



## CHAPTER 2\_THEORETICAL INVESTIGATION

## 2.1 Background: the relationship between city and nature through the ages

The Roman writer Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC - 43 BC) describes second nature in his classical treatise *De natura deorum* [*On the nature of the Gods*]. According to John Dixon Hunt (1992: 131), the Roman writer termed what we would call the cultural landscape as a second nature. This was a landscape of bridges, roads, harbours, agriculture, towns and other infrastructure. All of the elements which man introduces into the physical world to make it more habitable and to make it serve his purpose. Second nature holds onto its natural aspect. Jacopo Bonfadio (1508 - 1550) wrote in 1541 to a fellow humanist that gardens make up third nature (Ray, 2009). Later in the century, another humanist Bartolomeo Taegio (1520 - 1573) also used the term '*terza natura*' in describing gardens (Ray, 2009). The changes made to second nature are to make the world more liveable and pleasurable for humans. In sixteenth-century Italy, when gardens began to flourish, this art was likened to a third nature. Gardens went beyond the functional landscape. Human beings have processed nature in different ways and for different motives. One such mode is the garden. Gardens were worlds where the pursuits of pleasure became more important than the need for utility. According to Hunt, this is where resources of "human intelligence and technological skill were used to fabricate an environment where nature and art collaborated" (1992: 132). In this way the physical world could be seen as aesthetically pleasing and visited more safely. It was thought of as a painting. Each type of garden art draws strongly on the culture of its time. For example, the gardens of the eighteenth-century Romantic era represented the frivolity and pleasure that people so desperately searched for. Romanticism was a reaction against the Industrial Revolution and the scientific rationalisation of nature. People strove for a more playful, light-hearted life rather than that of the hard and serious life of the Industrial Revolution. Gardens go one stage further than the functional landscape of second nature in representing control over their environment. Gardens became an expression of human experience. While Cicero defines second nature, he does not outline what

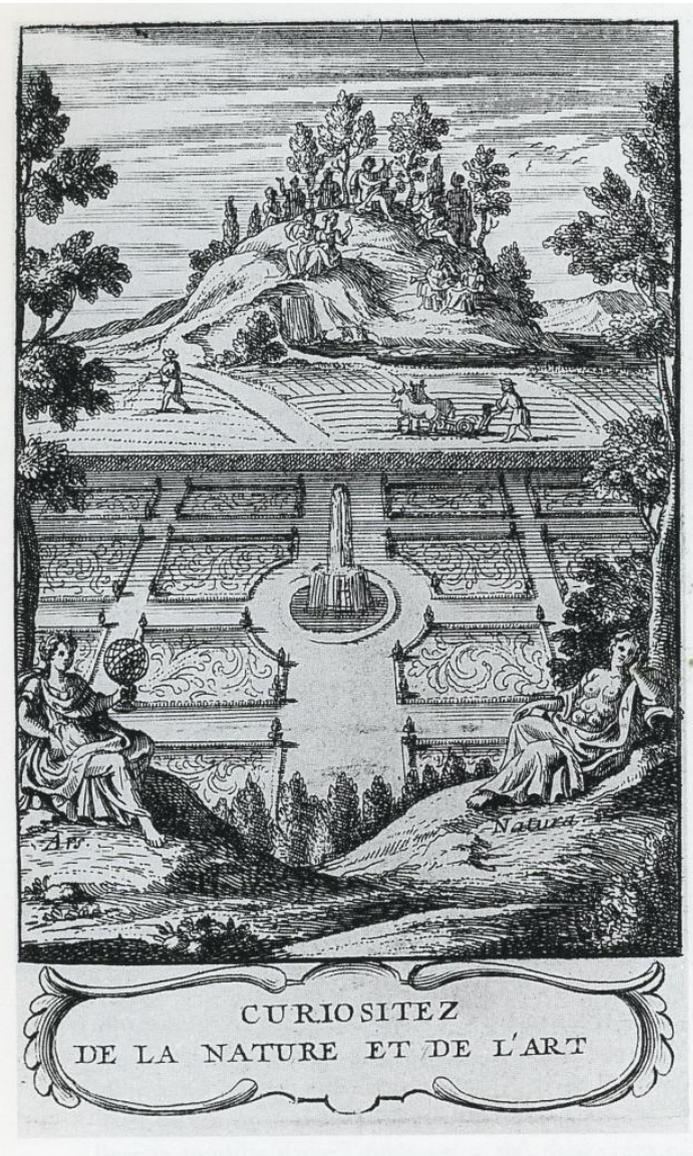


Illustration 5: Frontispiece to *l'Abbé de Vallemont Curiositez de la nature et de l'art*, 1705

first nature is. It is left for us to assume. Hunt (1992: 132) takes it that he implies a “primal nature”, the natural world, a world before “humans invaded, altered, and augmented it”, a world without any roads, bridges, paths, buildings, etc. Today we might call it the wilderness, portrayed as raw and dangerous. Illustration 5, a painting done in 1705, depicts clearly the three separate natures as described above. The formal, organised garden in the foreground depicts third nature. The middleground, classified as second nature, is the cultivated and agricultural land. In the distance lies the dangerous mountains and wilderness of first nature. In addition, illustration 6 depicts the three natures. In this illustration the city can be classified as third nature, a nature completely controlled, altered and organised by man for man.



Illustration 6: “Chain” map of Florence, 1470

Important to emphasise is the point that first nature has constantly been processed for human consumption, “[w]henver humans have encountered it, they tend to tame it, utilize it and otherwise process it” (ibid). The compact layout of past cities have changed form completely. Today it seems we have lost these three distinct natures. Cities bleed into the countryside and the first nature that Cicero implies rarely exists. Traditional urban histories show a movement from compact cities around the world to the Industrial Revolution that allowed cities to break beyond their former boundaries. “The Industrial Revolution altered this delicate ecological and agrarian balance of village around a commons”

(Shane, 2006: 61). Furthermore, it presented mankind with the miracles of innovative and efficient ways of producing goods, manufacturing services and creating new methods of transportation. However, the migration from nature and the simple life into bustling cities filled with polluted factories is evidence of the influence of Industrialisation. As cities grew larger and more congested, distance from the countryside and nostalgia for nature increased, while complaints about city life multiplied (Spirn, 1984a: 31). Over time the city became an unpleasant place to live. People desperately wanted to escape the crime, pollution and harsh environment of the city by moving to the suburbs in search of nature. This became the start of phenomena such as urban sprawl and decentralisation.



Illustration 7: “The city as an egg” by Cedric Price

In Europe, Cedric Price (Shane 2006: 64) described three city morphologies in terms of breakfast dishes (see illustration 7). There was the traditional, dense, “hard-boiled egg” city set in concentric rings of development within its walls. Then the “fried egg” city, where railways ran along the city’s perimeter in “accelerated linear space-time” into the landscape, resulting in a star shape. Lastly, was the post modern “scrambled egg city,” where everything is distributed evenly in small parcels across the landscape in a continuous network. The “scrambled egg city” depicts the layout of our cities today. The three natures have become amalgamated. Since the disintegration of Cicero’s distinct natures people have attempted to incorporate nature and city. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, written by Jane

## 02 THEORETICAL INVESTIGATION

Jacobs in the 1960s, is an attack on the city planning, rebuilding and modernist planning policies claimed by Jane Jacobs to have destroyed many existing inner-city communities. The following are influential ideas in orthodox planning. Starting from Howard's Garden city, a set of self-sufficient small towns was to be encircled with a belt of agriculture (see illustration 8). Industry was to be in its planned preserves; schools, housing, and greens in planned living preserves; and in the centre were to be commercial, club, and cultural places. The town and green belt were to be permanently controlled by the public authority. Although Howard tried to create a utopian city in which people live harmoniously together with nature, he set urban sprawl in motion as he increased the size of towns and therefore the desecration of the countryside. Stein and Wright as well as Mumford and Bauer demonstrated and popularised ideas such as: the street is bad as an environment for humans; houses should be turned away from it and faced inward, towards sheltered greens; frequent streets are wasteful; the basic unit of city design is not the street, but the block. Concurrently, City Beautiful, lead by Daniel Burnham of Chicago, was developed to sort out the monuments from the rest of the city, and assemble them in a unit (see illustration 9). One heavy, grandiose monument after another. The aim of the City Beautiful was the City Monumental with the intent of using beautification and monumental grandeur in cities. Designs largely focused on providing visual order in cities that seemed increasingly chaotic as industrial development increased. Later in the 1920s Le Corbusier devised the Radiant City (see illustration 10), composed of skyscrapers within a park. Le Corbusier believed that "[t]he whole city is a park." He envisioned cities with large blocks of park or grassland with many buildings on that parcel of land. Each building would be extremely tall and even be entirely self-sustainable. Jacobs argues that all these are irrelevant to how cities work. Cities are complex systems that are difficult to organise. According to Jacobs (1961: 23-24) cities need an intricate and closely knit diversity of uses that give each other constant mutual support, both economically and socially. Complexities in cities are very often viewed as problems, instead they should be viewed as urbanistic opportunities.

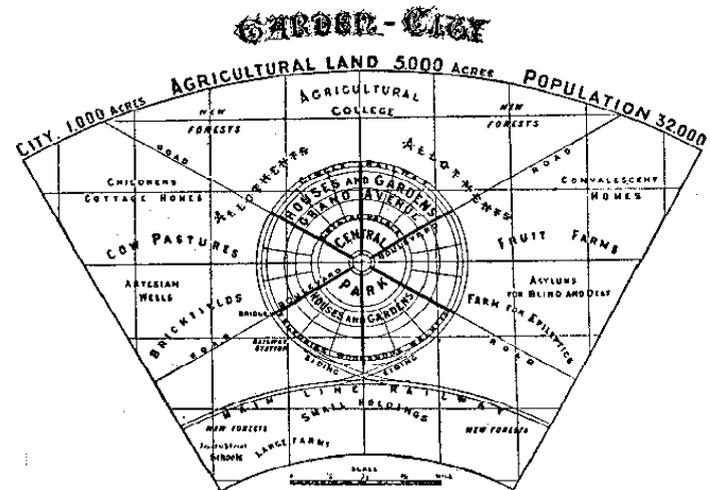


Illustration 8: Howard's Garden City, 1902 by Ebenezer Howard

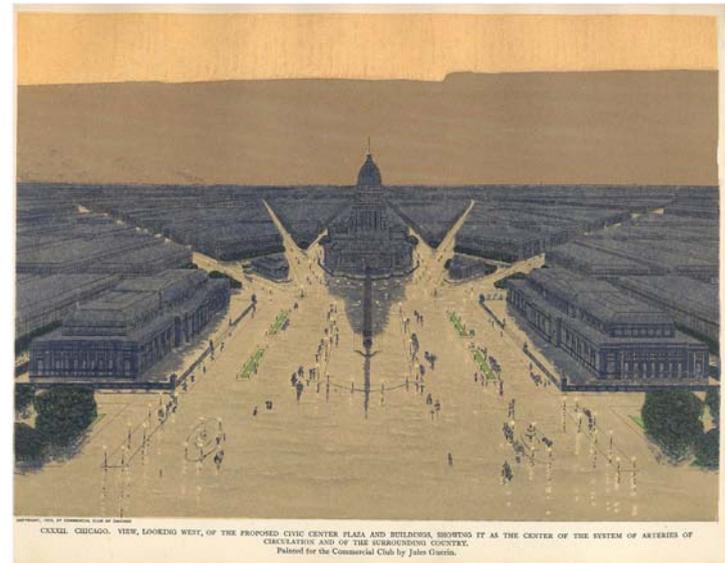


Illustration 9: Daniel Burnham's civic center design during the City Beautiful movement, 1890s and 1900s

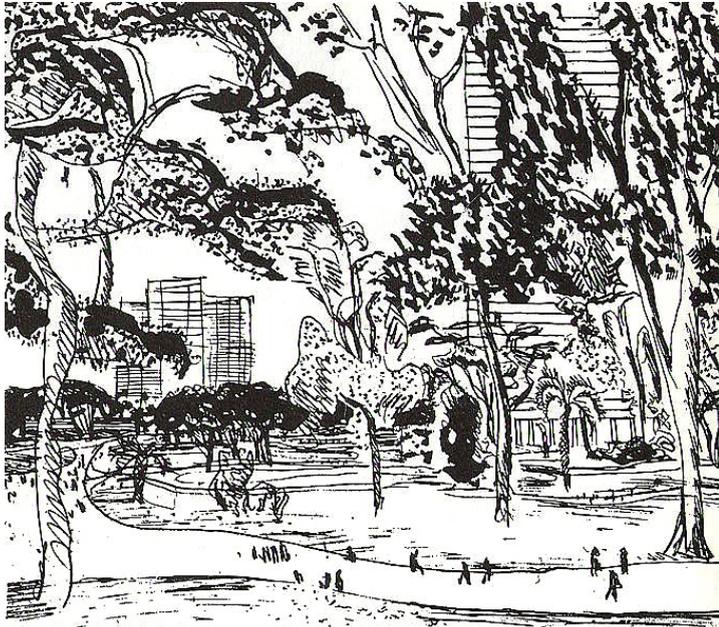


Illustration 10: Le Corbusier's Radiant City, 1920s

## 2.2 Current real world problems: urban sprawl, decentralisation, lost space and wastelands

Rapid horizontal urbanisation is moving away from the traditional descriptions of the city as a place of concentrated population and architectural density. This concept is called urban sprawl. Sprawl according to Berger (2006a: 21) has been seen as a “suburban phenomenon essentially detached from its urban core”. Good or bad, today’s suburban environments often provide more services, diverse amenities, and newer infrastructure than city centres. As a result, job markets have increasingly moved from inner city towns to outlying suburban areas. These overflows are the inevitable result of life’s expanding, waste-making tendencies. Urban populations continue to decentralise as a result and the dense city is no longer the hub of industrial activity. Cities do not look or function the same anymore. As cities undergo a shift of urbanisation expanding outward and hori-

zontally, left in the wake of decentralisation and urban restructuring are sites of waste. They are places where economies have evaporated, populations disappeared and production ceased. These wastelands and lost spaces in the city lie unutilised and forgotten. When viewed by a culture obsessed with clean and orderly space these sites are viewed as valueless entities and classified as wastelands (Claus, 2010: 1). They are banished to areas beyond public sight. Increasingly disconnected and isolated, wastelands have become unequal with adjacent spaces. Roger Trancik uses the term lost space and Stephen Jay Gould uses the term spandrel to describe these neglected spaces.

Trancik (1986: 3-4) defines lost space as:

- the leftover unstructured landscape away from the flow of pedestrian activity in the city.
- the no-man’s lands along the edges of freeways that nobody cares about maintaining, much less using.
- the undesirable urban areas that are in need of redesign – antispace, making no positive contribution to the surroundings or users.
- they are ill-defined, without measurable boundaries, and fail to connect elements in a coherent way.

Stephen Jay Gould defines the term ‘spandrel’ as the spaces arising “as a side-consequence of a prior decision, and not as an explicitly designed feature in itself” (Gould, 2002: 1250). “These spandrels were exapted as mosaic areas, having nothing to do with their original structural purpose” (Berger, 2006a: 34). Wastelands can be classified as spandrel. They may have been spaces that arise as a side-consequence of man’s decisions, but are definitely not afterthoughts of nature. These spaces are inevitable part of a city, so now the problem lies in how to deal with them. People have come up with different ways to approach and deal with wastelands. Some in a negative and some in a positive way. Others have attempted to change people’s attitudes and views about waste. The following discussion will look at these different approaches.

### 2.3 Wastelands: a discourse on approaches, views and attitudes toward wastelands

According to Berger (2006b: 202) the formation of wastelands can mean actual waste (such as municipal solid waste, sewage, scrap metal, etc.), wasted places (such as abandoned and/or contaminated sites), or wasteful places (such as oversized parking lots or big-box retail venues). For the purpose of this study wastelands will be broken down into three different types of sites: waste sites, wasteful sites and wasted sites. In the following pages, approaches, views and attitudes towards wastelands and these different sites will be discussed.

Travel to any country's urbanised area, and you will find "wastefulness" in many forms. Might this reveal the values of the people who live and govern there? Just like physical waste, what is considered "wasteful" is deeply embedded in a culture's value system (Berger, 2006a: 41). Waste was long regarded as part of urbanisation. For example, cities as diverse as ancient Rome, Manhattan and England dumped garbage and waste from daily life into the streets as a means of disposing trash. In older cities, people lived among their waste.

"If the streets of Valencia are not paved,' writes a eighteenth-century traveller, 'it is because their refuse mixed with excrement with which they are only strewn for a few moments, is carried at frequent intervals outside the walls to fertilize the adjoining countryside, and the people are convinced that if they were to pave them, they would deprive the great orchard, which surrounds Valencia on all side, of one of the principle sources of its fertility.'" (Braudel, 1972: 84-85).

Why is it that today we want to be as far away from our waste as possible? Currently there are requirements for appropriate fill materials, and most solid municipal waste is dumped in landfills outside populated areas while water is treated in specialised sewage-treatment plants. Current methods used to deal with waste hide the important services and cycles needed to keep a city running. With these hidden attachments, people

become more wasteful. Without seeing what happens to our waste we continue to live like blind consuming and wasteful citizens. This is not a new found problem and approach to waste, this view was born out of the Modernist period. The Modernists' viewed and dealt with waste as hidden and ugly attachments. Mies stated, "Orderliness is the real reason" (as cited by Perez, 2010). Mies and the Modernists' believed space should be categorised, zoned and responsive to a design philosophy of clarity (Perez, 2010). The landscape was painted as waste and seen as disruptive to any attempt to impose a new pattern (Claus, 2010: 5). For example, the Illinois Institute of Technology campus in Chicago by Mies van der Rohe (see illustration 11), attempts to eliminate the city of dirt and disorder. Modernism was a reaction to the Industrial Revolution. During the Industrial Revolution "[a]nything lying between the outposts of competing imperial realms was seen as masterless, a no man's land, and so an empty space – and empty space was a challenge to action and reproach (blame) to idlers" (Bauman, 2000: 114). The Modernists' sought cleanliness and viewed wastelands as harmful, aesthetically displeasing and negative. The design approach sought to camouflage and conceal them or, as in the case of Illinois Institute of Technology, delete them absolutely. Wasteful sites are a direct result of this Modernist city planning.



Illustration 11: Illinois Institute of Technology campus, 1950, by Mies van der Rohe

In terms of wasted sites contrasting views and approaches have been followed. One such approach is restoration. Landscapes are scraped clean and restored as close as possible to their natural states as if the destruction never occurred. (see illustration 12). Although a healthy approach, the restorative process is an example of a method that invests heavily in idealised notions of landscape (Claus, 2010: 7). The logic of the restorative approach is just as damaged as the landscape seeks to repair as it attempts to hide, sterilise and cover the past. Restoration, however, is a step forward from the Modernists' approach to wastelands. Although still viewed as ugly and ruined, these sites began to be dealt with and no longer ignored.



Illustration 12: Wallsend No. 2 Colliery coal mine before and after reclamation, Australia

By the middle of the 20th century, artists and designers initiated a shift in how wasted sites were viewed. A curatorial approach is shown in the works of Hilla and Bernd Becher (see illustration 13). Abandoned buildings and wastelands were photographed as subjects and objects. The Bechers' technique intended to strip the photographs of subjectivity striving for a non-style (Claus, 2010: 15). The framing detached its visual and cultural connections. Furthermore, reference points such as people, birds, and seasonal effects were kept out of the work. The photographs of the Bechers' step back to observe and capture the subjects for what they are. It does not entangle itself in meaning. They use photographs of objects and subjects to create beautiful compositions and artworks, thus bringing attention to the object. This began to change people's views and attitudes on what was considered beautiful. An example of these photographs changing people's mind sets is Hilla and Bernd Blast Furnace photograph taken at the Duisburg factory (see illustration 14). Artists began seeing this abandoned factory as beautiful and mysterious. The photographs captured the factory's abandoned and enigmatic state. This had a ripple effect which resulted in the factory not being demolished but instead transformed into a unique cultural park (see precedent study, page 32). According to Howette we are:

“trapped not just in a tyranny of the visual imposed by an inherited picturesque aesthetic, but that even the range of possibilities for visual stimulation and pleasure has been needlessly narrowed. And we have deprived our other senses and, indeed, our own minds and souls, of a potentially richer and more profound delight. Baird Callicott has made the point that just as we can develop the capacity to enjoy dissonance in music or ‘the clash of colo[u]r and distortion of eidetic form in painting’, we can come to appreciate qualities in a landscape that initially confound our preconceptions of what is pleasing” (2006: 111).

We need to become accustomed to these different spaces and celebrate them. Slowly our views about these landscapes are beginning to change.

02 THEORETICAL INVESTIGATION



Illustration 13: *Water Towers*, 1980, photograph by Hilla and Bernd Becher

Following this, a theoretical approach and movement, namely landscape urbanism, became a leading trend in the world. In contrast to the Modernists', landscape urbanism is an approach that aims to treat wastelands in a positive light. Landscape urbanism according to Waldheim (2006: 11) "describes a disciplinary realignment currently underway in which landscape replaces architecture as the basic building block of contemporary urbanism. For many, across a range of disciplines, landscape

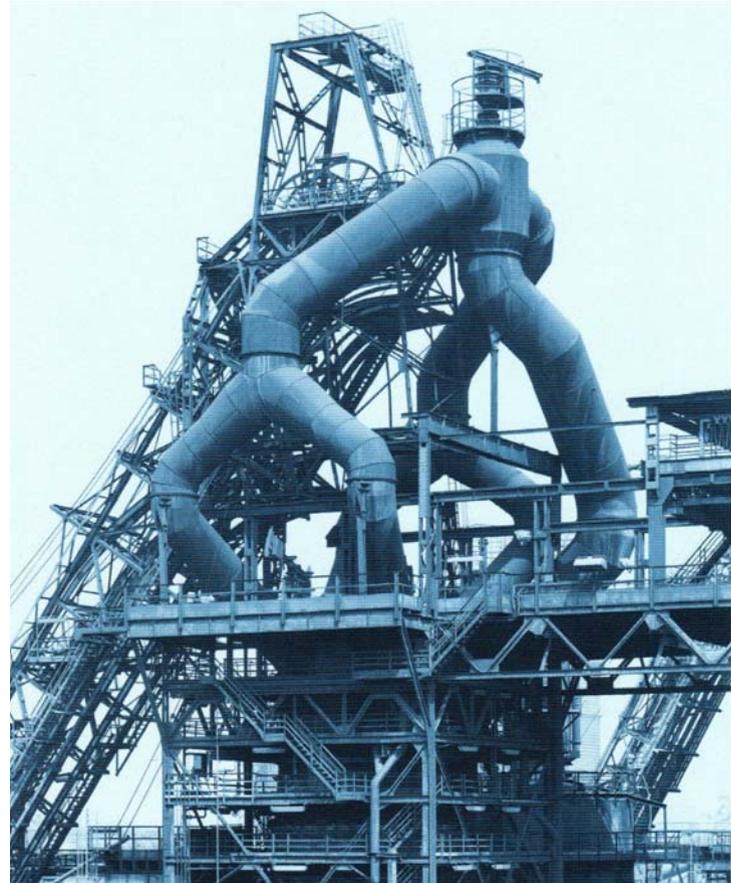


Illustration 14: *Blast Furnace, Duisburg-Bruckhausen*, 1995, photograph by Bernd and Hilla Becher

has become both the lens through which the contemporary city is represented and the medium through which it is constructed." Landscape architects seem mostly employed to deal with left over open spaces where infrastructure and buildings are not. It comes as an afterthought instead of being an integral part of the design process. The idea of "landscape urbanism reorders the values and priorities of urban design, emphasizing the primacy of void over built form, and celebrating indeterminacy and

change over the static certainty of architecture” (Durack, 2004). Urban landscapes have the ability to function as important ecological arteries and pathways. These are important to the health and wellbeing of urban populations. Ecology shows how all life on the planet is bound into dynamic relationships. Cities and infrastructure should be seen as part of the dynamic ecological relationships. Louis Kahn wrote (as cited by Waldheim, 2006: 30):

“Expressways are like rivers. These rivers frame the area to be served. Rivers have Harbors. Harbors are the municipal parking towers; from the Harbors branch a system of Canals that serve the interior; ... from the Canals branch cul-de-sac Docks; the Docks serve as entrance halls to the buildings.”

Lars Lerup divides the urbanised landscape surface into ‘stim’ and ‘dross’. Stim, Lerup defines as the places, buildings, programmes and events that most people would identify as being developed or built for human use (Lerup, 2001: 58). These are points of stimulation. Dross, he defines as the landscape leftover and wasted, found in-between the stims. One of the essential ideas landscape urbanism deals with is wastelands. In contrast to the Modernists’ views, landscape urbanism sees waste as an “indicator of healthy urban growth” (Berger, 2006a: 1). Dross [waste] is understood as a natural component of every dynamically evolving city and emerges out of two primary processes (Berger, 2006a: 12): first, as a consequence of current rapid horizontal urbanisation (urban sprawl), and second, as the leftovers of previous economic and production organisations. Berger takes Lerup’s negative aspect of dross and turns it into a positive one by stating that dross is a result of growth and progression and offers a designer the opportunity to create flexible design strategies that reintegrate the sites into the current urban context (2006a: 58). From this Alan Berger defines the term ‘drosscape’ in his book *Drosscapes: Wasting Land in Urban America*. By this term Berger implies that “dross, or waste, is ‘scaped,’ or resurfaced, and reprogrammed for adaptive reuse” (2006b: 236). Furthermore, Trancik (1986: 2) believes “lost space, underused and deteriorating, provide exceptional oppor-

tunities to reshape an urban centre, so that it attracts people back downtown and counteracts urban sprawl and suburbanization”. Landscape architecture tends to dwell on the traditional areas of landscape history; the garden and the picturesque landscapes (third nature). Beyond and behind these topics lie an important issue and type of landscape that tends to be forgotten and ignored: the wastelands, the drosscapes. These wastelands require attention and new approaches.

In addition to this positive view of wastelands, land artists Robert Smithson and Strijdom van der Merwe take on a celebrative approach toward wasted sites (Claus, 2010: 17). These land artists work suggest a continuance of time and process, it is not isolated from context. Robert Smithson began questioning the picturesque and static notion of landscape and art. Smithson sought to liberate scarred and wastelands from the defined and limited values of Modernism. Whereas the Bechers work pushed toward a non-style, Robert Smithson’s work embraced style. As-



Illustration 15: *Asphalt Rundown*, Rome, 1969, by Robert Smithson



Illustration 16: *am/pm Shadow Lines: Earth Work*, Namaqualand Mines, De Beers, South Africa by Strijdom van der Merwe

phalt Rundown in Rome (see illustration 15) was Smithson's first "flow", situated in an abandoned and mundane section of a gravel and dirt quarry in Rome. A large dumptruck released a load of asphalt down a gutted and gullied cliff already marked by time. Strijdom van der Merwe places emphasis on the Namaqualand Mines (see illustration 16). This is a major land art installation in the middle of the devastation wreaked by mining. Bringing attention to that which is considered wasteful and wasted. "While Strijdom's art is about recreating beauty and working with nature, it also highlights the environmental destruction humankind has wrought" (Ngwenya, 2010). These land artists do not seek to hide the truth but instead to reveal and celebrate it in its raw nature. Both land artists work with the "natural" places that have been altered, defaced and distorted by human intervention.

Another example of a celebrative approach toward wastelands

and appreciation for these unique places is the Oscar winning documentary, *Waste Land* (2010) directed by Lucy Walker and Karen Harley (see illustration 17). *Waste Land* tackles the personal relationship developed between Brazilian artist Vik Muniz and the garbage pickers that he befriends in Rio de Janeiro for collaborative art projects using the waste of the city. The artist invited people to choose paintings they identified with and then asked them to pose in the position of the principal figure for portrait photographs. Muniz would then collect waste from the landfill and create the artwork. Muniz's strong belief in the conceptual aspects of making art from trash and other unexpected materials features is a prominent undercurrent of the documentary as a whole. This documentary celebrates waste sites for what they are, it shines an artistic light on landfill sites and the people that work there, bringing that which is ignored to attention.

In addition, Ignasi de Solà-Morales and Irene Curulli also take on celebrative approaches with interesting opinions and views. Ignasi de Solà-Morales coined the term '*terrain vague*', Ignasi interests focuses on abandoned areas, on obsolete and unproductive spaces and buildings, often undefined and without specific limits, places to which he applies the French term '*terrain vague*' (Ignasi de Solà-Morales, 1995: 120). According to Ignasi de Solà-Morales (1995:119) the French term 'terrain' connotes a more urban quality than the english term. Two Latin roots come together in the French 'vague'. Vague descends from 'vacuus', giving us "vacant" and "vacuum" in English, which is to say "empty, unoccupied," yet also "free, available, unengaged." Vagus: vague; indeterminate, imprecise, blurred, uncertain (ibid). Regarding the generalised tendency to reincorporate and reintroduce these places into the productive city by transforming them, in contrast Rubio insists on the value of their state of ruin and lack of productivity (ibid, 1995: 120). Rubio believes that only in this way can these strange urban spaces manifest themselves as "spaces of freedom that are an alternative to the current profitable reality" (ibid). "The relationship between the absence of use, of activity, and the sense of freedom of expectancy, is fundamental to understanding the evocative potential

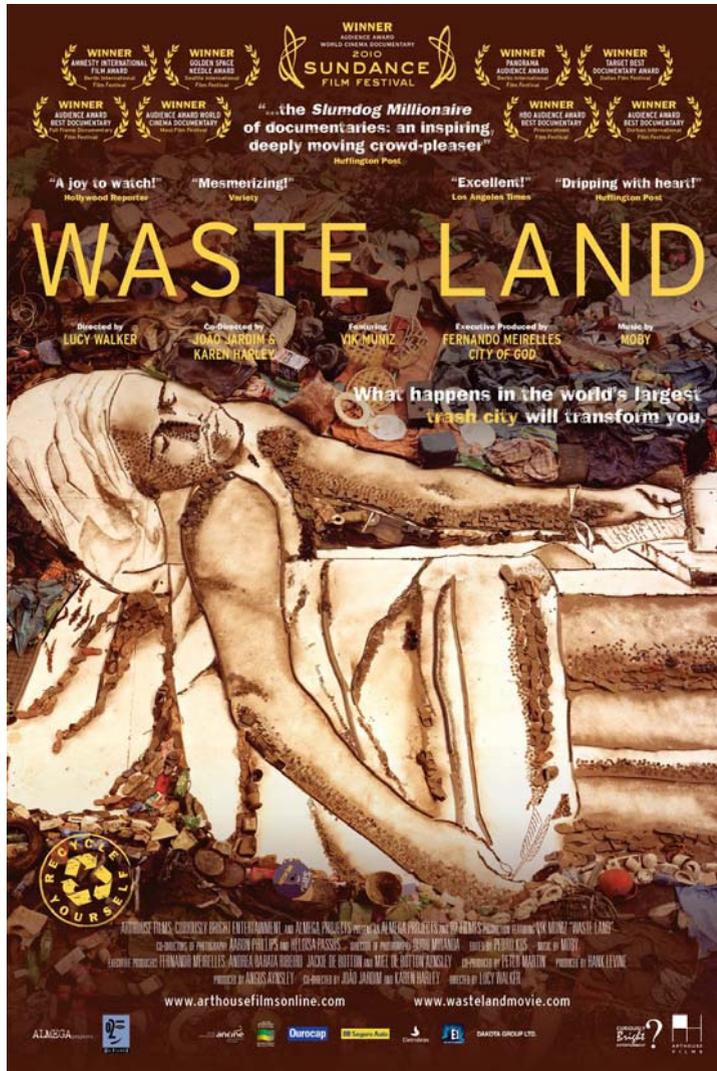


Illustration 17: *Waste Land*, directed by Lucy Walker and Kern Harley, a 2010 film

of the city's terrains vagues" (ibid). These places are outside of the city's usual functioning and offer a sense of freedom and richness of unexpected possibilities. Ignasi de Solà-Morales,

(ibid) theorizes that people, especially artists, are drawn to and inspired by the *terrain vague* because they are the unique, unrestrained and free spaces within the city. They are the spaces where "the memory of the past seems to predominate over the present" (ibid).

How can landscape architecture act in the '*terrain vague*' without becoming an aggressive instrument of power and abstract reason? According to Ignasi de Solà-Morales (1995: 123) this can be done through attention to continuity of the flows, energies and rhythms established by the passing of time. "Art's reaction, as before with "nature" is to preserve these alternative, strange spaces" (Ignasi de Solà-Morales, 1995: 122).

Furthermore, the writings by Irene Curulli take on a celebrative approach to industrial sites that focus on their intriguing character. According to Curulli (2007: 32) "wastelands are the leftover spaces and buildings from the industrial age. Void of role or function, they leave gaps in landscapes and urban fabric, which are targeted for recycling". Curulli believes their interpretation has the potential to get a grasp on the absent and invisible aspects in the recent past and present of our society (ibid). They "stimulate awareness and inspire memory: they are forgotten places, often black holes in the mental map of an area, as most people never go there" (ibid). The general trend is a face-lift approach that denies the characteristics of the site itself and wipes out the differences. These sites have built in forces, energies and patterns that the passing of time has set and moulded. These landscape are products of the energies of time. According to Curulli (2007: 33) "wastelands record memories and recall memories". They are extreme sites in their circumstances: "on the one hand, they were damaged by the human activity and are now witness of the human progress; on the other hand they are the focus of concerns as available sites for plans of urban growth" (ibid). Intervention on the site should focus on the process of transformation rather than the final product and this "welcomes decay of memory as the driving force for action" (ibid). These sites offer the designer a high extent of freedom for experimentation. Curulli mentions how the silence of these industrial wastelands is not muteness instead "silence is a potential" (ibid).

**Diagram summary of approaches to wastelands**

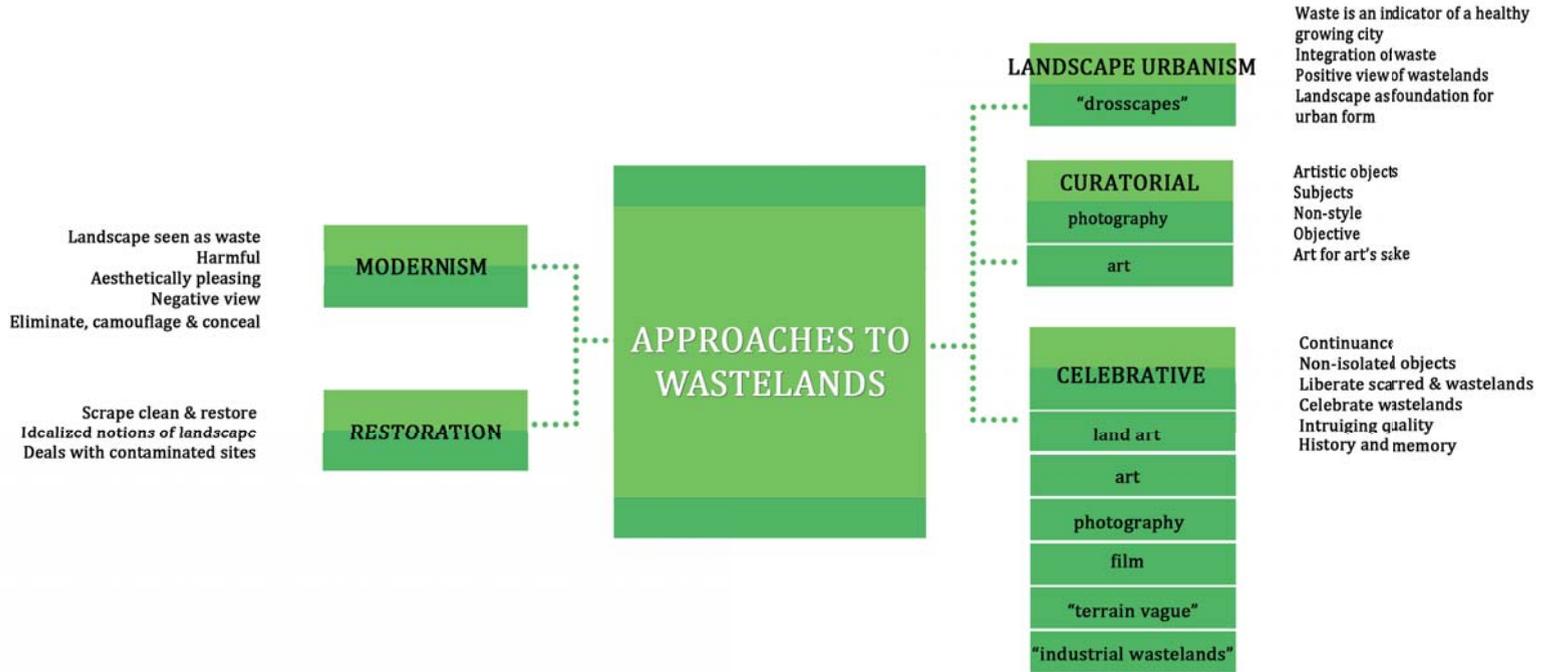


Illustration 18: Diagram of investigated approaches to wastelands

## 2.4 Non-place and place, pedigree and enigmatic landscapes

Marc Augé defines ‘non-place’ and ‘place’ in a city. He uses the term ‘non-place’ to describe the sterile, controlled and predictable spaces in cities. Michel de Certeau mentions ‘non-place’, suggesting indirectly to a “negative quality of place, an absence of the place from itself, caused by the name it has been given” (cited by Augé, 1995: 85). Examples include air, rail and motorway routes, the airports and railway stations, hotel chains, large retail outlets, and the complex galaxy of cables and wireless networks that allow communication (Augé, 1995: 79).

“If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place” (Augé, 1995: 77-78).

Marc Augé hypothesizes that supermodernity produced non-places,

“... [a] world where people are born in the clinic and die in hospital, where transit points and temporary abodes are proliferating under luxurious or inhuman conditions (hotel chains and squats, holiday clubs and refugee camps, shantytowns threatened with demolition or doomed to festering longevity); where a dense network of means of transport which are also inhabited spaces is developing; where the habitue of supermarkets, slot machines and credit cards communicates wordlessly, through gestures, with an abstract, unmediated commerce ...” (1995: 78).

*Lost in Translation* is a 2003 American film starring Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson, directed by Sofia Coppola (see illustration 19). The movie explores themes of loneliness, alienation, insomnia, boredom and culture shock against the backdrop of a modern Japanese cityscape. Both Americans find themselves ‘lost’ in non-places, such as hotels, airports, restaurants and motorways. This film shows the non-places we live in, the lifeless, controlled, powered, clean, neon lit and predictable spaces. Experience of non-place is today a fundamental component of all social existence and non-place occupies more space than ever before. “The

community of human destinies is experienced in the anonymity of non-place, and in solitude” (Augé, 1995: 120). These spaces offer no mystery, no uncertainty and no adventure. The philosopher Zygmunt Bauman talks of non-places being “temples of consumption”, they “reveal nothing of the nature of daily reality except its dull sturdiness and impregnability” (2000: 99).

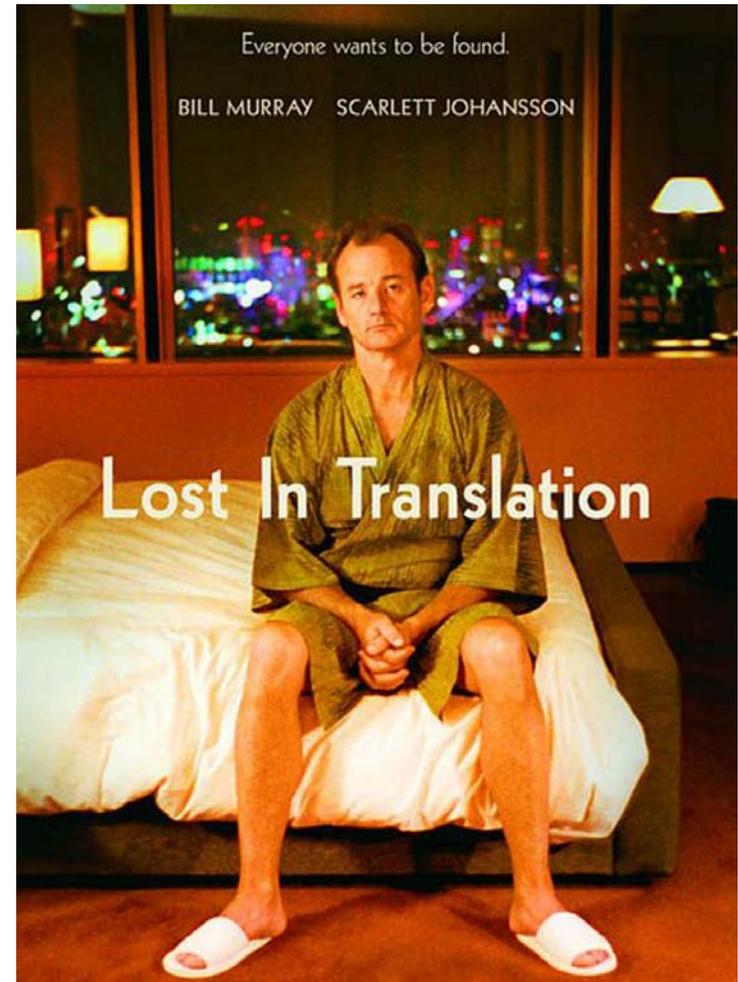


Illustration 19: *Lost in Translation*, directed by Sofia Coppola, a 2003 film. One is urged to question: if landscapes are be-

## coming non-place?

The controlled, green parks, mowed lawns, cut hedges and sterile ecological systems. For the purpose of this study the term non-site will be used as a landscape equivalent to non-place. Examples of non-site's include recreational parks, theme parks, formal gardens, leisure parks, golf courses, street edges and motorways. Non-place and non-site is a result of gentrification and these typical landscapes are found in gentrified areas. Gentrification is the restoration of run-down urban areas by the middle class. Illustration 20 is a cartoon that illustrates the term gentrification. It creates unnecessary, decorative spaces that are void of past references and existing character.

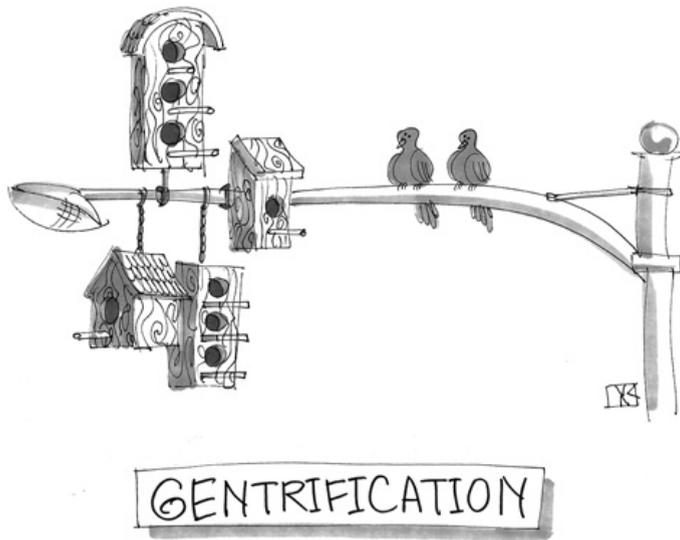


Illustration 20: Gentrification cartoon by Gregory Kogan

In addition to non-place and place, Hough, another theorist, describes two kinds of landscapes (1984: 6-7): the first is a 'pedigree' landscape consisting of lawns, flowerbeds, trees, water features and planned places. It depends on a formal design doctrine where aesthetics is a priority. These landscapes are dependent on high maintenance, this has a negative environmental value because they are so heavily dependent on energy-

intensive methods. These green landscapes are green because they are sustained by irrigation systems. They have little connection with dynamics of natural processes and are thus in conflict with local ecosystems. Many pedigree landscapes require an entrance fee and have limited social value. Controlled and predictable, they are usually built to sell a lifestyle or property. Brochures show the latest buildings set in a vibrant green carpet of manicured grass and exotic shrubs. Landscape has become a commodity, looked at but not used, and watered daily to conserve economic value. "The 'short term' has replaced the 'long term' and made of instantaneity its ultimate ideal" (Bauman, 2000: 125). The pedigree landscape falls perfectly under Marc Augé's definition of non-place.

The second landscape is an enigmatic, 'fortuitous', landscape of naturalised urban plants and places left behind after man has intervened. A natural vernacular. These forgotten landscapes in a city, which do not rely on maintenance but instead grow wild without any human disturbance, should take on an ecological design approach. Ecological design is "an approach which seeks to substitute for the restricted, artificial and expensive creations of conventional design, a looser and apparently more natural landscape, marked by species-diversity, structural complexity and freedom of growth, and achieved above all by the use of indigenous vegetation sensitively managed in order to exploit natural growth processes (especially successional) and the natural potential of the site" (Howette, 2006: 110). The enigmatic landscape represents a mysterious, accidental and unpredictable landscape and appropriately falls under Marc Augé's definition of place. Marc Augé believes place needs to come back to life, a place where journeys can be made:

"... it was in these crowded places where thousands of individual itineraries converged for a moment, unaware of one another, that there survived something of the uncertain charm of the waste lands, the yards and building sites, the station platforms and waiting rooms where travellers break step, of all the chance meeting places where fugitive feelings occur of the possibility of continuing adventure, the feeling that all there is to do is to 'see what happens'" (Augé, 1995: 3).

Wastelands have the qualities of place and enigmatic

landscapes; the uncertainty, the mysterious and the adventure. Wastelands should become a different performance, demonstrating the site's invisible processes and ecologies that become so undetectable in pedigree parks. Contaminated and abandoned sites may in actual fact have favourable ecological surprises. One may find much more diverse ecological environments in contaminated and abandoned sites than in the native landscapes that surround them. According to Spirn (1984a: 197) children find waste and abandoned land more attractive than conventional playgrounds. These areas represent a more efficient use of space. The land then becomes something to explore. The opening of oneself to chance encounters – going with the flow – and enjoying the surprise of what the other has to offer is seen today as psychologically healthy. Humans are adventurers by nature. Imagine a place where nothing is expected, a place where one is free to go anywhere and do what one desires. A place free from control and man's rules. A place far from the predictable shopping malls, endless highways, over the top hotels and massive airports. Imagine a place full of mystery and adventure. A place where exploration and discovery is welcomed. A place where imagination can run free. A place where one chooses where to rest, where to sit, where to stand, where to shout, where to run, where to kiss. A place that people do not control and do not dominate. A place where the soul is set free from the everyday drudgery and sameness. A place free of the evils of modern society, where someone can find out what he is really made of, live by his own rules, and be completely free. There is something about the wilderness that allows our souls to feel harmony. The enigmatic landscape should become these things.

“Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life” (John Muir, 2011).

It is inevitable that one cannot have a city with one or the other,

“places and spaces, places and non-places intertwine and tangle together. The possibility of non-place is never absent from any place. Place becomes a refuge to the habitué of non-places” (Augé, 1995: 107). We can still value the particular qualities that an ordered garden can bring where human design has the upper hand but we need to recognise the importance of a place where nature dominates over man. We need to bridge the gap between our love of order and love of extreme wilderness. “The city as a spatial form presents both the image of a map and the image of a labyrinth: figures by which characters orientate, but can also lose, themselves” (Pike, 1981: 121). The concept of a city should be to reflect this inherent ambiguity.

## **2.5 Precedent studies of landscape architectural projects constructed on brownfield sites and wastelands**

The following pages discuss and critique landscape architectural precedent studies that deal with wastelands and brownfield sites. The precedent studies will be critiqued in terms of their approach to dealing with the sites character, its past, its ecological approach and its enigmatic or pedigree qualities.



Illustration 21: Freedom Park, Pretoria



Illustration 22: The Palace of Versailles, Paris



Illustration 23: Marina Linear Park, San Diego by Martha Schwartz



Illustration 24: Burgers Park, Pretoria



Illustration 25: Burnette Park, Texas by Peter Walker



Illustration 26: Parc de la Villette, Paris

pedigree landscapes	enigmatic landscape
controlled	fortuitous
low biodiversity	biodiversity
short term	long term
high maintenance	low maintenance
man dominates over nature	nature dominates over man
close-ended	open-ended
contained	wild
unfruitful	fruitful
cultivated	uncultivated
instant transformation	gradual transformation
mono-functional	multi-functional
unsustainable	sustainable
unproductive	productive
surveillance	free
little dynamics of natural processes	process - patterns, flows, energies
pockets of controlled planting	structural complexity
infertile	fertile
separation of landscape and architecture	integration of landscape & architecture
restricted	interactive
product over process	process over product
pruned	freedom of growth
unresponsive to existing	responsive to existing
instant	time
stagnant	dynamic
suppressed	overgrown
common indigenous species	endemic species
traditional landscape and gardens	landscape urbanism
artificial	natural
static	constant change and motion
erase and ignore history and heritage	history, memory and palimpsest
disconnected island	connected
planned spaces	leftover
Foucault Panopticon - powered	<i>terrain vague</i> - mysterious
idealized perfection	imperfection
wasteful	resourceful
lacking vitality	inspirational
no interpretation allowed	imagination and creative
private or enclosed	true public space
sterile	unsterile

Figure 1: pedigree landscapes vs. enigmatic landscapes



Illustration 27: Duisburg Nord Landschaftspark, Germany

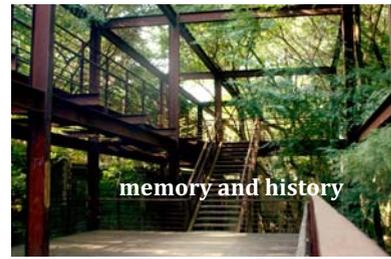


Illustration 28: Parque da Juventude, São Paulo



Illustration 29: High Line, New York



Illustration 30: Don River, Toronto



Illustration 31: Lurie Garden, Millennium Park, Chicago

## 02 THEORETICAL INVESTIGATION

### 2.5.1 Parc de la Villette (1987)

**Location:** North-eastern Paris, France

**Architect:** Bernard Tschumi

**Description:** Constructed on a brownfield site, this 35 hectare park is located on the site of a former abattoir and meat market closed in 1974. President Francois Mitterand issued an international design competition for the site, of which architect Bernard Tschumi became the finalist. As developed as part of an urban renewal plan, the parks aim and objective was to generate a new model for the urban park in the twenty-first century (Tate, 2001: 56). The park consists of a system of surfaces, a system of lines and a system of points. Bright red metal follies act as points of architectural representations of deconstruction. Continuous change is important in terms of the follies, as parts of it can be taken down, changed and built again.

**Critique:** Although a ground breaking design, the park has almost no reference to its industrial past and character. This ordered park does not celebrate its intriguing past. This shows the absent acknowledgment of the natural forces and processes on the site. It also lacks the ecological ability to adapt over time. This park falls under the definition of a pedigree landscape, and leans toward the modernists negative approach to wastelands. A successful park in terms of social and urban renewal but takes on a sterile ecological approach with neat, high maintenance lawn areas. Parc de la Villette is a non-site where man dominates over nature and where activities are controlled. This approach is opposite to the approach appropriate to further this investigation.



Illustration 32: Parc de la Villette in Paris, France

### 2.5.2 Parque da Juventude (2007)

**Location:** São Paulo, Brazil

**Landscape architect:** Rosa Grena Kliass

**Description:** Parque da Juventude in São Paulo was once the site of the notorious Carandiru prison where a massacre took place and was demolished after human rights violations (Parque da Juventude, 2009); Parque Juventude is now a green, hilly park. Signs of its former life still stand in the form of pavilions left over from darker days, with its concrete columns rising from the forest floor. A former prison wall stands up into the lofty trees and parts of the steel skeleton allow for one to climb up two floors into the trees (ibid).

**Critique:** This park serves as successful precedents in terms of acknowledging the heritage of the site as well as leaving physical reminders of the past. The history of the site brings a deep, profound story to the landscape and without acknowledgment the park would be a sterile, meaningless green space. The park becomes so much more intriguing with all its dark secrets. The elements used in this park create a curiosity to explore. This precedent celebrates the past and therefore falls under place and is an enigmatic landscape.



Illustration 33: Parque da Juventude in São Paulo, Brazil

### 2.5.3 High Line (2006)

**Location:** West side of Manhattan, New York, United States of America

**Landscape architects:** Field Operations

**Description:** The High Line was built in the 1930s, as part of a massive public-private infrastructure project called the West Side Improvement. No trains have run on the High Line since 1980. Friends of the High Line, a community-based non-profit group, formed in 1999 when the historic structure was under threat of demolition. The High Line is a complete reuse and transformation of an abandoned industrial structure into a fertile elevated public park.

**Critique:** The park maintains the spirit of the existing vegetation, special character and memory of the site. The design is furthermore successful in terms of its ecological diversity and long term transformation. The park celebrates the past and takes natural processes, patterns and energies into account. In addition, the design produces a variation and a maximum of functions within a constrained space (Margolis & Robinson, 2007: 44). Landscape urbanism principles were used to deal with this wasteland resulting in a unique place and an enigmatic landscape in New York. *High Line is successful in working with the existing potentials of a site.*



Illustration 34: High Line, New York

### 2.5.4 Fresh Kills (2003)

**Location:** Staten Island in New York, United States of America

**Landscape architects:** Field Operations

**Description:** Fresh Kills is a park located on what was once one of the world's largest landfills. Transformed into an ecologically healthy site. Field Operations' proposal, lifescape, envisioned the park as a new form of public ecological landscape and a new paradigm for creativity and adaptive reuse. The scheme has informed public involvement and is shaped by time and process. The scheme is multi-layered and the implementation of the project comprises three 10-year phases. Ecological succession is instigated by introducing pioneer species that will in time develop into full-blown eco-systems. The phases also include a series of movement systems, pathways and trails, neighbourhood parks, public installations, sports, recreational and other amenities.

**Critique:** The departure point is to first contain and heal the damaged and disturbed landscape and then programme it with various socio-cultural and recreational activities. This precedent illustrates how to deal with contaminated sites. Acknowledging time and continuous change unlocks the site's new potential. The proposal respects the site's character by using existing features and elements such as the wetlands and large mounds caused by years of dumping. The scheme is process based. This enigmatic landscape demonstrates an approach to restoring and rehabilitating a landscape without hiding and scraping clean past references.



Illustration 35: Fresh Kills, Staten Island in New York, USA

## 02 THEORETICAL INVESTIGATION

### 2.5.5 Duisburg Nord Landschaftspark (1990 - 1999)

**Location:** Duisburg North, Germany

**Landscape architects:** Latz and Partners

**Description:** Landschaftspark, a 200 hectare site including a coal mine and coking plant that ceased production in 1977, and a steelworks that closed in 1985 (Tate, 2001: 115). The abandoned factory soon became an object of beauty and mystery to artists and was photographed for these qualities. These photographs began changing people's perception of industrial wastelands. Instead of being demolished and forgotten, this site became a ground breaking park. Massive storage bunkers, rail beds, blast furnaces and the main steel works building have all been retained as industrial heritage and adapted to public use. Numerous gathering spaces, bridges and walkways connect these various elements while the existing vegetation offers an evolving reflection of the history of the site. Indigenous vegetation has been encouraged and heavily contaminated soils have

been removed and rehabilitated. An intricate lighting scheme designed by British light designer Jonathan Park, allows the site to be used at night.

**Critique:** This post-industrial brownfield site started out as an abandoned factory that attracted only artists and photographers. It has since transformed, becoming a catalyst for future development and urban regeneration. Industrial processes shaped the land and gave it its unusual landforms over time. Latz and Partners embraced the qualities and character of the site and his design is a reaction to its existing potential. The design allows the natural processes of decay and regeneration to take place and therefore the allows the site to adapt and evolve over time. This project leans towards a celebrative approach that results in a truly enigmatic landscape. This precedent employs the ideal approach to wastelands, the ideal approach that the design for this dissertation will strive to achieve.



Illustration 36: Duisburg Nord Landschaftspark, Germany

## 2.6 Theoretical conclusion: a hypothetical design process

With the inevitable decaying urban form, wastelands lie in abundance in the city centre. By examining the different approaches to wastelands an informed decision can be made as to which approach will be implemented in this dissertation. The approach taken to further this investigation is a combination of a landscape urbanism approach on a planning level and a celebrative approach (see page 20-23) on a spatial level. The proposed intervention must aim to become opposite to the many non-place's that exist in our cities. The design must strive toward creating an enigmatic landscape of mystery and freedom. Parc de la Villette uses an approach to wastelands that is opposite to the approach appropriate for this specific dissertation. In contrast, Duisburg Nord Landschaftspark provides the ideal approach, processes and methods that the design for this dissertation must strive toward.

In summary, the focus of this study is twofold (see diagram summary of theory discussed, illustration 38). First, on a planning level, people move to the suburbs in search of nature, as they move they destroy nature and contribute to the decaying of the urban form and fabric of the city (see illustration 37). In order to attract people back to the city one needs to bring nature back

to the city, but where can one do this?

Wastelands have the potential to heal a city's ecosystems and ultimately attract these people back from the sprawling boundaries to the inner city. This approach will allow the wastelands in a city to produce an open space network that surrounds and intermingles with the city. Once an open space network is established, development can be assigned in order to increase the density of the city. By first creating ecologically healthy spaces in the city with development following thereafter is one of the main principles of landscape urbanism that will be implemented in this investigation. Second, we tend to focus on sustainability and urban problems that the experiential and spatial quality of places are lost. Instead of gentrifying these wastelands to create a modern sterile cityscape consisting of more non-places, one needs to explore the mystery and character of these wastelands and work with the existing potentials of the site. Tribesmen do not select a holy place by looking at a plan of the area, instead places and their character dictate programme and function. A majestic holy tree cannot be seen on plan.

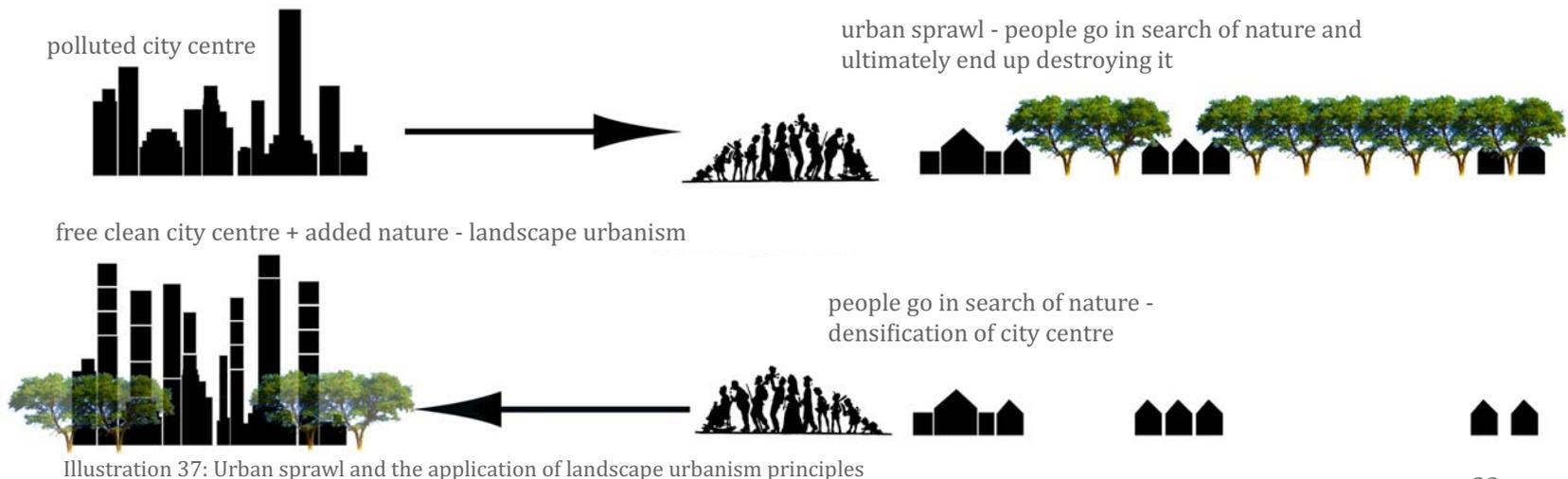


Illustration 37: Urban sprawl and the application of landscape urbanism principles

“The best improver or physician is he who leaves most to nature – who watches and takes advantage of those indications which she points out when left to exert her own powers; but which, when once destroyed or suppressed by an empiric of either kind, present themselves no more” (Brook, 2008: 109).

Wastelands, although intriguing as they are, do however need to add value to the city and therefore cannot be completely untouched as Ignasi de Solà-Morales suggests. Wastelands should be transformed with carefully retaining the spirit of the place. A solution should emphasise local attributes, characteristics and qualities and therefore create a local sense of place.

The solution and design proposed must be treated as a long term project that enriches a city through creative effort and imagination. The project must be phased over time to ensure flexibility in the future ultimately resulting in the design of an enigmatic landscape that is responsive, process driven and ecologically diverse and rich in character. Intervention on the site should focus on the process of transformation rather than the final product and this “welcomes decay of memory as the driving force for action” (Curulli, 2007: 36). The forces and elements that act on wastelands are too complex and challenging for immediate broad stroke solutions. A landscape is more than something to restore and manufacture to a sterilised state. The difference and uniqueness of enigmatic landscape to pedigree landscapes needs to be emphasised. By transforming a wasteland into an enigmatic landscape one provides different types of open spaces in a city, different to conventional parks. These projects should demonstrate how a landscape architect can “acknowledge the history of not only human use, but also abuse of the land” (Meyer, 2000: 230). Instead of returning the site to some image of an idealized nature thought to exist before human dumping, destroying, wasting and polluting, the sites unforeseen events are highlighted and reinforced.

Design guidelines to retain the unique qualities and character of wastelands:

- Approach
  - landscape urbanism principles of working first with ecological systems and landscape and then allowing develop-

ment to follow

- following a design process that focuses on character of place
- nature and ecological systems dominate over man
- allowing these sites to add value to the city but retaining their unique quality
- a long term solution
- working with the existing potential of the site
- Materials
  - use recycled materials
  - reusing materials
  - using robust materials
  - integration of nature and man-made
- Planting
  - focus on long term succession and rehabilitation
  - use of indigenous and endemic plant species
  - retaining species that add character and mystery to the site

Because of the importance and emphasis of the character of wastelands the design process used will be adapted and altered. Conventional design processes look at programme and site first and lastly deals with the spatial and experiential qualities (see illustration 39). It is a standard and very linear process. In this investigation the character of the site will lead almost all of the design decisions. The experiential and spatial qualities will be explored first, with a programme being accidentally assigned to the design at the end of the process (see illustration 40 and 41). *Therefore the design is not programme specific and programme is not forced.* This process is more organic and tends to grow naturally from one aspect to the other. The potentials of the site will guide the process. In the following chapters the city of Pretoria will be the area under investigation. More specifically, the Pretoria CBD and Pretoria West will be examined. The city will be tested on a planning level by first mapping the existing open spaces and then layering this with a map of the wastelands to obtain an understanding of existing healthy nodes and potential nodes. Thereafter an open space network and urban framework for the city will be proposed. The city analysis will provide potential sites to further the investigation in terms of the spatial and experiential levels.

### Diagram summary of theory

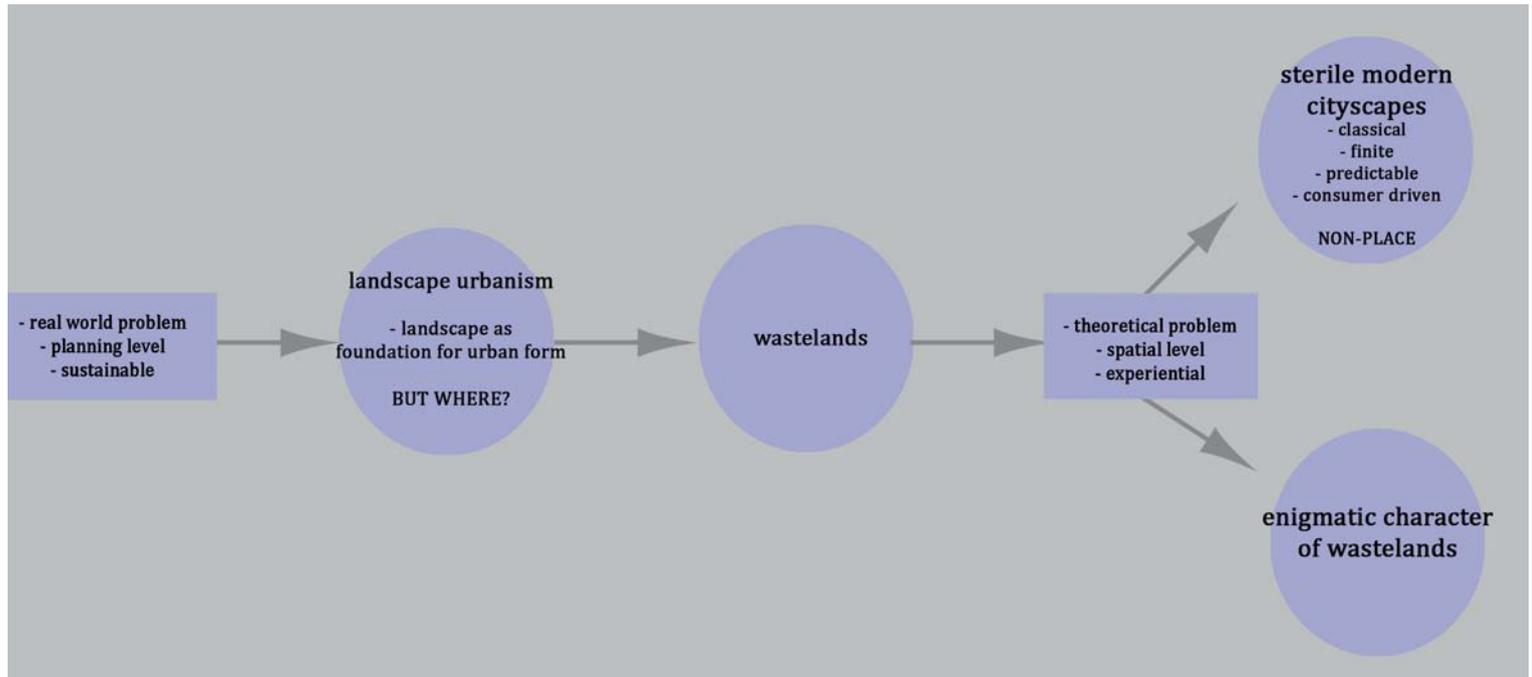


Illustration 38: Diagrammatic summary of theory

### Design process

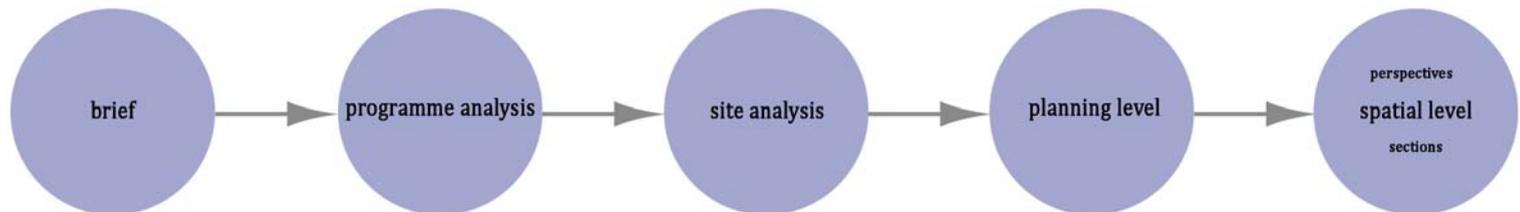


Illustration 39: Conventional design process

02 THEORETICAL INVESTIGATION

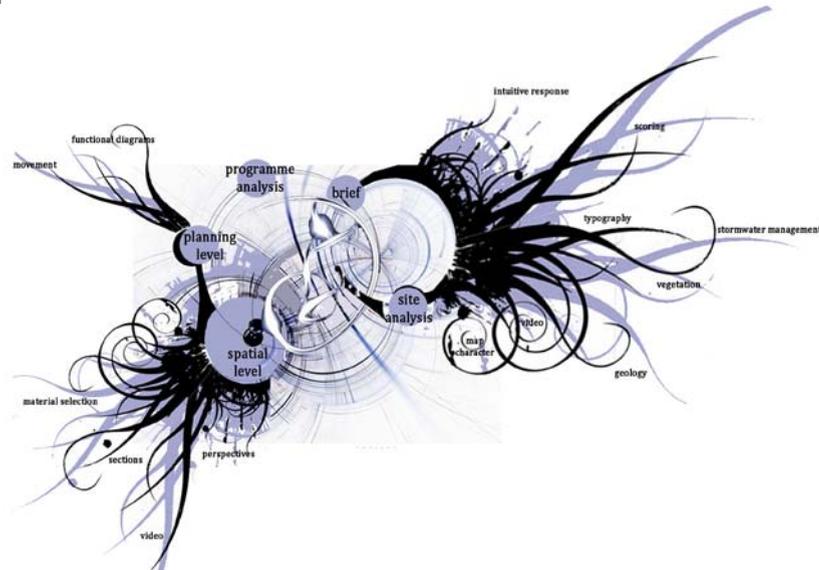


Illustration 40: Proposed organic design process

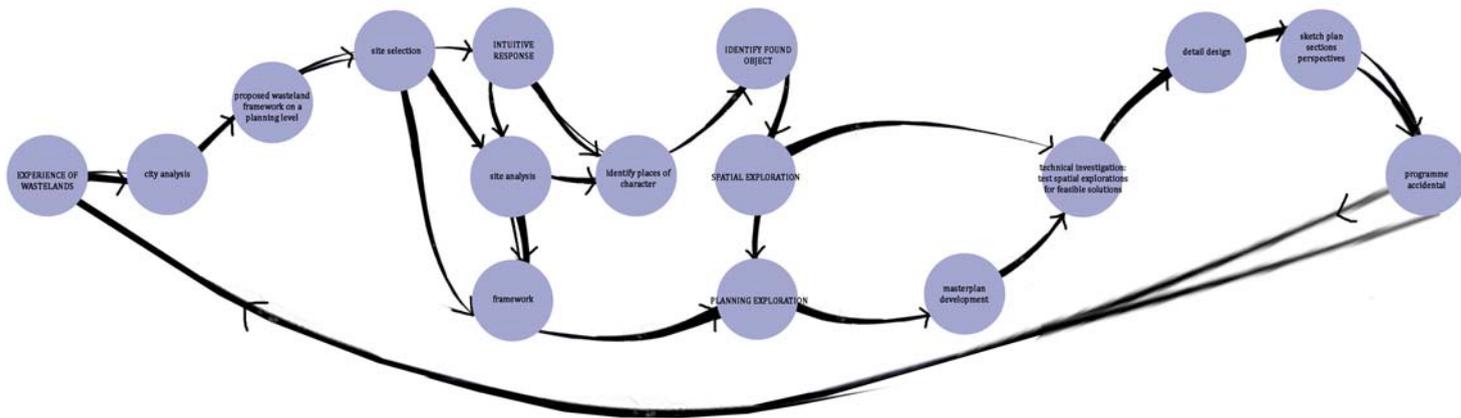


Illustration 41: Proposed design process