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**School of Architecture, Planning & Landscape
Global Urban Research Unit
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Electronic Working Paper No 6

**Can a Landscape be a Work of Art?
An appraisal of Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe's theory of
landscape aesthetics**

**Previously published in June 1994 as Working Paper No. 36
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ABSTRACT.

Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe is one of the most important landscape architects of the century and one of the few practitioners to have produced a theory of landscape design of any philosophical stature. This paper uses Jellicoe's theory as a jumping off point for an inquiry into the grounds for considering any piece of landscape design as a work of art. Various theories of art, including Imitation Theory, Formalist Theories and the Institutional Theory, are considered. It is argued that Jellicoe's theory most resembles the Communication Theory of Art advanced by Tolstoy at the turn of the century, and is subject to many of its defects. The paper concludes that the conditions proposed in Jellicoe's theory cannot be considered as necessary or sufficient for a landscape to qualify as a work of art. Nevertheless it may be entirely appropriate, in many cases, to regard designed landscapes as artworks.

ISBN 0 905770 269

CAN A LANDSCAPE BE A WORK OF ART?

An Appraisal of Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe's Theory of Landscape Aesthetics.

Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe has been hailed as the doyen of landscape architects. His career as a designer spans seven decades and includes, alongside commissions from millionaires and royalty, such pinnacles as the design for the John F. Kennedy Memorial at Runnymede and his current undertaking, the 25 acre Moody Historical Gardens, which are taking shape on a salt marsh near Galveston, Texas.

Jellicoe's career as a designer has been buttressed by a second as a writer. Profiling Jellicoe for the Royal Academy Magazine, Rowan Moore suggests that virtually alone he has "resurrected landscape design as a serious art form, as something to be treated on a par with painting." (Moore, 1993)

If this is so, it is really rather extraordinary, because very few practicing landscape architects in Britain (or elsewhere?) would claim to be artists, and even if they did, few of them could substantiate such a claim. In this paper I shall use Jellicoe's theories as the jumping off point for an inquiry into the possibility of landscape architecture being considered as a form of art. What sort of conditions have to be met if a designed landscape is also to be a work of art? Jellicoe's theory will be put under the closest scrutiny, not in an effort to debunk it, but rather to say exactly what kind of theory it is, to find out what preconditions one must accept in order to hold it, and what consequences then follow from it.

Jellicoe has never written a direct treatise on landscape design theory in the manner of Repton's *"Enquiry into the Changes in Landscape Gardening,"* or Knight's *"Enquiry into the Principles of Taste "*. We have instead the three volumes of his *Studies in Landscape Design* (Jellicoe, 1956, 1966, 1970), a collection of papers based on various lectures and addresses given in the course of his fruitful career. The *Guelph Lectures on Landscape Design* (Jellicoe, 1983) provide another important source. Sir Geoffrey's theories are woven through these studies as incomplete threads. Part of my purpose is to follow these strands, unknit them where necessary, and see whether the rope they form is indeed sufficiently strong to haul landscape architecture alongside the recognised fine arts. Inevitably this project is going to sail into the reefs and archipelagoes of philosophical aesthetics, for Jellicoe employs many assumptions and arguments that are of philosophical interest.

The most complete statement of Jellicoe's theory is to be found in a speech entitled *Landscape from Art*, which he delivered to the Institute of Contemporary Arts in 1961 and which is reproduced in *Studies in Landscape Design Volume II*.

LANDSCAPE FOLLOWS PAINTING.

This study is primarily concerned with the relationship between landscape design and painting, but from the outset, Jellicoe recognises that architecture and landscape design have much in common, for both must serve practical purposes, both must answer briefs, both are dependent upon the whims of clients and the performance of contractors. This makes them cumbersome in a way that painting is not. Consequently painters are more easily able to innovate and explore. As a self-declared Modernist, Jellicoe is wedded to the idea of progress in art. He sees painters as the scouts and path-finders of the artworld, while landscape architects must trundle along in their train. There would, for example, have been no English Landscape School had it not been for "the infinite patience of generations of painters, each advancing the study of the relationship of objects in space.." (Jellicoe, 1966)

Landscape architecture is never, according to this view, going to keep abreast of painting. What it must do, however, is to make sure that it stays firmly attached to the tow-rope, for Jellicoe believes that when landscape loses its connection with painting, as it did in the nineteenth century, it loses its way.

"We have in this country," writes Jellicoe, "at last reached a point when seamliness as an objective is no longer enough; we can and should make landscape as meaningful as painting." (Jellicoe, 1966) Now, we may wonder why Jellicoe saw fit to include the phrase "at last" in this sentence, for it implies that "seamliness" (whatever that may be) was at one time sufficient, and this prompts the question "why then and not now?". As a response to the Modern movement in art, Jellicoe's theory is readily applicable to many twentieth century landscape designs of note, but it does not sit so easily with designs that predate the explosion of Modernism. We shall touch upon this again, but first let us consider the issue of "meaningfulness". How do paintings, or landscapes, come to have such a quality?

Jellicoe's answer is inextricably bound up with his Modernism, which owes more to artists like Nicholson, Moore, Hepworth, Sutherland and Piper than it does to architects like Gropius, Mies, or Corbusier. Jellicoe is far from a functionalist, for his Modernism is much concerned with the exploration of the sub-conscious as this passage from *Landscape from Art* demonstrates;

"For the literary or intellectual meaning of a picture as seen photographically by the eye was subdued and even eliminated in order that the instincts should predominate. This is the basis of abstract art."

Jellicoe goes on to ask what these "instincts" are. His answer is that:

"The arts are preoccupied firstly with the new dimension of time and space that has been with us from the start of the century, and secondly with our own primitive origins in relation to these dimensions."

In the introduction to his *Guelph Lectures*, Jellicoe elaborates his theory to suggest that, not only is landscape design "a projection of the psyche into its natural environment", but that the psyche itself is hierarchically layered in a series of "transparencies" which relate to human evolution.

At the base is the primaevial level that he calls *Rock and Water*, so remote as to be "scarcely perceptible and certainly without a known influence on the psychology of the present day." Above this we jump to the level of the *Forester* which is identified with the time our ancestors spent in the sub tropical forests, and which, according to Jellicoe, accounts for all that is specifically sensuous and tactile in landscape design", including our love of flowers. Above this we have the level he calls the *Hunter*, which was formed on the African savannah and accounts for our liking for parkland, and on top of this we find the *Settler*, which represents the transition to an agricultural existence, and accounts for our love of mathematical order. Finally we reach the uppermost "transparency", our own, to which he gives the name *Voyager*. The voyage in question is not an outward one, but the inward one initiated by Freud and taken further and deeper by Jung.

In creating designed landscapes, says Jellicoe, we will be utilising these layers. A formal garden like Versailles appeals to the instincts of the Settler, whereas the sort of parkland created by "Capability" Brown awakens the Hunter within us. Jellicoe is less clear about the instinctive responses of the Voyager, for surely this journey must take us back through all previous levels down to Rock and Water? In the fourth lecture of the Guelph series, he refers to "the unreasoned fantasia of the subconscious in all their fun, oddity and awesomeness", but still he does not say what these might be. It is clear from his reference to "analytical psychology" in the Introduction (a term coined

by Jung and distinct from psycho-analysis) that he is thinking in terms of the "collective subconscious", in which case we might expect the archetypal symbols identified by Jung to appear throughout the history of landscape design, and in the work of Geoffrey Jellicoe in particular. This would be a worthwhile study, but it is not my present purpose.

We might, however, feel justified in asking why this subject matter should be so important to landscape design. In Lecture IV (*Towards a Landscape of Humanism*) Jellicoe offers one answer:

"It would seem that to project the into the environment the whole and not merely part of the mind of man, individual or collective, is the highest objective in the creation of landscape as an art."

To which the obvious question is "Why?".

Jellicoe's probable answer may be found in *Landscape from Art*, where he writes that:

"the effect upon human beings is the ultimate objective of all landscape design, whether rural or urban. To obtain this impact we have already established that it is necessary to have subconscious as well as conscious appeal."

Jellicoe believes that for landscape architecture to function as art, the rational design process, concerned with the technical aspects of answering a brief, must be accompanied by a parallel design process in which the sub-conscious is somehow tapped. "Without this second appeal," he writes, "the design would remain seemly but not in any sense a work of art." He then provides, by way of example, accounts of the design processes for the landscape works associated with a nuclear power station at Oldbury on Severn and the nuclear research station at Harwell.

THE APPEAL TO THE SUB-CONSCIOUS.

I do not want to get involved in questions concerning the accuracy or efficacy of Jellicoe's psychological model, still less in an assessment of the standing of Jungian psychology. What is significant for this inquiry is Jellicoe's claim that without an appeal to the subconscious, landscape design cannot be art. Presumably, since landscape architecture follows painting, he holds the same view about the latter. It is not enough to produce a "seemly" or satisfying arrangement of colours or shapes. What is necessary is some form of communication from the sub-conscious. The process goes like this;

1. The artist must somehow penetrate his or her own subconscious.
2. The contents discovered in this exploration must somehow be represented in the work. In the case of Jellicoe's own landscape work, this has very often involved some kind of symbolism or allegory.
3. It is not enough for these contents simply to be expressed. They must be communicable, for the "ultimate purpose" is an effect (presumably beneficial) upon human beings.

It is clear that Jellicoe regards this process as a necessary condition of making landscape that can be considered as art, and the general direction of his argument would suggest that he holds the same to be true for painting. It is not so clear whether he considers that such a process is also a sufficient condition, or whether an artist or designer could succeed in effecting such a communication from the subconscious and yet fail to make a work of art.

THEORIES OF ART.

Philosophical aesthetics already contains a number of well articulated theories about what may constitute a work of art. These can be summarised under four headings;

1. Art consists in the representation or imitation of nature.
2. Art is whatever provides an aesthetic experience.
3. Art is whatever the "artworld" thinks it is.
4. Art is a vehicle for the expression and communication of feeling.

Jellicoe's theory fits most readily into the last category. It bears many similarities to the theory which Tolstoy expressed in his book *What Is Art?* (Tolstoy, 1930). Like Tolstoy's theory it has some serious shortcomings, but before we examine these, it will be worth looking at some of the alternative theories in relation to the possibility that landscape design might be considered an art form.

ART AS IMITATION.

The idea that art is representational, that it mimics some natural state of affairs, is found in Plato's philosophy and was taken over, more or less wholesale, by Aristotle. The artist imitates nature, which, in the context of Plato's broader metaphysics, is in any case a pale imitation of the world of ideal Forms. One consequence of this view is that the more a painting resembles its subject, the better it must be, although, as an approach to what Plato considered to be reality, painting occupies a much lower place in his esteem than mathematics. When Charles Batteaux established the modern system of the "fine arts" in 1746 he took the view that art consisted in "the imitation of beautiful nature", and he thought that certain art forms - music, poetry, painting, sculpture and the dance - were particularly suited to this role and so to be distinguished from the "mechanical arts" (discussed in Kristeller, 1951). But although the idea of "a good likeness" persists in conversations about art, particularly at the popular level, mimetic theories now seem extremely narrow and naive, not to say lacking in explanatory force, because only a fraction of the paintings hung on the walls of the world's art galleries approach a photographically realistic representation of their subjects, and only a fraction of these would be ranked among the best.

Imitation theories of this unsophisticated sort seem totally inadequate as an explanation of the aesthetic merits of landscape design, for though it is true that many designed landscapes particularly in the Chinese, Japanese and English traditions - draw their inspiration

from the study of nature, none of them sets out to copy nature in every particular. Humphrey Repton makes this clear in the first of his requisites for the perfection of Landscape Gardening; "First, it must display the natural beauties, and hide the natural defects of every situation." (Repton, 1969 [1806]) His purpose is to improve nature, not merely to copy it. It is true that some contemporary landscape practice, particularly that concerned with land reclamation, habitat creation and the mitigation of the impact of development, is concerned with the simulation of naturally occurring landscapes. In such cases, landscape designers are often most successful when they leave no evidence of their involvement. Such landscapes can certainly be "taken for nature", but more than this, they take their place within nature. We would probably wish to praise their creators for their technical skill, but we would not be inclined to say that any of these landscapes were works of art. These are exactly the sort of landscapes that Jellicoe has in mind when he talks about making things "seemly".

A more sophisticated form of imitation theory suggests that the reality which is presented in a successful work of art is not the superficial reality of the photograph, but some deeper truth. Even in Plato's day a distinction was drawn between portrait painters who tried to depict the character of their subjects and those who did not. On this view, artists do not just try to copy appearances, they try to penetrate them. A related view, put by Gombich in "*Visual Discovery Through Art*" (Gombich, 1960), is that artists help us to see the world. At a simple level, most people would accept that an artist might bring some aspect of reality to their attention of which they had previously been unaware. At a more profound level, Gombich suggests that artists do not just copy reality, in some sense they create it.

The relationship between visual art and the world is complicated. As Hursthouse explains it, "Pictures change our way of seeing the world; pictures are part of the world, so pictures change our way of seeing pictures." The situation becomes even more complicated when we try understand the role that landscape architects have played in shaping perceptions.

Jellicoe clearly subscribes to the idea that painters do not merely represent, they also discover. Consider this passage from *Landscape from Art*,

"The English park of the time was composed mainly of undulations, trees, and water, and its essential characteristic was an appreciation of that same unity in nature for which the earlier painters had been seeking."

Jellicoe does not name the painters in question, but he probably has in mind such names as Claude Lorraine, Poussin and Salvator Rosa. These great artists studied nature and then the great English Landscape Gardeners studied their paintings. Through their study, they learnt, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say formulated, the means to "improve" existing landscapes.

The process is represented in figure 1.

The Landscape Gardener would be presented with an unimproved landscape (A). Part of his understanding of this landscape, and certainly his ability to conceive of how it might be "improved", would be conditioned by his knowledge of landscape painting (B). Though these paintings would be creative works, involving principles of composition at the very least, and very probably mythical or allegorical associations as well, they in turn would be grounded in the close observation of the spatial relationships actually to be found in nature (C).

There does not seem to be much room in this scheme of things for landscape designers to make their own discoveries, perhaps by real muck-shifting rather than by drawing. "*Landscape from Art*" seems to imply that landscape design must always follow painting.

This theory, however, seems to give most or all of the credit for creativity to the artists, for it is their "infinite patience" that has penetrated nature, not that of the landscape designers. The question then arises whether these improved landscapes can be considered works of art? If they are, it surely cannot be because they resemble nature? They are supposed to be an improvement upon it. Nor can it be because they resemble the paintings of Claude et al, for to create a landscape which looks like a known picture is surely to exercise technical skill, rather than to produce a work of art. If we want to maintain that these landscapes, or some of them, are works of art, we shall have to find better grounds than imitation theory.

I suspect that Jellicoe would be very eager for some at least of the works of Kent, Brown, Repton and their peers to rank as artworks, but if it is difficult to see how they could do according to imitation theory, it is not much easier under of Jellicoe's own

theory, for however well they may embody the spatial principles to be found in great landscape painting, do they, in themselves, effect the communication from sub-conscious to sub-conscious that Jellicoe has elsewhere claimed is essential if landscape is to be art? These "spatial principles" would only make sense, in Jellicoe's later view (as expressed in the Guelph lectures) if they could be said to spring from one of the "transparencies" of the psyche, presumably that of the Hunter. This might account for the aesthetic appeal of such landscapes, but do they contain any of the "fantasia of the subconscious" that would appeal to the Voyager, and without such elements can Jellicoe say that they are art? To be consistent, he surely cannot.

AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE.

Having taken a look at imitation theory and found it wanting, what of those theories which suggest that art is whatever provides an aesthetic experience? Although we respond to paintings, sculptures, symphonies, great buildings, gardens, and so on, in a variety of ways, we would nevertheless wish to say that many of these experiences are aesthetic experiences, and it is natural to ask what causes them? Is it some causal property that they share that makes them all works of art? As the critic, Clive Bell, put it, in 1915, either we mean by works of art a class of objects having "some quality common and peculiar to all members of this class" or else "we gibber" (Bell, 1915).

We often talk about being moved by the beauty of a painting, a piece of music or a view, so beauty is an obvious contender for the role of common and defining quality. This leads us straight into the contentious heartlands of philosophical aesthetics, for what, when one comes to think about it, is beauty? Aristotle thought it consisted of order, symmetry and definiteness, qualities which the mathematical sciences possessed to a special degree. We can recognise Jellicoe's fourth "transparency" here, that of the Settler.

Hogarth conversely thought that the constant rule in painting was to avoid regularity. His "line of beauty" was a waving line consisting of "two curves contrasted". There have been numerous attempts to identify such formal qualities, but there is clearly much room for disagreement, not only over whether object A possesses quality X, but also about what it is about X that makes us value it in the first place.

David Hume called into question the whole idea of looking for beauty within the objects themselves. He considers the circle, a figure often thought to possess a particular beauty.

"Euclid has fully explained every quality of the circle, but has not, in any proposition, said a word of its beauty. The reason is evident. Beauty is not a quality of the circle.....It is only the effect that the figure produces upon a mind, whose particular fabric or structure renders it susceptible of such sentiments." (Lenz, 1965).

On such a view, questions about whether or not objects, be they paintings or landscapes, are beautiful become empirical questions about the mental processes of those who perceive them. It suggests that beauty really is "within the eye of the beholder", and that questions of aesthetics could be solved by questionnaire survey. If art is about no more than creating things which people find beautiful, we could proceed in an empirical and business-like way. Landscape designers could become artists simply by learning to give the public what it desires. On such a view, it really would not matter if these preferences were the consequence of deep psychological processes, cultural conditioning, or mere fashion.

On this subjectivist view, all opinions carry the same value. It can make no sense to talk about one person's taste being better than another's, or about one person being right in an aesthetic judgement and another wrong, but this is a consequence that most commentators have deplored. Hume, indeed, wished to avoid this conclusion and

argued that rules of art could be established by general observation "concerning what has been universally found to please in all countries and all ages." (Lenz, 1965). Bad taste would simply be a deviation from this standard. Kant disagreed. To call something beautiful, he said, wasn't just to describe what people would happen to feel in its presence, but to say what they *ought* to feel.

While the experience of beauty may make us feel good, it is a much stronger claim to say, as Hume does, that beauty actually *is* a feeling. This seems to take us a long way away from our normal use of the word, where beauty is certainly ascribed to objects rather than to perceiving minds. A more sophisticated version of this approach is to suggest that beauty is some quality of objects that can produce within us certain kinds of feelings. This causal view was rejected by Wittgenstein in his *Lectures on Aesthetics* (Wittgenstein, 1966) When we describe an object as beautiful, he maintained, we are giving a description of the object itself, not some power it has with regard to our sensations.

Beauty, in any case, cannot be a necessary or sufficient condition for a work of art. Wilderness areas, or those managed landscapes that we call natural, can be very beautiful, but we would not generally think of them as works of art, though we can and do consider some paintings of them to be. Even where a landscape designer has intervened primarily to create aesthetic effects, we would in most cases not say that he or she has produced a work of art. On the other hand, galleries contain many paintings and sculptures which would not commonly be described as beautiful. Picasso's *Guernica*, whatever its other merits, is hardly a beautiful picture.

Even when the concept of beauty occupied centre stage, it had to share the billing with other concepts, particularly that of the sublime. According to Burke, beauty and sublimity were incompatible opposites, yet a work of art might embrace either one or the other. This alone is sufficient grounds for saying that beauty cannot be an essential quality of a work of art. Indeed, many recent writers, including Read, Wittgenstein and Passmore, have helped to de-throne beauty from its pre-eminent position in the discussion of works of art. This does not mean that the word does not have its uses, but attempts to define beauty, and to define art in terms of beauty, are likely to fail. The landscape architect who wishes to become an artist will derive little assistance from the concept.

It is worth noting in passing that Jellicoe accounts for the Sublime and the Beautiful by attributing them to the experience of the Hunter in the mountains or the savannah. Once again, this biologically based account may explain some of our feelings about landscape, but it is not easy to square it with his general idea of what is required for a landscape design to be a work of art.

The dethronement of beauty did not spell the end of attempts to identify formal qualities in art. As we have seen, some thinkers have taken the view that beauty consisted of form; others have put it forward as an alternative to beauty. The presence, or absence, of form has been used to distinguish between works of art and objects that are merely agreeable. There is a parallel here with Jellicoe's distinction between landscape design which is art and that which is merely making things seemly, though his criterion is the rather different one of "meaningfulness".

SENSORY EXPERIENCE.

In *The Sense of Beauty* (1961 [1896]), Santayana discusses three levels of aesthetic experience. The first, which he calls sensory, is the sort of experience one has when one feels a cool wind on one's cheek on a hot day, or paddles in the sea. Steven Bourassa suggests that the best definition of sensory aesthetics is a negative one - "it is a matter of pleasurable experience that does not rely upon formal structures or other symbolic values." (Bourassa, 1991). Nature abounds with the opportunities for such

experiences, and it is well within the landscape architect's power to provide more. Jellicoe's design for Shute House, for example, includes a series of waterfalls designed to produce different notes as the water tumbles over the various cascades. Gardens provide enhanced opportunities for pleasurable aesthetic experiences of colour, scent, texture and so on. Jellicoe attributes such pleasures to our primitive development in the primaeval forest, but without explaining what evolutionary mechanisms might have been at work. In any case, if gardens awake the Forester within us, this alone is surely not enough, on Jellicoe's own view, to make a garden into a work of art.

FORMAL QUALITIES.

Santayana's second category is concerned with the formal qualities of objects. We have already come across examples of such properties in our discussion of Aristotle; order, symmetry and definiteness, for example. Others might be balance, harmony, complexity (these three actually feature on a subjective check-list used by the Countryside Commission for landscape assessment [CCD18, 1987]).

Though different thinkers may produce different lists, there are many that would follow the line taken by Kant, that it is only formal properties that count in consideration of beauty. Mere sensory qualities, like colour, texture and so on, could be agreeable, but could not be the objects of judgements of taste.

"In painting, and in fact all the formative arts, in architecture and horticulture, so far as fine arts, the *design* is what is essential. Here is not what gratifies in sensation but merely what pleases by its form, that is the fundamental prerequisite for taste." (Kant, 1952)

In his influential book, *Art* (1915), Clive Bell amplified this thought by making "Significant Form" the defining quality of all works of art. He wrote;

"- significant form..lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and certain relations of forms, stir our aesthetic emotions. These relations and combinations of lines and colours, these aesthetically moving form, I call "Significant Form"; and "Significant Form" is the only quality common to all works of art."

Bell does think significant form is to be found in nature;

"It seems to me possible, though by no means certain, that created form moves us profoundly because it expresses the emotion of its creator. Perhaps the lines and colours of a work of art convey to us something that the artist felt. If this be so, it will explain the curious but undeniable fact....that what I call material beauty (eg. the wing of a butterfly) does not move most of us in at all the same way as a work of art moves us. It is beautiful form, but it is not significant form. It moves us, but it does not move us aesthetically."

Bell goes on to argue that significant form is the expression of "a peculiar emotion felt for reality". An artist's only interest in things is that they provide the means to achieve this "particular kind of emotion", but this, rather paradoxically, only occurs when the artist is able to see them as ends, as things in themselves, "for it is only when they are *perceived* as end that they *become* the means to this emotion."

In his concern to bolster a particular approach to painting, Bell has little to say about natural landscapes and nothing about gardens or designed landscapes, but he does discuss landscape as a subject for pictures.

"It is only when we cease to regard the objects in a landscape as means to anything that we can feel the landscape artistically. But when we do succeed in regarding the

parts of a landscape as ends in themselves - as pure forms, that is to say - the landscape becomes ipso facto a means to a peculiar, aesthetic state of mind."

Art, according to Bell, is akin to religion because it concerns itself with "emotional reality." It must not concern itself with practical purposes. This single-mindedness is easier to achieve in the world of painting than in architecture or landscape architecture. Bell does not discuss design as a discipline, but to be consistent he would no doubt have to deny that its products could be considered as art, even though designers might be concerned with form as well as with function. When landscape architects manipulate landform, they may conceivably do it "as a means to a peculiar emotion" but other practical and scientific considerations also play their part. Jellicoe recognises this because he suggests that there are two processes going on in tandem, a rational one and a shadowy unconscious one.

Bell's theory does not rule out representational painting. A picture of Borrowdale may move us aesthetically, but as a result of its form, rather than its subject matter. But it seems very odd to say that the same formal qualities cannot be experienced by standing in the middle of Borrowdale and just looking. It does seem, when one reads Bell, that he is suggesting the artist is somehow needed as an intermediary. What would the landscape architect have achieved if he were able to create a new landscape that had all the same formal qualities of the Borrowdale view? Would he have created a work of art, or just a semi-natural object with pleasing but insignificant form?

It is possible to stretch Bell's theory to accommodate those landscape designers who have been able to place purely aesthetic considerations ahead of all others. This presumably would set their work apart from nature, and certain landscapes, produced in this way, might then qualify as works of art. But Bell's theory has, in any case, been severely criticised as an example of vicious circularity. If the only thing that makes form significant is that it evokes a particular sort of emotion, we are entitled to ask how we recognise this aesthetic emotion. The unsatisfactory answer is by the presence of significant form! The two ideas are defined in relation to one another.

Moreover, Bell's theory over simplifies the nature of aesthetic experience, for it is not really possible to throw a cordon around formal properties and say that they are all that matters in art. Considerations of the symbolic meaning of a work, its context, its place in the artists' canon, its whole connection with the world of human affairs, must all be given their weight.

There are faint echoes of Bell's thinking in Jellicoe's writings, but in the place of the "peculiar emotion" felt and expressed by the creator of a work with significant form, we have the idea that the important quality comes out of the creator's sub-conscious. Jellicoe is probably closer in spirit to those who have suggested that aesthetic experience, far from being separate from everyday life, is inextricably bound up with it.

In rejecting Bell's theory, we need not take the further step of rubbishing the notion of formal qualities, for surely we do recognise and value such things as unity, complexity, symmetry and so on, whether we find them in nature or in works of art. But to say that there is such a thing as proportion, or symmetry, or mystery, is to say nothing about why we value such things.

We have already considered Jellicoe's answer to this question, and it would seem that he agrees with Steven Bourassa who, in *The Aesthetics of Landscape*, suggests that if there is such a thing as a formal aesthetics, it must be transpersonal and trans-cultural, in other words it must be rooted in our biology. I imagine that Jellicoe is fully aware of the scientific attempts that have been made to explain our aesthetic preferences for certain kinds of landscape in terms of those landscapes which would have been

conducive to our prehistoric survival as a species, indeed the later elaboration of his theories may have been a response to them.

Gordon Orians, a behavioural ecologist, put forward the so-called Savanna hypothesis, which suggested that the reason modern human beings like parks is because their ancient forebears evolved on the plains of Africa, which parks are said to resemble. (Penning-Roswell, 1986) These plains were rich in resources, so we have come to associate them, at a very deep level, with our well-being and continuance. Jay Appleton, meanwhile, analysed paintings of landscapes and reached broadly similar conclusions, arguing that we respond positively to symbols of prospect and refuge (Appleton, 1975) In terms of our survival these allowed us to be seen without being seen. Assuming that there is some truth in theories such as these, it follows that landscape architects can contrive landscapes which tap into these reservoirs of primitive experience. Landscapes which are able to do this will be pleasing, but, once again, we can ask "would they be art?"

SYMBOLISM AND MEANING.

Santayana's third level of aesthetic experience was concerned with the manner in which objects can express symbolic values. Bourassa argues that all values that cannot be explained by our biological origins must come into this category, and furthermore that many formal systems of aesthetics, for example the Golden Section, are best understood in this way.

In *The Landscape of Allegory* (Studies in Landscape Design Vol. III.) Jellicoe quotes with approval a passage written by Kenneth Woodbridge about Henry Hoare's creation at Stourhead in Wiltshire;

"...art is a symbol making activity, giving form to inward states because only in this way can they be experienced and assimilated. Symbolic forms, rich in associations, crystallize ideas and feelings which would otherwise escape definition; their existence enables individuals, whose own vague thoughts and feelings are otherwise unformulated, to participate in a collective ritual with others..."

The Jungian tenor of this is unmistakable. As we have seen, Jellicoe believes that the significant communication must come from the sub-conscious. It cannot be forced. He is particularly sympathetic to the idea that those things that are of value in art are primordial. He points, for example, to the continuing power of the mandala and to the "mysterious and eternal attraction of rounded hills". He further believes that self-conscious, rational attempts to create meaningful symbolism are doomed to failure. In the introduction to Volume III of his *Studies in Landscape Design*, he states that he has made discoveries about his own designs after, rather than before, the first sketch. "The world of ideas that must lie behind any object of art seems to exist independently of the subject, but it is fugitive and it is better to let it come in its own time and of its own volition." (Jellicoe, 1970)

If we are to understand art as that which provides us with an aesthetic experience, for Jellicoe this is to be on the receiving end of a communication from the collective sub-conscious. This is heady stuff, not greatly removed from Bell's parallel between art and religion, and the role that the perception of significant form can play in ecstatic experience.

However it is one thing to explain certain kinds of aesthetic experience in terms of receiving this sort of symbolic communication, and another to suggest, as Jellicoe does in *Landscape from Art*, that there *has* to be this sort of communication for anything to be a work of art.

THE INSTITUTIONAL THEORY OF ART.

Before looking at communication theories of art in more detail, we must look at one radical alternative to all the theories examined so far. Some philosophers, having rummaged in vain for a single property defining all works of art in the bran tub of qualities, feelings and experiences, yet wishing to maintain, as did Bell, that some such common property must exist, have suggested that it must be some kind of "non-exhibited" property. George Dickie claims to have discovered such a quality. He suggests that what all artworks have in common is their acceptance by the "artworld", by which he means the social institution that consists of the totality of artists, producers, gallery directors, critics, connoisseurs, art historians and so on. Indeed "every person who sees himself as a member of the artworld is thereby a member" (Dickie, 1974).

Nothing could be further from the mysticism and transcendentalism of Bell or Jellicoe. On one hand, Institutional Theory seems to have almost cynically missed the point about art; on the other, its explanatory force can be quite seductive. It explains, for example, how new art forms, such as photography or film, can come into being, and it how problematic works like Duchamp's "ready-mades" (the urinal that became Fountain, for example!) can come to be considered works of art. It might also be invoked to explain how gardening, which was regarded as a fine art in the eighteenth century, is no longer thought of in this way today. Jellicoe's singlehanded attempt to re-establish landscape architecture as a fine art is easy to explain in terms of a propaganda campaign directed at the "artworld".

According to Institutional Theory, what makes something into a work of art is a speech-act or performance analogous to christening; "I name this a work of art." The very act of hanging a painting in a gallery makes it into a work of art. However, a suitable institutional setting is required before the performance can succeed. A gallery director's utterance will succeed where the lollipop lady's will not. There is no reason why a designed landscape should not be accepted as a work of art. It would help if the designer intended that it should be one, and said as much, but even this is not necessary, if persons of sufficient authority can be found who regard it as such. It would seem, purely as a matter of fact, that many of the landscapes designed by Geoffrey Jellicoe have indeed realised this level of acceptance within the artworld.

However, the inadequacies of the Institutional Theory start to appear when we consider paintings or poems that have never been exhibited or published. It does not seem to follow that these cannot be works of art, simply because they have never been put forward for appreciation. On the other hand, to accept the Institutional Theory, implies that one can never question the status of anything exhibited in a gallery. Yet if we consider some of the pieces that have been exhibited, whether they be Carl Andre's bricks, or paintings by chimpanzees or very young children, we would not wish to say that anyone who questions whether these are art is thereby talking self-contradictory nonsense. The question of whether or not something is art is not settled simply by reference to the context it appears in.

Consider also the position of the gallery director who has to make the decisions about what to hang. The Institutional Theory will give him no guidance, because it says nothing about the traditional qualities of art. He will need reasons for selecting one piece rather than another, and all the Institutional Theory can tell him is that once he has decided, then the chosen piece will be the work of art! We may, like Geoffrey Jellicoe, wish to see more works of landscape architecture accepted as works of art by the artworld, but we will have to find reasons why that world should admit them. These reasons cannot be provided by the Institutional Theory.

ART AS COMMUNICATION.

As I suggested earlier, there is a strong parallel between Jellicoe's theory and the theory of art advanced by Tolstoy at the turn of the century. For Tolstoy an object was a work of art if and only if; it caused its audience to experience feelings; it was deliberately intended to by its creator; and its creator had personally lived through the experiences so aroused.

Tolstoy was a fervent Christian at the time he put this forward, and he supplemented his definition with a second requirement concerning the nature of the emotions to be conveyed. Worthwhile emotions were all those which in some way served to unite the brotherhood of man. Unworthy emotions were all those concerned with "pride, sexual desire and the weariness of the world." In its conflation of moral values with aesthetic ones, Tolstoy's theory is the antithesis of those formalist theories which set art apart from the rest of human affairs. If we were to accept Tolstoy's theory, many of the artworks which hang in the world's galleries would have to be banished to the cellars. Something very similar actually happened, though with a different ideological justification, in Soviet Russia.

Jellicoe's theory is similar to Tolstoy's but in the place of emotion there is some message from the collective subconscious (which presumably is felt rather than apprehended by the intellect). The transmission is subtle rather than obvious (here Jellicoe is at odds with Tolstoy who favoured art that was immediately understandable by children and untutored souls). Rather than serving human brotherhood, Jellicoe has written that landscape architecture should "reconcile the unchanging tempo of the natural world around us, which includes that of our bodies, with the increasing tempo of modern life resulting from scientific discovery and echoed in the sister arts" (Jellicoe, 1970). In other words, the underlying purpose of landscape design is therapeutic.

The first problem with Tolstoy's theory is that there are many works of art which do not seem to express strong feelings. There are many elegant and well-formed paintings or sonnets which we would generally consider to be works of art, which do not embody powerful sentiments. Tolstoy's definition of art is regulatory; it suggests which works ought, on his view, to be classified as art, not how the concept of art is actually used. If some of Geoffrey Jellicoe's statements are taken at face value, he seems to be taking a similar position, ruling out the possibility that landscapes which do not tap into the sub-conscious could ever be works of art.

A second problem with Tolstoy's theory is that it gives special weight to the subject matter of a work of art. If the latter is something that Tolstoy would ideologically approve of, the success of the work as art is assured. This is not how works of art are actually judged. Formal and technical qualities are weighed in the balance. The subject is important, but so is the manner in which it is handled. To be fair to Jellicoe, I do not think that he ever suggests, in parallel vein, that it is enough simply to communicate from the subconscious in the interests of psychic healing. His theory suggests how it is possible to make landscape into art, but it does not say that all such art will be equally good. Nevertheless we can say that while the ideational content of an artwork, whether a painting or a landscape, may count towards its aesthetic value, it can never be said to guarantee it.

If art is about communication then it would seem to matter whether or not the communication is effective. Telecommunication experts talk about the ratio of signal to noise. It could be said that in the case of a Jellicoe landscape the signal is the symbolic message from the unconscious, and that anything which obscures it is merely noise. Unauthorised additional planting, litter bins placed by an insensitive

client, graffiti..these are all readily understood as "noise", but the designer can also blur the signal with inappropriate features or gestures. This seems to provide us with a critical yardstick, but the problem is that we have no way of knowing whether the communication we have received is accurate or not. In the case of a radio transmission we could check our reception against the script or a transcript, but how, in the case of a designed landscape, are we to determine what the subconscious was really trying to tell us?

I think this is something which Jellicoe glosses over in his writings. He says that people who visit landscapes created in this way will come to realise in a few days time that they have been in the presence of something altogether deeper than they had realised at the time. This is the way that communication from subconscious, via landscape, to subconscious is effected. But we cannot *know* that anything has been communicated. We are on safer ground if we suggest a simple cause and effect relationship between the visit to the site and the later thoughts, feelings and reflections.

I do not mean to suggest that Jellicoe is wrong in believing in a subconscious, nor even to believe in a particular version of the subconscious. Where I think he may be wrong is in making this the rigid foundation stone of a theory of art, which in turn has to support a theory of landscape design.

The Jungian collective unconscious is a rich and illuminating idea, but I do not believe that it has been proved and it is hard to imagine what kind of experiment could ever be devised for the purpose. In discussing it we seem to be closer to the realm of religious experience than to that of science. Freud, after all, drew a quite different picture of the unconscious. Instead of a huddle of archetypes, he visualised the hydraulics of the ego and the id. Jellicoe does not seek to create Freudian symbols in his landscapes, nor does he seem in his writings to recognise the possible connotations of an obelisk or a grotto.

He does, on the other hand, employ several of the symbols referred to by Jung. In *The Landscape of Symbols* (Studies in Landscape Design Volume III) Jellicoe discusses the history of the cross, the circle and the spire, admitting in a footnote his debt to Jung's "*Man and his Symbols*" (1964). In the Jungian interpretation of dreams, animal forms often represent the Self. Many of Jellicoe's designs incorporate such elements, like the "prehistoric animal form" that lies beneath the hills at the Cadbury's factory at Moreton, Cheshire, or the fish shapes used both for the lake at Sutton Place and for the hills in the Brescia Park in Moderna, Italy (though Jellicoe's fish look like no one else's). The sinuous lake that flows through Hemel Hempstead takes the form of a serpent, another age-old symbol referred to by Jung.

It might be argued that there are many aspects of Jung's psychological system that do not appear in Jellicoe's work (I have, for example, found no references to the anima or the animus, or to archetypes like the Trickster, the Cosmic Man, or the Great Mother), but there are certainly enough references to prove that Jellicoe, at the very least, shares Jung's respectful, and even reverential, attitude towards symbolism and its place in human life.

However, the question that concerns me is not whether or not Jellicoe is a true Jungian. On that, let us take him at his word. My concern is that Jellicoe says we must all become Jungians if we want to have any chance of making landscapes that will be works of art. Just as I would wish to maintain that a painting can be a work of art even if it is not morally improving in Tolstoy's sense, I would wish to say that there can be landscapes which are works of art, even though they effect no communication from the sub-conscious of their designer. Indeed, as we can never *know* whether such a communication has taken place, even though we may suspect that it has, we cannot rely upon this as a criterion of landscape design as art form.

ON DEFINITIONS.

We have examined a number of theories of art which have all attempted to define one essential characteristic which can be used to decide whether or not an object can be truthfully called a work of art. In his later work, Wittgenstein disagreed fundamentally with all attempts at such essentialist definitions, whether of beauty, of art, or - famously in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953) - of language, tools, and games.

Let us take the example of tools. Is there any one quality the possession of which makes one thing a tool and another not? Perhaps all tools are to do with cutting? What about a hammer? Perhaps all tools are used to alter materials. What about a ruler? Wittgenstein concludes that there is no quality which is common to all tools, but that there is a crisscrossing network of similarities which he calls "family resemblances".

The idea of "family resemblances" has proved a very powerful notion, which can be applied in all sorts of areas. It can certainly be applied to the concept of art. It suggests that the whole search for a defining quality is mistaken, whether it is called beauty, or sublimity, or anything else, and whether it is found in objects or within the minds of those that perceive them. On the contrary, there is likely to be a whole family of similarities between those things that we call works of art. Some will stir particular feelings, some will not; some we might call beautiful or sublime, others not; some - and here let us remember Jellicoe - will delve into our collective subconscious, and some will not.

There are those who have found Wittgenstein's theory of family relationships altogether too open-ended. Everything, they say, resembles something else. Yet we are able to use the word "family" well enough, even though human relationships are extremely complicated, families overlap and individuals can belong to several at once. If we accept Wittgenstein's theory, it follows that there may be many ways in which an object, or for that matter a landscape, could come to be seen as a work of art. Some will have better claims than others. No one could argue with the statement that Monopoly is a game; it involves competition between a number of players, the use of dice, an element of chance, an element of skill, and so on, all of which are features we recognise in a number of other games. Pulling the wings off flies has less of a claim to the status of a game, although, presumably, it too involves the exercise of skill and gives some sort of pleasure to at least one of the participants. We might wish to say that a garden like Stourhead, which involves the arrangement of earth, water, planting and buildings to create an idealised landscape and which also incorporates an allegory based upon Virgil's Aeneid has a strong claim to be considered as a work of art, but that the careful arrangement of landform and planting around a reservoir such as Kielder Water does not have enough of the recognisable attributes to qualify. Which schemes are works of art, which are not, and which lie upon the borderline will remain a matter of judgement. Perhaps, as Steven Bourassa has suggested, we need professional landscape critics, just as we need professional art or theatre critics.

In making our judgement, one of the things we will have to take into account, is the intention of the landscape architect. Practitioners are often called upon by clients or employers to tidy up or "make seemly" a visually displeasing piece of land. Many landscape architects do this kind of work for their entire careers, without once attempting to make design into art.

In *Art or Bunk* (1989), Ian Ground suggests that; "Works of art are not simply artefacts which have been deliberately made in order to provoke aesthetic interest.

They are artefacts, the essential interest of which consists in this fact." On this view, it is not enough for an object to be aesthetically interesting; to be a work of art it must also be aesthetically intelligible, which is to say there must be possible answers to questions about why the work of art was made to look the way it does. Such answers might include explanations in terms of the communication of emotions or of sub-conscious contents, but they will not be restricted to such explanations.

JELlicoe'S THEORY.

What I have attempted to show is that if Jellicoe's theory of landscape architecture as art form is taken in its strictest form, which is to say that it lays down a necessary condition for the creation of works of art, it is untrue. It is also untrue if it is thought to be laying down a sufficient condition. However, this is emphatically not to say that works of art in landscape cannot be created by tapping into the sub-conscious. Indeed it may be true that this is one of the most effective ways of doing so. Jellicoe's theory is thus better understood as a personal belief system than as a general theory in philosophical aesthetics.

Nothing I have written should be taken as negative criticism of Geoffrey Jellicoe as a designer or an artist. On the contrary, I find his work inspiring. If I have done him any disservice, it consists in taking an artist's ideas about his medium as if they were a paper in a philosophical journal, and for this I apologise.

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