

# 2002 Vol 2 Issue No. 04 — Regional Landscapes

> EDITORIAL



**Cover image:** "On the rocks"

The articles before you on the theme of 'Regional Landscapes' present discussions of a fairly wide range of landscapes – with some notable absences. The articles range from a discussion of landscape painting and photography of 'natural' or 'wilderness' landscapes outside the city to discussions of urban and suburban landscapes inside the city and to photography of the city. They also range from discussions of representations of landscapes in painting, film and photography to objects found in the landscape such as rocks. Cutting across these discussions is a concern in several articles with the gendered construction of landscapes, especially as

found in, and produced by, the masculinist European landscape aesthetic which feminises the land.

Naturally, or predictably, in a journal published in Australia there is a predominance of discussions about Australian landscapes, with the notable exception of one article about China. This article draws attention to the fact that the construction of a national landscape is essential to the formation and maintenance of national identity and an integral part of nationalism. Perhaps unpredictably or unnaturally for a journal published in Australia there is a notable absence of discussion about Aboriginal Country. All Australian landscapes – urban, suburban, extra-urban – are Aboriginal Country.

Curiously for a journal published in Australia all the articles are by either current or former residents of Western Australia. This points to an alarming lack of concern with landscapes, especially regional landscapes, in and by the rest of the country. Politically this is alarming as regional Australia is the heartland of the nation and the primary support base of the federal Liberal/National Party Coalition government. Environmentally this is also alarming, as Cultural Studies academics in eastern Australia don't seem to be sufficiently interested in their own bioregion to want to write about it or its significance.

Cultural Studies is both the product and victim of the 'two cultures' divide that assigns nature and the environment to the hard and life sciences, and relegates culture and the arts to the humanities and social sciences. Science has colonised nature epistemologically and institutionally – and it does not want its empire to be decolonised. It is up to Cultural Studies to do it. The articles assembled here go some way to doing just that and I commend them to you for that.

Rod Giblett  
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