



Bulletin

International Association for Landscape Ecology

SENSE OF PLACE

by Hannes Palang¹

Some years ago I was recording the memories of my relatives about Vääлма, the farm (Fig. 1) where they grew up. The place was abandoned in 1963, and ten years later the house was taken apart and moved to Rakvere, North Estonia, where one of my granduncles re-erected it. Vääлма is now an overgrown meadow in the middle of forests, where only some roof tiles, logs from a sauna (Fig. 2), a well-hole, and part of the basement reminded me that this place had once been inhabited. Still, the names and stories have survived. One of my aunts drew me a map that showed the location and names of the old fields. Another aunt sketched me the road that went to the farm (Fig. 3). A third one told me the stories behind the place names and about the other significant places.



Fig. 1

Last autumn I visited the place just to pay tribute to the myths. I had some Belgian students with me. We managed to drive the car deep into the forest, then I spent some time trying to find the place where the footpath started - disoriented by a fresh clearcut. Finally I found the way. Veronique and Irmine at first did not believe that there had been a farm on every meadow.



Fig. 2

Yet we found basements beneath ashes and maples, several bear-scratched apple trees, and gooseberries. My grandmother managed to write down the history of the Vääлма farm before her death, I know at least that much. But it is only a story, a memory, a foreign country. I have to re-create the place for myself.

Places in the landscape

Space is large and unfathomable. Place puts a handle on space so that it can be tamed and understood. Places are created by people, emerging, existing for a certain time, and then disappearing. And places are personal. We all have our own secret places where we go when looking for refuge, for partying, for taking our darlings out. Locals are those people who know the stories of the landscape. And landscape itself is an endless story. Landscape is also heritage. Each generation tries to erase previously created

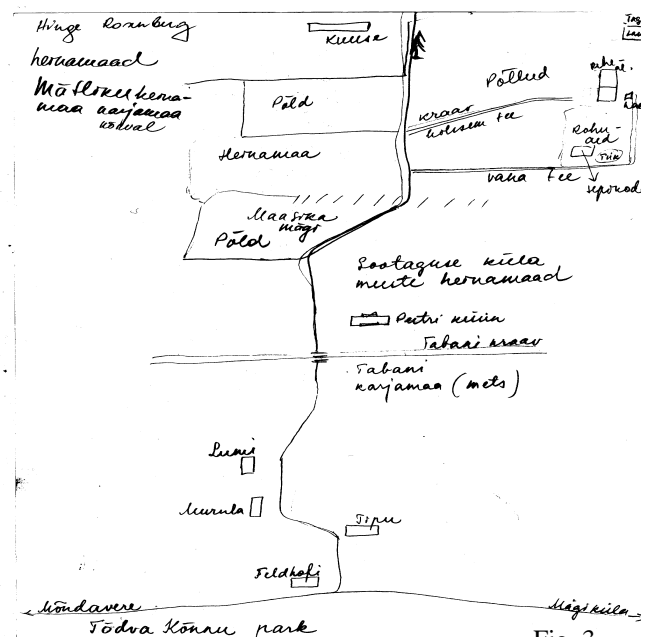


Fig. 3

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...continued from p. 1 (Sense of place)

landscapes, writing its own instead. This is not always successful, as old pieces sometimes remain.

A question that I often ask is whose landscape is it. Is landscape an elitist or democratic feature? Should there be a group of people who has the right to decide what is good and what is not, or should the landscape be an agreement between different stakeholders? In this context, then, what is the role of landscape ecologists in this game? Nature conservation tends to be elitist, based on prescribed rules and regulations. The locals had to accept these rules, as their voice was heard only on elections, but not while plan-making. In several projects it has been demonstrated how democratic, participatory planning gives better results than the elitist approach. However, it may be a disaster when these kinds of decisions will be based on public opinion polls. As Don Mitchell (2001) puts it, "whatever lure the local may hold for landscape geographers it must become one of understanding how particular places, particular landscapes fit into a larger, scalarly complex mosaic of landscapes that themselves are never 'naively given'".

While carrying out planning exercises on delimiting and defining valuable landscapes here in Estonia, we have become much more aware of the understanding of landscape by the local people. We know what we think landscape is, but is that knowledge common understanding? The answer is of course no. For "normal" Estonian people, landscape is nature in the first place, because this is what they have been taught at school. But when you talk further with the people, new levels of understanding become evident. Landscape turns out to be very intimate, so tightly and personally linked to the person that it is almost

sinful to open it to an outsider. There are places that, for one or another reason, are so special and are related to some kind of human activity - a hay meadow cleared by one's grandfather, a school, church, or local party-place, or places where one's soul relaxes. Landscape is home, a system of symbols that enables us to orientate ourselves, to delimit our habitat.

Landscape is an agreement. We have ten times demonstrated that all landscape ecologists have their own definition for landscape. As long as we are just researching, it does not matter. However, while undertaking a planning exercise, it is healthy to reach an agreement. We must define each time the meaning of the landscape in the context of each project, and we must know what are we going to change or develop. There are so many stakeholders in the landscape, each of them with their own view of landscape. There are the locals and land owners (these two are not the same) who have to generate income. There are tourists who are seeking amenities. And there are different interest groups who push their specific interests. Finally, there are experts and decision makers. The land owners are the ones who finally carry out all changes, so all others have to make their wishes clear to them. How this is achieved provides a marvellous research pursuit for landscape researchers. A harmony model could be applied (see Jones 1993) where all the stakeholders' interests are taken into account and a compromise looked for. Or there is a conflict model where the stronger takes it all. In any case, landscape is agreement, and landscape ecologists can contribute to fair agreements by promoting a holistic view of landscapes that includes both the physical and the mental landscape.

More "sense of place" and cultural landscape analysis:

<http://www.ut.ee/SOPL/english/border/hp.htm>

<http://www.wsl.ch/land/society/welcome-en.ehtml>

<http://www.uiowa.edu/uiowapress/rydmapthe.htm>

<http://www.swenvo.org.uk/sustainable/sheet02.pdf>

<http://www.yale.edu/yup/books/060025.htm>

<http://www.icls.harvard.edu/main.htm>

Palang, H., 1995: Landscape - from objectivity to subjectivity?

In: Tammaru, T., K. Kandla, H. Palang (eds.) 1995: Proceedings of the VI EGEA Congress, 89-91.

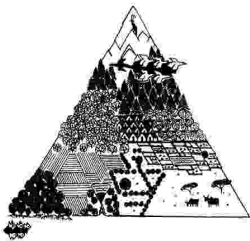
Mitchell, D., 1996: The lie of the land: Migrant workers and the California Landscape. Univ. of Minnesota Press.

The IALE Bulletin is distributed six times a year to the members of the IALE. The IALE - International Association for Landscape Ecology was founded in 1982 to promote communication between scientists, planners and interdisciplinary scientific research. IALE Executive Committee: **President:** Richard J. Hobbs (CSIRO Wildlife and Ecology, Private Bag, P.O., Wembley WA 6014, Australia), tel +61 8 9333 6442 fax +61 8 9333 6444 email Richard.Hobbs@per.dwe.csiro.au; **Past President:** John A. Wiens (USA), email jaws@lamar.colostate.edu; **Vice Presidents:** Duning Xiao (China), email Indscp@iae.syb.ac.cn; Kathryn Freemark (Canada), email kathryn.freemark@ec.gc.ca; Margareta Ihse (Sweden), email ihse@natgeo.su.se; Francoise Burel (France), email francoise.burel@univ-rennes1.fr; **Secretary General:** Michael Moss (Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, N1G 2W1 Canada), tel +1 519 824-4120 ext.4800 fax +1 519 763-4686 email mmoss@uoguelph.ca; **Bulletin Editor and Deputy Secretary General:** Felix Kienast (Swiss Federal Institute of Forest, Snow and Landscape Research WSL, CH-8903 Birmensdorf, Switzerland), tel +41 1 739 23 66 fax +41 1 737 40 80 email felix.kienast@wsl.ch; **Treasurer:** Rob Jongman (WAU, Department of Physical Planning and Rural Development), Gen. Foulkesweg 13, 6703 BJ Wageningen, The Netherlands, tel +31 317 483 713 fax +31 317 482 166 email R.H.G.Jongman@Alterra.wag-ur.nl

IALE on the Internet: IALE International: <http://www.iale.ws>

BOOK

Landscape Ecology Applied In Land Evaluation, Development And Conservation. Some Worldwide Selected Examples. Editors: D. van der Zee and I.S. Zonneveld, c/o ITC, P.O.Box 6, 7500 AA, Enschede, the Netherlands E-mail: vanderzee@itc.nl; IALE book MM-I; ITC publication 81



This IALE book comprises 22 papers by 33 authors from Asia, Africa, Latin-America and Europe, 17 of which are ITC alumni. It is a, of course far from exhaustive, overview of the practice of landscape ecology in various countries, mainly outside Europe and North

America. Of the papers 11 concern case studies in Asia, 5 in Africa, and 4 in Latin-America.

Common to all papers is the description of environmental problems related to change, degradation and the development of certain types of land(scape) use. Moreover, in all papers the land is approached as a system, a correlative complex of factors that cannot be studied in isolation. This justifies incorporation in this book. Some papers describe specific types of land use in the regions of interest, some focus on methodological problems, e.g., inventorization, land evaluation, scenario use in planning and management. Some papers incorporate more than one of these aspects of land ecological application.

The book can be ordered through the bookshop of the ITC. The price is Euro 36.50 excluding mailing costs, which are Euro 7.00 for Europe, and Euro 8.00 or 17.00 for elsewhere (depending on the priority rate).

Payment preferably by credit card. Both Visa and Mastercard are accepted.

Mail (bunk@itc.nl) or fax (+31 53 4874400, attention of ms J. Bunk, ITC Bookshop) your card number, its expiry date and the name and address of the cardholder (=you) and the address where the book has to be sent.

2002 SCIENTIFIC EXCURSIONS IN THE CARPATHIANS

As in previous years, the Center for Scientific Tourism in Slovakia and the Institute of Forest Ecology in Zvolen organize several tours for individuals interested in the rich nature and culture of this region.

More information: <http://www.ecosystems.sk>

JOURNAL "LANDSCAPE ECOLOGY":

Key papers (1987-1992) and abstracts (1987-1997) from Landscape Ecology, assembled by David J. Mladenoff, Robert H. Gardner, and Frank B. Golley, Current and former Editors.

The journal *Landscape Ecology* was established in 1987, marking the beginning of new growth and synergy within the field. The journal particularly linked the emerging North American strain of landscape ecology with the more established European traditions. The early years of the journal contained many key papers that have helped form the development of landscape ecology in many sub-areas. To make these key papers more available, the current publisher, Kluwer Academic Publishers, (KAP) has funded a project to electronically scan these early papers, convert them to digital form, and create a web site for their viewing and downloading, free of any charge. The goal is particularly to increase availability for students and as a service to the International Society for Landscape Ecology. The site can be accessed directly at <http://landscape.forest.wisc.edu/LandscapeEcology/>, and at the *Landscape Ecology* journal home page <http://www.wkap.nl/journals/landscape> at KAP. It would also be useful to members if the IALE and regional association web pages established a link.

As the current and former editors-in-chief of the journal, we have made an initial selection of 48 papers from 1987-1992 which we consider most influential within the field. These papers are now available as PDF files. Note that all abstracts from *Landscape Ecology* before KAP acquired the journal (1987-1997) have been included on the site. If use and feedback is positive, we hope to make more of the complete papers from this period available. Issues since 1997 are available at the regular journal web page. You will need a copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader in order to view the PDFs. If you do not have this program, you can download it for free from the Adobe website.

BOOKS / BOOK CHAPTERS / EDITORIALS

Haber, W., 1999: Conservation of biodiversity: Scientific standards and practical realization. In: Kratochwil, A. (ed.): *Biodiversity in Ecosystems*. Kluwer.

Tress, B., et al., 2001: Bridging human and natural sciences in landscape research. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 57: 137 - 141.

Landscape Information Hub (<http://www.lih.gre.ac.uk>): Hundred Best Books on Landscape Architecture (<http://www.lih.gre.ac.uk/histhe/books.htm>)

MEETINGS

September 26-28, 2002

4th Annual Symposium of the International Association for Landscape Ecology, Region Germany (IALE-D): "Bewertung und Entwicklung der Landschaft". Dresden, Germany.

This Symposium will be held by the Saxon Academy of Sciences and Humanities in co-operation with the Institute of Ecological and Regional Development (IÖR) and the Technical University Dresden, Institut for Geography, in the classicistic "Blockhouse" opposite the Dresden castle.

Within the framework "Bewertung und Entwicklung der Landschaft" (Assessment and Development of Landscape), we will discuss methodological problems of land use assessment and landscape change. An important issue is the use of such analyses in the sustainability discussion. We seek contributions with both theoretical and practical relevance.

There are three foci:

1. Land use and driving forces of landscape development
2. Assessing the carrying capacity of landscapes, formulating development targets
3. Landscape change and monitoring.

Call for papers:

Contributions to one or more of the themes mentioned above can be sent to Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften, AG Naturhaushalt, Neustädter Markt 19 (Blockhaus), D-01097 Dresden, deadline for abstracts is March 30, 2002, e-mail: Olaf.Bastian@mailbox.tu-dresden.de

More information: <http://www.iale.de/dresden-2002/>

June 13, 2002

Seminar of the Dutch Association of Landscape Ecology (WLO) together with the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands: "Integration of Scales in Landscape Ecology", Educatorium, De Uithof, Utrecht.

The seminar will focus on upscaling and downscaling approaches for integrating ecohydrological and biogeochemical studies carried out at different spatial scales. In landscape ecology and regional land-use planning, there is an increasing need to understand interactions between land use, water flow, biogeochemical processes in vegetation and soil and environmental quality of groundwater and surface water. An active area of investigation is the use of dynamic modelling, statistical modelling and spatial modelling as a means to integrate process information across scales. Such attempts have two directions. First, detailed studies of biogeochemical processes can be carried out at smaller scales (e.g., soil mesocosms, individual ecosystems) and can then be integrated through the use of dynamic models to study larger scale processes. Typically, landscape models combine information on ecological processes with spatial information available through GIS. A second approach to landscape analysis involves downscaling from studies that start at larger scales (e.g., entire river catchments) and work towards understanding the relationships between geomorphology, geohydrology and land use patterns at smaller

scales. Up-scaling and down-scaling approaches should ideally meet at intermediate scales of regional landscapes to evaluate ecological conditions and offer opportunities for influencing management and restoration decisions. The seminar will encompass oral presentations by invited speakers. Further, there will be a poster session in the coffee and lunch breaks.

Registration and further information: Secretariat WLO, P.O Box 47, 6700 AA Wageningen; e-mail: wlo@alterra.wag-ur.nl; <http://www.landschap.nl>

August 11-18, 2002

8th International Congress of Ecology (INTECOL): "Ecology in a changing world". Seoul, Korea

More information: <http://www.seoulintecol.org/>

September 23-27, 2002

La ciencia de los paisajes como fundamento para el ordenamiento y la gestion territorial, Universidad de la Habana, Facultad de Geografía.

El tema principal de discusión será la manera en que la Ciencia de los Paisajes puede y debe contribuir al Ordenamiento y la Gestión Territorial, incluyendo todas sus diversas variantes: el Ordenamiento Ecológico, el Ambiental, el Manejo Integrado de Zonas Costeras, Turístico, de Cuencas, de Ciudades, de Humedales, de la Degradación de Tierras, de Montañas y el Paisajismo. El evento se realizará de manera simultánea con el II Taller "El Turismo en el Desarrollo Regional y Local" que también organiza la Facultad de Geografía, compartiendo algunas sesiones. Ello permitirá a los interesados tener acceso a ambos eventos, pagando la cuota de inscripción de sólo uno de ellos.

Presentación de los Resúmenes: 15 de Junio del 2002. I

nformation: Dr. José Mateo Rodríguez & Dr. Pedro Acevedo Rodríguez, E-mail: pacevedo@geo.uh.cu

September 23-27, 2002

El Turismo en el Desarrollo Regional y Local, Universidad de la Habana, Facultad de Geografía.

El Grupo de Geoecología, Paisajes y Turismo de la Facultad de Geografía y la Consultora de Turismo de la Universidad de La Habana, los cuales acumulan más de 15 años de labor en la temática, así como otras instituciones nacionales y extranjeras, convocan a este evento como medio para un intercambio de experiencias entre diferentes especialistas lo que permitirá el desarrollo de acciones más efectivas para enfrentar los retos del próximo siglo.

Information: Dr. Eduardo Salinas Chavez, Ms C. Yoel Del Risco Yera, yrisco@geo.uh.cu, esalinas@geo.uh.cu

June 12-15, 2002

International Workshop, Protecting Nature on Private Land – from Conflicts to Agreements, organized by the European Forest Institute EFI, Lahti, Finland, for details see IALE Bulletin 19.4 (2001)

Infos: http://www.efi.fi/events/2002/Protecting_Nature/