THE LANDSCAPE ESSAY FILM:
A DISCURSIVE PRACTICE TO REVEAL THE HIDDEN, FORGOTTEN,
AND SUPPRESSED MEANING OF PLACE AND SITE

by

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ABSTRACT

An increasing number of landscape scholars have promoted the cinema as a means to comprehend the complex characteristics of place and site that inform the discipline of environmental design. This dissertation explores the utility of the landscape essay film as a dynamic research method and site analysis tool to reveal otherwise invisible or underserved aspects of landscape that may have been forgotten, hidden, or suppressed by engaging the unique affordances in film and video with the alchemy of eidetic montage. Contextualizing the cinema as a representational, analytic, theoretical, and hermeneutical resource that acts as a repository of relationship between humans and the land, the landscape essay film as a discursive practice has the potential to re-present landscape experiences, uncover underlying cultural values, and act with predictive agency on future design and planning. This method arranges acquired and appropriated imagery and sound into the narrative sequence of a short film, building upon the tradition of the essay film, a searching hybrid of narrative, documentary, and experimental filmmaking through research-as-praxis. As such, this dissertation investigates the value of employing film production techniques for landscape studies scholarship, pedagogy, and practice.

The form and content of this abstract are approved. I recommend this publication.

Approved: Jody Beck
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my maternal grandmother, Inez Moore, who enchanted me with her pioneering stories of growing up in Texas and Oklahoma at the turn of the century and introduced me to her love of Westerns. It is because of her that I moved out West as a young adult, chasing my own dreams in these landscapes of such sublime beauty.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Necessity of Methods to Augment Traditional Practices

Environmental designers are increasingly finding themselves mediating and negotiating a surging wave of conflicting interests and values that may challenge our ideas of site, space, and place. Therefore, it seems prudent to have as many resources at our disposal as possible to support our professional intention of sustainable solutions. In this dissertation I explore the utility of developing a research method and site analysis tool around the affordances of film and video that can be applied to the environmental, economic, and social considerations of landscape design.¹ This research reinterprets landscape architect, educator, and scholar Kenneth Helphand's taxonomy of four roles for landscape in film: landscape as subject (the documentary tradition); landscape as setting (the stage set); landscape as character (landscape as a cast member); and landscape as symbol.² I suggest that the landscape essay film, drawing from the tradition of the essay film and expanding its use specifically for landscape architecture issues and processes, can be used as a representational, analytic, theoretical, and hermeneutic resource for landscape planning and design to supplement and augment traditional representational practices.

A Road Map

In the forthcoming pages I will briefly review the role of representation in landscape architecture and the need for emergent media; provide context for the Post-apocalyptic Western as an iconic American landscape and how this informs and reflects design interventions; introduce a novel research method and a unique typology with which to engage around landscape issues; present the case study and the findings of creating a landscape essay film titled, WASTELAND: a negotiation of place and meaning in the American cinema; and offer a summary with a conclusion that suggests the potential for further research.
CHAPTER II

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND REPRESENTATION

The Call for a More Inclusive Language of Landscape

Informed by postmodern and poststructuralist concerns with hegemonic power inequities, landscape architecture practitioners, scholars, educators, and students have endeavored to realize a more inclusive engagement of landscape. Recognizing that representation is never a neutral practice, a more thoughtful consideration of how we enact and facilitate design has primarily occurred through three modalities: an effort to represent the dynamic complexity of landscape beyond the static, pictorial representations of the historical past; an increasing emphasis on the participatory process for an inclusion of voices, especially those of the marginalized and disenfranchised; and a call to re-evaluate the relationship between landscape, representation, and power. Endeavoring to recognize place as a complex, experiential milieu of agency, there is an emerging interest in complementary forms of representation to the familiar techniques of drawing, photography, mapping, and computer aided design.

Given the current perceived challenges on our globe, landscape scholars have expressed the need for a comprehensive language of landscape that serves both the public and the natural environment alike. Some have blamed rational processes that rush to seek closure and control through the “objectifying logic of technology” for alienating us from landscape and contributing to the challenges of our times. Others have argued that the rational planning process is non-inclusive, leading to significant social, cultural, and economic consequences that designers and planners are struggling now to understand and amend. Yet, landscape is more than dirt and real estate; it is also the functional, educational, economic, social, political, ecological, aesthetic, symbolic, and spiritual layers that may have been forgotten in the traditional emphasis on the rational and accessible characteristics of a site. A concern is that a primary focus on the physical characteristics of the land may disengage and distract us from the deeper narratives of place, editing out the subaltern, controversial, or incomprehensible aspects of design intervention. The landscape essay film endeavors to fill the gaps in our understanding of landscape by diving
deeply into the undercurrents of the land, providing a richer response to design intervention, and increasing awareness and opportunities for social advocacy and political activism. I suggest that this process can assist in revealing, recording, and making sense of these subterranean and often underserved aspects of site and place.

**The Cinema as a Resource for Landscape Architects**

The cinema has a long history of study through a recognition of its prevalence in popular and global culture, and for its role in the production of meaning. Although Humanities and Social Science scholars have argued that films are a reflection of their time, making them useful teaching tools to help us understand the physical and social complexity of place, the study of the cinematic arts in landscape architecture and pedagogy might fulfill a recognized need for new interpretations of landscape. A small but growing corpus of landscape scholars have championed the cinema as a means to reveal how space is organized, lived, and represented. Recognizing this opportunity, John W. Danahy has called for more utilization of visual media in the environmental design disciplines and has encouraged planners and landscape architects “to invent, develop and apply emergent visual media that will better deal with dynamics, convey context and serve to support visual-spatial processes of negotiation and creativity.” As a supplement to traditional representational methods of design, I suggest that the landscape essay film is an emergent visual media that allows landscape scholars, educators, and practitioners a means to delve more deeply into the characteristics of landscape and site, providing new meanings and ultimately informing landscape theory and practice.
CHAPTER III

CONTEXT: THE POST-APOCALYPTIC WESTERN AS ICONIC LANDSCAPE

The Construction of the Urban and Rural Landscape

The human experience of landscape, the design of places, and the discourses around site, space, and place have been informed by the portrayal of real and imagined places since the inception of the cinema at the turn of the century. Therefore, a critical investigation into the relationship between cinema and landscape may provide insights into representational practices that are at the center of spatial design and planning disciplines. The most studied landscape in film is the urban environment, and the literature suggests a reciprocal relationship between the growth of the modern city and the development of cinema. American media scholar William Uricchio wrote that “there was a natural interaction between the rapid developments of urban life and a medium capable of observing and commenting upon it.”

Scholars have proposed that the characteristics of modernity in the city - with its increasing speed and standardization of time; the rise of consumerism and the movement of capital; emphasis on spectatorship, distraction, and entertainment; focus on technology, expediency, and mobility; and concerns with overstimulation and ephemerality - paved the way for the cinema. This argument positions the experience of urban life as an inspiration for the cinema because “modernity can best be understood as inherently cinematic.” Others have reasoned that the growth of the industrial city is inextricably linked with the development of the cinema and continues to be shaped by popular film. In the early years, films such as Ruttmann’s Berlin, the Symphony of a Great City (1927) and Vertov’s The Man with the Movie Camera (1929) promoted the city as the culmination of civilization with machine-like efficiency, championing the urban experience as a “producer of urban culture and civilization.” As a symbiotic system informed by the media, the cinema is both witness of the urban condition and a protagonist contributing to the growth and development of urbanity.

While early European films focused on the city and were characterized by an attempt to differentiate the urban environment and what it represented - modernity, promise of work,
civilization, and culture - from the pastoral past; the American experience in early cinema is intertwined with travel, wilderness parks, and technological forms of locomotion, and had a significant mythological component. A narrative of mobility conflated with open landscapes had a far-reaching influence on the development of the Western and later, the Road movie genre that paralleled evolving identities and social movements. Yet, perhaps as a result of the historical focus on urbanization, only recently have there been publications devoted to the rural landscapes of the cinema. Contemporary works from film theorists, art historians, and geographers illustrate a renewed interest in natural places, both in film and in the national conscience.

The representation of pastoral landscapes, although covered less in the literature, is a deep reservoir of historical and societal beliefs around the nature-culture relationship with the land. One of the most popular genres in film, the Western, relies on the rural landscape to relay its message, including the promulgation of the ideals of American society, such as self-sufficiency, individualism, pioneering spirit, mobility, personal control over environment, equal opportunity, competition, optimism, directness, action oriented, pragmatism, and materialism. If the cinema has had a reciprocal and symbiotic relationship with urbanity as argued earlier, then I suggest films that feature the rural landscape, and in particular the Western genre film, has played an important role in informing the morphology and management of landscapes in a wide range of population and use. Investigating the relationships between these films and design and planning outcomes seems an important course of study when we consider that the widespread popularity of the Western may also be a vehicle for the global diaspora of American values of landscape. Designers can look to these films that privilege open and natural land as historical documents, extant artifacts, and precedent archetypes for illuminating how environmental designers have understood terrain as territory and contested space; the significance of narratives about nature, people, and place; and the relevance of imagery that inspires our future imaginings.

**The Post-apocalyptic Western**

This dissertation chose cinematic representations of a post-apocalyptic future as a focus of study because of its apparent popularity in the American culture, especially in the preceding
decade, a trend that has been noted in papers, books, and even film festivals. I suggest that the prevalence of post-disaster imagery reveals much about our contemporary world and our relationship to the landscape. Many of these films, such as Logan’s Run (1967), Planet of the Apes (1968), Dead Man (1995), I Am Legend (2007), The Road (2009), and The Book of Eli (2010), appear structured around what I refer to as the Post-apocalyptic Western, dystopian movies set in a post-disaster future that directly reference the plot structure, imagery, and thematic characteristics of the Western genre, engaging in the tension between the open, rural landscape and the frontier town or urban environment to signify the conquest of the wilderness and the subordination of nature. The archetypal conflict between culture and landscape is often played out as a contest of dualities between law and lawlessness: civilization versus wilderness, city versus rural, architecture versus landscape, good versus bad, virtue versus evil, pioneers versus Indians, lawman versus outlaw, East versus West, farmer versus cowboy, man versus woman, schoolteacher versus madam. The Western genre film and the Post-apocalyptic Western share a similar formulaic plot structure, iconic desert landscape, itinerant movement, agitation between dualities, excessive violence, glorifying of a lone, usually male hero, a tabula rasa ideology, the dream of the garden, as well as the narrative of mobility and self-discovery.

However, the Post-apocalyptic Western departs from the Western genre on several key points through setting, ideology, and intention. In the Post-apocalyptic Western the action is set amongst ruins, in a time after a mysterious but powerful, cataclysmic event has occurred. Unlike the Western, whose outcome is always known as successful colonization, in the Post-apocalyptic Western the future of humankind hangs in the balance with its future uncertain. As such, the latter features some nostalgia for the past, often signified by softly focused color photography that contrasts starkly with grainy monochromatic imagery that indicates the post-apocalyptic future. I suggest that while the primary storyline revolves around a large-scale calamity that ends much of life on earth, the Post-apocalyptic Western is ultimately informed by the more ancient etymological meaning of apocalypse as revelation rather than the modern eschatological interpretation as disaster or devastation. The Post-apocalyptic Western’s gnostic
role is accomplished primarily through two approaches: the role of the hero(es) and cultural ideas about nature and landscape.

Whereas the Western genre hero, usually male, is portrayed as the “megalomaniac — obsessed with power and his own ability to dominate and rule over others,” the Post-apocalyptic Western hero builds upon the pessimism of the Vietnam era of film that “questioned the historical patterns of Western nations and the evils of their imperialistic past,” because the protagonist carries the unbearable knowledge of American hubris that has finally gone too far and destroyed the world through misguided arrogance. Unlike his traditional counterpart who chooses a solitary life away from the comforts of culture, the post-disaster hero is predominantly a reluctant warrior because his situation has been thrust upon him and he is caught between defending the old ways and accepting the future, which is decidedly chaotic. The protagonist role is also a metaphor for the designer who must choose between traditional, possibly archaic, conceptualizations of landscape and a more pluralistic society. Yet, on a social-psychological scale, it also invites humanity to move beyond the self-absorbed, resource-depleting, soul deadening forces of industrialized capitalism to seek a deeper connection to the natural world, including how we design, manage, and preserve the built and natural environment.

A reading of contemporary post-apocalyptic films suggests that the current dream of the populace seems to be obsessed with the destruction of cities - at least as a metaphor - and a return to a simpler, more rustic time in the countryside, an image that recalls the life of the early colonist portrayed in Westerns. Martha Bartter, in an article titled, “Nuclear Holocaust as Urban Renewal,” wrote of these post-disaster films set in the future as nostalgic for a past with lower populations. She wrote, "Ideal communities, we somehow believe, could exist if only our world were renewed as a better (less urban, mechanized, depersonalized) place." If popular films are any measure, many people would like the opportunity for a blank slate to begin their lives anew, echoing the ideology of the American colonists who sought a new life in the New World. Closely tied to this narrative is a suspicion of the city in the national consciousness, echoed in the Post-apocalyptic Western, which seeks to flee the ruins of the city as a site of danger and loss.
Informed by the Western genre film, the narrative of *tabula rasa* as a blank space to start over, mobility conflated with freedom, a deep, if unconscious, distrust of cities, and rugged individualism seem to be enduring motifs in the American consciousness. Therefore, designers and planners would do well to study these themes through films that encapsulate them, to better understand how closely held and ingrained beliefs might inform the philosophical, institutional, and structural challenges of our profession. Seen in this way, transportation issues (and why Americans resist alternative forms such as biking and buses), housing patterns (the suburb as the miniature ranchette), and gated communities (fear of being invaded by the Other) begin to make a little more sense, and this awareness can be the beginning of addressing and evolving long held positions. However, despite its potential to represent and engage design interventions, the medium of film and video has been relatively underutilized in the field of landscape architecture. I suggest that this has as much to do with an underestimation of cinema’s value to the design profession as well as a dearth in methods with which to engage it. To address this potential, I offer the landscape essay film as a research method for excavating the layers of landscape in the cinema as a palimpsest of memory and meaning through the transformative agency of eidetic montage, a method and a theory that will be explained in more detail in the forthcoming pages.
CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHOD: THE LANDSCAPE ESSAY FILM

The Landscape Essay Film as a Modality of Essay Film

The landscape essay film is a tool that may be used to supplement our understanding of place and site through a research method that borrows from documentary film theory and cinematic production techniques, a discursive process used to explore temporal and spatial meaning of place through the medium of a short film. This method arranges acquired and appropriated images and sound into a narrative form, using non-linear montage editing techniques, for the purpose of documentation, analysis, theoretical advancement, and reflection. The landscape essay film is a type of essay film, a searching hybrid of narrative, documentary, and experimental filmmaking, what Jean-Luc Godard called “research in the form of the spectacle.” Much like a written composition, essay films quote from novels, plays, songs, and other films, referencing imagery, ideas, and authors both backward and forward in time, as a venue to explore intellectual concepts with visual images. The essay film was chosen as a model for landscape research because of its flexibility, increasing popularity, and rich theoretical scholarship. However, while informed by the essay film and other experimental cinema practices, the landscape essay film is uniquely devoted to the discourses and practices of landscape design and planning.

The landscape essay film adopts and re-appropriates the essay film’s discursive mode of inquiry. While cinema studies scholar Timothy Corrigan has characterized the essay film as “short documentary subject, […]the lack of a dominant narrative organization, […]and] the interaction of a personal voice or vision, sometimes in the form of a voice-over,” he also defines the essay film as a mode of deconstruction; Straddling fiction and nonfiction, news reports and confessional autobiography, documentaries and experimental film, they are, first, practices that undo and redo film form, visual perspectives, public geographies, temporal organizations, and notions of truth and judgment within the complexity of experience. With a perplexing and enriching lack of formal rigor, essays and essay films do not usually offer the kinds of pleasure associated with traditional aesthetic films like narrative or lyrical poetry; they instead
According to American film critic Phillip Lopate there are five qualities that distinguish a successful essay-film as a discursive practice: it contains words and text; has a single voice; is an attempt to work out a problem; has a personal point of view; and is compelling and interesting. However, film historian, scholar, and critic Paul Arthur distilled that list down to one primary characteristic, the authorial voice; “a quality shared by all film essays is the inscription of a blatant, self-searching authorial presence,” while for critical studies scholar Michael Renov what characterizes the essay film is its subjectivity and reflexivity. Although the essay film is a contested medium, its ambiguous nature and its resistance to categorization is also its greatest strength.

Types of Essay Films

There has been some scholarly thought on developing a taxonomy of essay films as they coalesce around certain themes. This list will be initially described briefly in this section and then applied to a case study to evaluate how effective landscape essay films are in addressing the topics of environmental design and intervention. Seven modes of inquiry include the interview, self-portrait, diary, travelogue, editorial, notebook, and refractive. Timothy Corrigan defines the interview as a biographical or autobiographical exposé. As an extension of the tradition of painted and literary portraits, while self-consciously acknowledging the deceptive power of the image, the inter-view is not a self-absorbed biopic but an opportunity to challenge and interrogate subjectivity and context in the private lives of public personas or the lives of marginalized and subverted individuals, “an inter-view that takes place between two or more views of that self.” The interview can be distinguished from the self-portrait, a mode that has its roots in both artist portfolios and painted self-portraiture, “a contradictory genre, which merges the most intimate artistic gesture with the most public display of image-management.” A third mode is the diary, characterized by personal and detailed accounts of daily life through the eyes of the essayist. Unlike the autobiography, written at a later time and often at a considerable distance from the
events portrayed, the diary’s relative simultaneity with the event begets an open-ended conversation that feels immediate and unburdened by a shadow of the future.64

Similar to the diary but more akin to a sketch than a record is the notebook, a tool of creative discovery that is both humble and agile. The notebook, like an artist’s or writer’s sketchpad, in its fragmentary and uninhibited form can stand on its own or function as an early draft of future films and creations.65 More structured than the notebook but just as focused around the telling of a story, the travelogue is a type of essay film whereby the experiences of the essayist moving through natural and human-made environments are captured on camera, along with personal reflections and markers of symbolic significance.66 While the travelogue attempts to make sense of the past from the present, the editorial essay film endeavors to change the future by interrogating past events through re-appropriation of archival artifacts and a re-contextualizing of historic narratives, functioning as “investigations into the truth and ethics of social events and behavior.”67 Lastly is the refractive cinematic mode, which looks critically at the cinema itself, focusing on a specific filmmaker, cinematic technique, or the history of film and video, engaging filmmaking as a heuristic medium to illuminate how framing, lighting, color, and effects promote specific agendas. Corrigan wrote, “the best of these films about art and film do not simply describe or document filmic or other aesthetic practices but specifically engage them within an essayist arena that abstracts the very activity of thinking through a cinematic process.”68

The essay film’s resistance to definition and its transgressive qualities are the keys to its potential as a medium appropriate for engaging the complex issues of our times around landscape and place. Its extraordinary flexibility has much to do with its development as an alternative form of discourse. Rascaroli wrote that the essay film is “informal, skeptical, diverse, disjunctive, paradoxical, contradictory, heretical, open, free, and formless…a field of experimentation and idiosyncrasy.” 69 As such, the landscape essay film borrows from the tradition of the essay film as an open-ended, dialogic medium that is suited for landscape architects and designers who seek deeper insight into their profession’s issues. An ability to adapt to a variety of conditions and an
inherent limberness provides many opportunities for environmental designers to draw from a wide spectrum of essay film modalities in scholarship, pedagogy, and practice.

**Historical and Theoretical Influences of the Landscape Essay Film**

In addition to the scholarship of the essay film process, the landscape essay film is informed by over a century of film theory and practice, including the historical and theoretical influences of the formalist-realist dialectic, Soviet film theories, semiotics and structuralism, American experimental filmmaking, Direct Theory, and New Media. These influences assist in empowering the landscape essay film with agency, voice, and activism.

**The Formalist-Realist Dialectic and Montage Theory**

The landscape essay film employs both formalism and realism in its method, inherited from the origins of the cinema as a realist-formalist dialectic at the turn of the century, informing Soviet Film theory and, later, the documentary and narrative film traditions. André Bazin articulated the tension between the realist and formalist tropes as, “two broad and opposing trends: those directors who put their faith in the image and those who put their faith in reality.” The distinction between the realists and the formalists can be described as between those who show the event and those who allude to it. The landscape essay film also rests on the writings of a Soviet formalist of the post-revolution era, Lev Kuleshov, who introduced the idea of imaginary landscapes created by the selective pairing of moving images of place. The potency of the landscape essay film lies with both the verisimilitude of the photographic image and the puissance of the story created through cinematic montage, which empowers this method with the ability to realistically recruit landscape imagery while employing the compelling nature of narrative to engage the viewer in discourse on landscape, place, and site.

**The Cinema as a Textual System**

The landscape essay film is endowed with the theoretical influences of the cinema as a textual system, a code where symbols provide a portal to greater meaning, where film as a text can be analyzed “for meaning that transcends the text itself and points toward a vision of the
world.” Thus, symbolic affordances may be employed for constructive insight into the meaning of landscape imagery in film, and the cinematic montage becomes a revelatory practice. The landscape essay film is also intertextual, referencing and quoting other works of literature, mythology, and cinema. Intertextual theory has its roots in the textual theory of Roland Barthes and Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of dialogic work, the idea that literature carries on an ongoing conversation with other authors and other works of literature, both backward and forward in time. Similarly, the landscape essay film quotes authors, imagery, symbols, and ideas about landscape to create a dialogic narrative that both explicates meaning and invites a conversation around the role of representation, the agency of landscape, the importance of context, and the function of symbols and signification.

**Experimental Filmmakers and the Agency of Landscape**

The landscape essay film aligns with the experimental filmmakers who have advanced the role of landscape in the cinema. Film studies scholar Scott MacDonald noted that many of the American avant-garde artists foreground place and space as a rejection of the commercial film’s closed, linear narrative based on the drama of human actors, relegating landscape to setting or character as the handmaiden of consumerism. Instead, experimental filmmakers “have attempted to use cinema as a means of revivifying our sense of place in all is complexity…at the same time recognizing the problematic moral, environmental, and political implications of five centuries of European involvement in the Western hemisphere.” Others have written that landscape has an inherent agency in the cinema. Sergei Eisenstein believed that the image of landscape in film has the ability to express what might otherwise be inexpressible, something that it excels with compared to other types of filmic representation. “For landscape is the freest element of film, the least burdened with servile, narrative tasks, and the most flexible in conveying moods, emotional states, and spiritual experiences.” Similarly, American experimental filmmaker Maya Deren contended that the eidetic image of the landscape provides a provision of verity analogous to the physical presence of actors in the theater. In the landscape essay film the landscape is the main
protagonist, forefront and center, encouraging a vigorous conversation on topical issues in landscape scholarship, pedagogy, and practice.

**New Media and Technology**

Aside from historical and theoretical influences, the landscape essay film is viable and accessible because of recent advances in New Media. Accessible technology now allows amateur filmmakers to make films that once involved substantial financial and educational investments. The case study film was created by developing a storyline using found footage of iconic American Western genre films, road films, and contemporary movies with a post-apocalyptic narrative. Files of found footage were extracted from films easily purchased or rented on Blu-ray discs and DVD from movie rental stores and online video rental websites, as well as digital files downloaded online.\(^{81}\) Many old movies, commercials, instructional films and home movies in the public domain are now available through the Prelinger Archives, serviced by the Library of Congress, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division.\(^{82}\) Encryption-breaking software\(^{83}\) was used to transcode these files into workable images that could be read by an editing program. Once extracted and saved as workable files, clips were combined using non-linear editing software, a facile method of non-destructive editing of digital source material stored on computer hard-drives that replaces the historically laborious task of cutting and pasting film negatives. Legal changes that support public conversations around copyrighted works, along with the availability of digital files, has encouraged an increase in media projects within and outside academia that incorporate the borrowed imagery of commercially shot features, advertisements, educational films, and other recorded communications, increasing the dialogue around media and imagery never before possible.

**Direct Theory and Image as Discourse**

The landscape essay film is furthermore advised by Direct Theory, the development of theoretical understanding through the production of experimental film and digital media, promoting films as primary texts and filmmaking as a discursive process that transcends the
written or spoken word. This practice is borrowed from the Independent and Avant-garde filmmakers who use film and video primarily as theory, radically advancing the discourse for a more expanded notion of the cinema. Aligned with Direct Theory’s confidence in visual discourse, the landscape essay film is also energized by the recent visual turn and the contemporaneous critique of hegemonic logocentrism that takes issue with the implicit authority of the written text. As such, the landscape essay film endeavors to engage imagery as text and cinematic montage as discourse. A reassessment of film’s representational affordances might contribute to a new way for designers to conceptualize and represent landscape through eidetic montage; develop novel language and syntax; increase pluralistic input through democratic access; encourage fresh theories in landscape studies; and invigorate political agency. These ideals will be introduced here briefly and discussed in further detail in the case study section. The case study research herein follows the model developed by Maya Deren, who employed filmmaking as discourse and wrote about her films only after she had finished her first three works to explicate what she had developed through the actual filmmaking-as-art process.

Cinema, like landscape, has a highly eidetic presentation and thus has the potential to represent landscape experiences that closely resemble reality. This particular quality of landscape allows extraordinarily accurate and vivid recall of visual and aural impressions, while cinema has the technological ability to record it in a way unique from traditional methods of landscape architecture representational practices. Thus, the synergy of landscape and cinema has the potential to engender James Corner’s idea of eidetic as an ideal found beyond the static image, as a generator of ideas and forms. To Corner, a landscape architect and theorist, that is the distinction between landskip, simply a framed image of landscape such as photographs, maps, and documents, and landschaft, “a deep and intimate mode of relationship not only among buildings and fields but also among patterns of occupation, activity, and space.” Corner promotes the latter because a reliance on pictorial and formal qualities alone “denies deeper modes of existence, interrelationship, and creativity; it conceals the agendas of those who construct it, and it seriously limits the design and planning arts in more critically shaping
alternative cultural relationships with the earth,” 90 leading to an incomplete sense of site and place, and quite possibly inferior design solutions. 91 As such, the landscape essay film may engage with the eidetic qualities of landscape and act as agency in revealing the underlying physical and cultural constructs that frame the discourses on place and site while offering novel ways to conceptualize site, space, and place.

Secondly, some have recognized the need for a common language that attends to the rich nuances of landscape. 92 By privileging imagery and sound, the landscape essay film starts to communicate through its own dialect, terminology, and prose, creating a novel lexicon, “new languages with new and unique powers of expression.” 93 The language of the landscape essay film may speak to us in a profound way, imparting powerful associations, emotions, and meanings that may enlarge our ideas about landscape, enhance the discourse, and animate our practices.

Third, the landscape essay film also supports a social justice agenda and takes on issues of authorship by championing the democratization of access to ideas and information. This has fascinating implications for scholarship and discussion, where students, scholars, and artists of today borrow freely from the text, imagery, and songs of others, effectively undermining the rights of private ownership. Artist, writer, and video essayist Ursula Biemann has argued that in the digital age, the era of hypertext and the Internet, images and effects are more readily accessible than ever before, allowing for a multifaceted exchange of ideas across many platforms, including the essay film, which “has always distinguished itself by a non-linear and non-logical movement of thought that draws on many different sources of knowledge.” 94 By providing a prototype of democratic exchange the landscape essay film invites designers to more freely share ideas and resources while loosening up the boundaries on our roles as designers.

Fourth, the landscape essay film also provides an opportunity to engage film theory as a model for advancing landscape theory by encouraging landscape architecture scholars to ask the questions uniquely pertinent to the field around ideas of perception, reception, experience, and
phenomenon. The landscape essay film, by illustrating a reconciliation of the historical rift between film theory and film production in America, supports a more robust exchange between landscape theory and practice as research-as-practice and theory-as-praxis. As such, the landscape essay film supports several paths of inquiry, and encourages the investigation of a subject at a much deeper level than typically explored. In addition, similar to the recognition that film documentaries do not often tell the whole truth and may actually be misleading, the landscape essay film is a portal to greater meaning through the stories we tell ourselves. Thus, the Landscape essay film becomes a means for developing new theoretical contributions around cinema and landscape.

Fifth, the landscape essay film may also cultivate the landscape designer’s role as political advocate. Imbued with the essay film’s agency as radically communal, interrogative, and dialogical, the landscape essay film invites dialogue and discussion on place, space, and site, and engages the evolving role of the designer in landscape intervention. The writings of Hungarian film theorist Béla Balázs are particularly instructive in this endeavor. Balázs promoted the agency of representations of landscape in moving pictures, arguing that the cinema reveals relationships between humans and landscape that previously had been hidden or too subtle to notice, and championed film as a modern art that could most authentically address the horrors of industrialization. Similarly, the landscape essay film may empower designers to capture and promote certain landscape narratives for discussion and advocacy.

The Essay Film as a Research Method for Landscape Architecture

Through resourcing the diary, notebook, interview, travelogue, editorial, refractive, and self-portrait modes of inquiry, the landscape essay film is uniquely suited for engaging challenging issues around space, place, site, and design. The potential to relay experience and meaning through a re-calling, re-arranging, and re-presenting of our memories of real and imagined places provides a powerful way to understand physical and social nuances of landscape, terrain, and geography, including the “problems of everyday people living in a complex, industrial environment.” The landscape essay film endeavors to address the increasingly
complex status of society and our design interventions because filmic essayist practice, as a self-reflexive method, excels in “organizing complexities” and “capturing the more abstract, untangible (sic) processes of social and cultural transitions.” As such, the landscape essay film seeks to bridge the gaps between studio and field, pedagogy and practice, theory and praxis, innocence and experience, dream and utility, community and power, aesthetics and function. In the next section this method will be put to the test with a case study that recruits and interrogates popular motion pictures of landscape in the American cinema.
CHAPTER V

CASE STUDY

I propose that the landscape essay film borrow from the essay film’s seven modes of inquiry as a means to employ cinematic montage as a representational, analytic, theoretical, and hermeneutic resource for conversations around place, space, and site. The case study, a short landscape essay film titled, *WASTELAND: a negotiation of place and meaning in the American landscape*, was undertaken to demonstrate the utility of creating landscape essay films, transfigured from experimental film practice to be used as a research method and site analysis tool to engage with the spatial and temporal meaning of landscape, and how the landscape essay film might inform landscape architecture scholarship, pedagogy, and practice.

The Landscape Essay Film as a Representational Tool

Through the landscape essay film, the camera as a selective apparatus controlled by the filmmaker-designer is also a method of constructing and making sense of reality through what Soviet filmmaker and theorist Dziga Vertov referred to as “organization of the visible world.” Others have promoted the dual functions of the cinema as both discovery, the process of recording, and invention, the method of constructing an alternative reality. For Vertov, editing occurs in the field and the maker’s choices as to where and how the camera is fixated is just as significant as the subject recorded. Once back in the studio, editing continues to focus the narrative chosen by the designer, creating a “sequential relationship which gives particular or new meaning to images according to their function.” The designer-filmmaker may utilize the representational affordances of film and video as a site survey method, exploratory design tool, archival documentation, and promotional proposal video that speaks to a site’s spatial conditions and physical patterns.

In the context of a representational tool, the diary landscape essay film could be used to document a designer’s interior conversations that are independent of a specific site, ones that might otherwise be lost, especially if they are difficult to represent or would have been
prematurely discarded as not important. Capturing both the mundane and profound, images, shapes, patterns, stories, poems, sketches, and sounds, as well as musings recorded as voiceover or written script on the screen, become a record of what may later be used in a design. By way of example, during the initial stages of *Wasteland* I documented the post-apocalyptic landscape of the FourMile fire that had raged through my neighborhood. I began to conceive of these places as sacred somehow, as a charnel ground. Although no human lives were lost in this natural catastrophe of 2009, the twisted frames and melted glass of what had once been homes and the ashen landscapes sparsely dotted with blackened remnants of what had previously been forest humbled me to the power of nature. This imagery would later inform the final development of the case study film by exploring the idea that we are surrounded by post-apocalyptic landscapes, both physical as well as metaphorical. Landscape designers, scholars, and students can benefit from creating diary forms of the landscape essay film by documenting these exploratory lines of thought as both an archival resource as well as a process of discovery. Although meant primarily for the author, these works can be re-contextualized later for clients, re-appropriated for other landscape essay films, or as embryonic inspiration for future research.

More developed than the diary mode of inquiry, the notebook landscape essay film may be engaged to record and represent a site survey taken in the field. Landscape is primarily understood as an actual place with restricted boundaries, recognizable features, and tangible physical characteristics. In an urban context this may take the form of a pocket park, urban infill, city park, or large-scale cityscape. Rural contexts range from small lots to national parks. The landscape essay film’s photographic action endows film with the ability to report, describe, and catalogue the nuances of site and space, a Vertovian conviction in the camera’s role as a mechanical eye that captures a reality not detected by human vision. In landscape inventory, film and video may be used to survey nodes, paths, boundaries, landmarks, rhythm, patterns, and scale. It may also be used to document meetings with clients, community gatherings, and possibly combined with social media as a tool of community participation. As a powerful form of representation, the notebook type of landscape essay film can also act as activist and voice for
underserved perspectives. Kofi Boone’s “Cell Phone Diaries” project empowered stakeholders to document their sense of place using mobile phones as a model for conscripting technology and images in the name of social justice. Working with imagery instead of written texts bypasses the elitist training that often separates those with privilege from those of non-privileged status, democratizing stakeholder input. The notebook’s ability to record and re-present reality underscore the landscape essay film’s potential to act as witness of landscape’s environmental and spatial characteristics from more than one perspective.

The notebook film may also interrogate the relationship between landscape imagery in the cinema and design outcomes, specifically around aesthetics and morphology. Some have argued that films provide visual archetypes for environmental design. In the urban context, the majority of architecture literature has contextualized the scholarship on film and architecture in terms of setting or backdrop, paying particular attention to iconic buildings or historical periods, architecture used in film sets, or cities conceived as film sets by our familiarity with them. Others have addressed the role of the cinema on architecture through the rubric of motion. Taking the stance of cinema as agency, architecture and cinema scholars Francois Penz and Maureen Thomas have reflected on the dialogue between representations of the city and architectural practice. In the realm of the rural, geography scholars have addressed cinematic landscapes as representational reservoirs; cinematic geography; the construction of identities of gender, race, and nationality through landscape; in the service of territory; contested terrains; and cinematic urban life. Anton Escher has proposed four subject areas for geographical film research: the construction of cinematic space; the construction of the cinematic landscape; the construction of the cinematic world; and the significance of cinematic location. In the suburban context some have pointed to the apparent diaspora of architectural forms, such as the development pattern in Latin America as a product of the American cinema or the Floridian community Opa-lacka as inspired by the set of the popular film The Thief of Baghdad (1924). Landscape designers may use this scholarship as a foundation for making landscape essay films
that investigate the connections between cinematic representations of landscape and design influences.

The notebook mode may additionally be used as landscape inventory to make connections between space and politics. Designers may look to the work of experimental filmmaker James Benning, an outspoken artist and scholar who combines a structuralist sensibility, populist politics, and an interest in history in the context of place. Benning relies on long, unedited takes of landscape as meditations on representation and meaning of the land, a process he calls “recording place over time.” His studies of the relationship between landscape and people are informed by a rejection of the hegemonic agendas perpetuated by scopic regimes, particularly pictorial representations of place such the perspectival method, the picturesque tradition, and aerial imagery. Humans are at the center of his work, if not always at the center of the frame, and their relationship with the landscape through time is the subject of his interest, particularly repressed imagery and human narratives around socioeconomics and labor, race, and capitalism to articulate a politics of place and how social inequalities are distributed through space. Filmmaker Thom Andersen’s Los Angeles Plays Itself (2003) is also an example of a notebook landscape essay film in its representational mode. Andersen combined clips of well-known Hollywood films shot in Los Angeles with insightful commentary on how the city has been constructed and deconstructed through the medium of motion pictures. The case study film Wasteland was inspired by Andersen’s process of critical voiceover paired with recognizable imagery.

Early in my research process, emboldened by the work of Benning and Andersen, I was holding the question of how ideologies perpetuated in the Western genre film might influence landscape practice and developed a short notebook landscape essay film on the politics of resource allocation in a piece titled, Homelands: A Negotiation of Cultural and Economic Resources at Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. This film focused on the unlikely liaison between the rich Ancestral Puebloan sites at Canyons of the Ancients National Monument and the resource extraction industries, with public lands officials, indigenous peoples, and
archaeologists coming together to find negotiated solutions. Environmental designers can use a similar process to reveal, inventory, and comment on the political conditions of landscape that sit side by side with the material and phenomenal conditions of site.

The landscape essay film can also be recruited to represent conditions otherwise difficult to capture with traditional static methods. Landscape as a dynamic set of systems and processes of change, from living organisms as well as shifting needs and uses, presents a fundamental challenge to the landscape architect, particularly around representation and documentation. Some have argued that fixed illustrations lead to a static, abstracted, incomplete, and manipulated comprehension of landscape and site, informing morphology and how designed spaces are ultimately experienced and used. This is a particular concern where daily and seasonal movement is a dominant theme, such as growth cycles, water systems, transportation corridors, and the migration of populations. Filmic media can address those qualities where maps and drawings cannot, which is perhaps why an increasing number of design schools are incorporating video into their programs. Designers may use the filmic medium to document natural processes such as plant growth and water flow; place change such as daily use and historical imprints; and project forward in time with management plans. Since film and video can be conceived of as a four-dimensional medium with the ability to engage with both space and time, while acknowledging that this manipulation can also be problematic, the notebook landscape essay film may be employed as site survey method, exploratory design tool, archival documentation, and promotional proposal video to re-present short-term temporal happenings, as well as manipulate time (in the form of editing) to illustrate larger conditions of transition and movement.

The interview landscape essay film in the representational modality has the potential to recognize and document personal stories from those who live, work, and travel in specific landscapes, revealing dominant as well as non-dominant narratives of place. Interviews might feature individuals, community members, public servants, and designers. While Wasteland did not include interviews in the usual sense, it did sample visual and aural archetypes of human interactions on an iconic landscape. However, interviews were a key component to the
Homelands movie, in preparation for Wasteland. A more direct example of this type of work is Alan Spearman’s As I Am (2013), which follows Chris Dean and others through the secluded and forgotten landscapes of his neighborhood in South Memphis; places that he travels through to become invisible, while also acknowledging the complex relationship between safety and marginalization. The interview places the human experience of landscape at the forefront of design considerations.

The travelogue landscape essay film may follow human characters through real and imagined landscapes, which is another way to describe Spearman’s As I Am (2013). However, travelogues might more purely subsume the narrative film’s sequential structure, with a beginning, middle, and end, articulating the passage through real places and sites. While Wasteland contains an element of movement informed by the Road Movie genre, the travelogue essay can also be used to document the visceral sense of moving through space, a proficiency that landscape historian John Dixon Hunt argued was comparable to the garden’s ability to present an illusion to the visitor.

Drawing from the roots of the documentary film, the editorial landscape essay film interrogates the narratives of historical events as it relates to landscape. Part social commentary and part political expository, the editorial film draws from archives to “unveil and analyze not only the realities and facts that are documented but also the subjective agencies (enmeshed in the films and their reception) of those realities and facts.” When Wasteland sampled archival footage of atomic testing the purpose was to interrogate a national narrative of everlasting war in the public and private spheres and across a variety of scales. Reece Auguste's Twilight City (1989), a political documentary that investigates the social and economic landscape of London during the Thatcher era is an example of the editorial type of landscape essay film. In this film a fictional letter from a daughter to her mother as voiceover weaves through interviews, archival footage, and urban imagery illustrates patterns of institutional control through the legal system and spatial divisions of labor, class, and race that spans several centuries in one of the world’s most well known cities. Twilight City reframes and re-represents narratives of landscape in the
documentary tradition of the exposé, and invites the viewer to rethink how places are developed, marketed, and distributed, with an implicit call for an increase in public participation.

In landscape design the refractive landscape essay film could be employed to question the role of representation in promulgating narratives of place, such as Katya Crawford’s inquiry of automobile commercials. Similarly, as a critical reflection of cinematic representations of the American desert as a symbol that signifies and impels certain actions in deserted and desert-like landscapes, *Wasteland* examines the relationship between terrain, identity, and propaganda. Thus, the same medium that so skillfully promotes an agenda can also be a vehicle of awareness, providing a path of liberation from the suggestive power of the cinema.

The self-portrait landscape essay film as a form of cinematic portfolio could be posted online or shared through digital files. Professionals, scholars, and students alike may use the landscape essay film to showcase their philosophy, projects, and community engagement and upload them to the Internet for job applications, design competitions, and collaborative opportunities. The self-portrait essay replaces the physical portfolio, resume, and business card, facilitating self-promotion as a much more dynamic and engaging experience for both designer and viewer.

**The Landscape Essay Film as an Analytic Tool**

Film and video, with its inherent ability to represent time and space, may be recruited to elucidate landscape experience and social spatial behavior. Planning scholars in particular have reported some success in screening and discussing films in the classroom as an interpretive media to assist in understanding urban phenomena. Comparative literature scholar Ackbar Abbas has championed film as artifact. “My working assumption is that the practices of the cinema constitute a kind of empirical evidence for an understanding of urban space but also that such evidence is not necessarily evident and only emerges through visual-spatial critique.” Similarly, architectural and urban designer Roy Strickland believes that cinematic representations
can assist in understanding complex relationships of urbanity. He wrote, “[films] capture the city’s multiple streams of activity, the forms and spaces containing them, and their hierarchy.”

As an analytic tool, the diary landscape essay film could be used to collect methods of research and ideas about spatial phenomena. These may range from the extremely scientific to the anecdotal, from theory to praxis, from traditionally recognized to fringe and borrowed practices. The purpose of this cataloguing is that some of these methods might be used later in actual research as a resource for both designers and their clients. For example, a follow up to *Wasteland* might include a survey of how spaces are actually used after a cataclysmic event such as a natural disaster.

Perhaps informed by the research practices collected at the diary stage, the notebook type of landscape essay film may be employed to collect data on how spaces are used daily, weekly, and seasonally, including flow patterns, negotiations of space, as well as key phenomena. Cognizant of the recent spatial turn and the study of political ramifications of landscape, there is fairly robust interest in serving the spatial characteristics of a site. An example of a notebook landscape essay film is William H. Whyte’s *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1988), a filmed recording of direct observations of behavior in urban settings in public plazas in New York City that challenged conventional wisdom of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Environmental designers can utilize the notebook type of landscape essay film as a post-occupancy evaluation for place and site, as a contribution for community dialogue and input in public meetings and community engagement, and in site analyses and design proposals.

The interview landscape essay film may be utilized to undertake research, aggregate data, and analyze results of place based activity by those who arguably know it best. More than likely these will be social science informed methods of quantitative and qualitative research, using video surveys, open-ended interviews, and user-directed testimony such as providing cameras for community members. These interviews could be visual, auditory, or a combination of both. The
The interview film provides on-the-ground observation paired with rigorous and professionally recognized research methods from an analytical perspective.

The remaining essay types will serve to corroborate, comment, criticize, and broadcast the analytical chronicles of primary research undertaken through the diary, notebook, and interview process. The travelogue landscape essay film reconstructs and examines the data collected in a search for validity, pattern, and meaning. The editorial landscape essay film may be applied to interrogate how data is collected, organized, and presented, particularly how this process is informed by historical archives and traditionally used methods. The refractive landscape essay film could be a self-reflexive meditation on the role of cinematic processes, investigating how data and theories are presented as fact through a privileging of the scientific method and cinematic techniques such as framing, editing, and audio. Refractive landscape essay films could draw from previously made landscape essay films; popular television networks such as National Geographic, Discover, and PBS; documentaries such as *Manufactured Landscapes* (2006) and *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth* (2011); and narrative films such as *Berlin, Symphony of a City* (1927). The self-portrait landscape essay film provides the opportunity to exhibit these findings as a portfolio of short essay films that engage landscape concepts and issues of our time, and could be posted as a link on Vimeo or YouTube to be used in design firm web pages, as part of a submittal package for employment or consulting opportunities, attached to blogs and social media sites, or employed as a promotional tool for a design competition.

**The Landscape Essay Film as a Theoretical Tool**

**Linking Film Production Practices with Design Practices**

While film and video excel in representing the spatial and temporal characteristics of the physical and experiential landscape, the affinity between cinema and landscape provides an opportunity to link film production practices with design practices. Landscape and cinema scholar Kenneth Helphand has argued that film and landscape share similar conventions, including how an experience is framed - the aerial shot that establishes context and scale, the tracking shot that simulates movement, the panning shot that establishes a panoramic view, and
the static shot that frames the view - as well as a dialectic between those who accentuate the reality (honoring the realism style originating with the Lumiere Brothers) and those who obscure the hand of the designer (taking after the narrative film tradition of formalism originating with Georges Méliès), that is, between location and set. Film and landscape also share an ability to construct narratives. As landscape scholar, author, and photographer Anne Spirn says, “[design] is a mode of storytelling.” Designers can benefit from familiarizing themselves with film production practices as a portfolio of effects for design applications. Thus, landscape essay films may be developed as a design development tool, proposal document, or archival record to organize landscape ideas taken from the cinematic arts to explore issues of access, circulation, movement, transitions, contemplation, collision, texture, pattern, context, reference, drama, surprise, humor, systems, function, storage, and maintenance, and how these might be informed by cinematic ideas about place and space.

In the realm of theoretical contributions, the diary landscape essay film may be used to create a catalogue of film production practices that may provide inspiration for design practices that relate cinematic processes. The notebook landscape essay film could document these practices for site analysis research, potentially combining them with samples of cinematic practices as a design development tool or for client presentations to propose ideas taken from cinema. Landscape interviews employed in the documentary tradition will endeavor to support or refute perspectives, or engender creative solutions to design problems.

The travelogue landscape essay film could feature a slide show that alludes to a storyboard sequence of sketches, similar to architect and urban designer Gordon Cullen’s experiments with serial vision, which utilized a series of storyboards to visualize the experience of moving through a space as a way to understand urban landscapes as sequence of dramatic spaces or as a proposal device to help visualize future designs. Cullen’s work influenced Donald Appleyard, who analyzed the visual and phenomenological experience of motion in highway sequences and linked it to filmic representations, as well as Kevin Lynch’s theory of urban legibility, wayfinding, and the development of city elements (paths, edges, districts, nodes, and
landmarks). Urban designers David Gosling and Barry Maitland were inspired by the contributions of Cullen, Appleyard, and Lynch to represent their design proposals as a storyboard or film strip to express the spatial and experiential considerations of urban environments for such projects as the redevelopment of the Manchester city centre, the Irvine New Town centre, the Blackpool Fun Fair, and Bridgetown, Barbados. Similarly, landscape and urban designers may employ storyboarding and serial visioning to their site analyses, design proposals, theoretical experiments.

Landscapes may also be cinematic. Helphand has referred to Bernard Tschumi’s plan for the Parc de la Villette as a cinematic “model for urban design,” noting that Tschumi himself described it as a “filmstrip,” while Corner described Villette as a notational sequence for the “cinematic path.” Therefore, narratives in the landscape can be created much like the cinema constructs an experience. Landscape architecture scholars Matthew Potteiger and Jamie Purinton have promoted developing narratives in design, using terms such as jump-cut (“outside the city a farm may jump-cut to suburban development”); freeze-frame (“historic landscapes such as Colonial Williamsburg are frequently interpreted according to one historic period”); and blackout (“the tunnel acts as a blackout between one side of the river or mountain and the other”). Similar to the narratives found at the gardens of Rousham, Stourhead, or Villa Lante, designers could borrow filmic sequences from Road Movie genres or other popular films with monomythic narratives for design inspiration. Myth, metaphor, and archetype may also be recruited as a mnemonic device, to evoke strong emotions, be used for salubrious purposes, and for political commentary, perhaps to promote what Corner has referred to as an eco-imaginative landscape/architecture.

The editorial landscape essay film could be employed to query how cinematic practices inform, and are informed by, design practices. For example, landscape architecture can take a cue from films that reference imagery, ideas, and other movies in their storyline. Wasteland cites the ideology and imagery of the Western found in the traditional Western genre film and the Post-apocalyptic Western for the purpose of interrogating how the conflation of landscape with
American ideals gets planted in our minds and finds a way into popular ideas about landscape and design interventions. One of the most pertinent films sampled in *Wasteland* was *Dead Man* (1995), which alludes to famous Western films and American mythology while subverting the dominant narrative of expansionism at the cost of the indigenous population. Designers and planners may be inspired by referential cinematic practices to find novel ways to quote historical patterns and uses, design precedents, and key words or phrases that emerge in interviews and surveys.

The refractive landscape essay film could reflect on the significance of the visual image in promoting design ideas as cinematic, while the self-portrait landscape essay film might employ these investigations as a unique contribution of the designer-researcher.

**The Development of Novel Theory through Eidetic Montage**

Profound insights may be realized through the process of what I call eidetic montage, a theory for the study of landscape in the cinema specifically dedicated to environmental design and practice. This technique acknowledges the impressive, eidetic qualities of landscape imagery, both real and imagined, that make them so memorable, including the layered and associated meanings that get tied to these places and the synergy that occurs when landscape imagery is combined in a sequential medium. Eidetic montage takes its name from the foundational montage theory developed by Sergei Eisenstein, one of the better known formalists of the Soviet era who championed montage as *collision*: “A view that from the collision of two given factors arises a concept.” 167 Eisenstein endorsed the dramatic principle of montage as “an idea that arises from the collision of independent shots.” 168

Similarly, eidetic montage refers to the alchemy that occurs between and amongst the combination and collision of landscape images in a film, generating new meanings and insights around landscape not typically available through viewing films in their entirety one after another, the usual method in film studies, nor accessible by traditional methods of landscape representation. Engaging the symbolic affordances that are culturally derived as well as the
human affinity with the natural world that is at least partly genetic, eidetic montage synergistically transfigures landscape imagery into a dynamic and multi-layered colloquy on site, space, and place, revealing both the visible and invisible meanings of landscape. In *Wasteland* eidetic montage occurs in the opening sequence of an atomic bomb blast, followed by newsreel footage of the destruction of Pruitt-Igoe, concluding with more atomic imagery and then archival footage of soldiers marching toward a light in the desert endeavors to introduce the metaphor of America as a landscape of war, with connections between the military, bombing, urban renewal, and race. Guided by the emotional power of the chosen imagery for the author, this dreamlike sequence strives to engender a visceral response that not only creates a somatic experience but might also lead to a revelation about the nature-human dialectic. However, the principles of eidetic montage are not only a portal to gnostic knowledge but may also inform environmental design whereby landscape scenes and settings could be judiciously placed in the physical landscape to create an emotional response that invites insight or perhaps an epiphany. The theorizing of eidetic montage suggests that associated and other novel theories may be developed in the realm of landscape studies and pedagogy by exploring the affinities between cinematic and design practices.

### The Landscape Essay Film as a Hermeneutical Tool

Film, much like landscape, is a medium that acts as a repository of memory and meaning. Recognizing that landscapes are culturally constructed and in large part informed by imagery seen in film and television, designers and scholars may create landscape essay films to excavate both visible and invisible narratives that remain as revenants of a site, as echoes of larger archetypes, or that exist *in memorium* in film, partially submerged artifacts that inform design with or without our conscious knowledge. These artifacts are not necessarily accessible through traditional means such as drawing and mapping or the three prior methods of landscape inventory, analysis, and theory. Building upon the representational, analytic, and theoretical affordances of cinematic portrayals of landscape, the landscape essay film as a hermeneutical tool seeks to
reveal the latent and often unconscious notions of place that inform the use, management, and design of landscape.

However, making landscape essay films can also be a predictive practice, revealing how the public contemplates landscape, which in turn informs how constituents perceive and participate in planning issues, informing public policy and the design of places. The predictive agency of cinematic landscape studies is especially true for science fiction narratives, which can play a significant heuristic role in our society, guiding our actions into the future, an unknown territory. Perhaps the common themes of frontier and exploration partially explains the symbiotic relationship between science fiction and Western historic narratives, with many sci-fi films resembling the plot structure, iconography, and itinerant characteristics of the Western genre cinema. According to urban studies scholar Carl Abbott, science fiction provides a way to understand and perhaps even predict forthcoming trends. He wrote, “science fiction has important clues to the ways that Americans think about urban life and urban development,” which “can …contribute to planning pedagogy by offering insight into the social and cultural assumptions that constrain the possibilities of plans and planning” because “planning history and theory has long accommodated what we might call design science fiction.” As such, the landscape essay film conceptualizes the cinema as a collective dream and eidetic montage as a means with which to analyze these reflections to extrapolate future policy and design morphology. Far from an eidolon or chimera, the imagery presented in moving pictures is a window into our deeply held convictions, subterranean narratives, and as prognosticator of future land forms and planning practices. Designer and planners could analyze the strength, volume, and frequency of these signals to plan and invest design interventions over different time periods and phases.

The landscape essay film, Wasteland, was specifically developed as an interpretive investigation, informed by the philosophy of hermeneutics. The order of presentation, the clips chosen, and the clarity and compelling nature of the imagery were informed by this perspective. Originally associated with the study of religious texts, hermeneutics in contemporary times has been expanded as a method of cultural studies with a broadened definition of text to include all
manner of media as well as social context. As in previous sections, seven modes of the essay film were employed to ascertain the applicability of the landscape essay film as a hermeneutical practice for landscape architecture, each one building on the prior.

The diary landscape essay film may be used to record internal thoughts on the meaning and symbolism of imagery and sound found in popular films that the designer has screened with no particular project in mind. Downloaded clips, stills, trailers, and advertisements may be combined with voiceover narration and written text to explore threads of ideas and intuitions. Several years before assembling *Wasteland* I became fascinated with the imagery of American Westerns, Road Movie films, representations of the desert, movement in the landscape, and urban ruins. These ideas and images were developed into short landscape essay films with themes that eventually supported the final case study film. The imagery is so pervasive in the public domain that I believed they must have some sort of impact on landscape design, especially around master plans and the management of public land. Through the process of making these exploratory landscape essay films I started to notice that certain motifs appeared again and again as moving water; streams of traffic; silhouettes of cars on a lonely road; a windshield framing a changing desert landscape; old, abandoned buildings; and compelling, vivid imagery of post-disaster cities, as I explored the meaning of movement, mobility, and iconography. While this undertaking helped me begin to understand the challenges of designers and planners in the West, it also provided insight into other patterns of landscape design such as suburbia and the contemporary city. These explorations later became the foundation of the case study film as an extant historical archive, cultural studies method, and iterative design process.

The notebook landscape essay film may be recruited to further develop ideas explored in the diary stage or to explore singular subjects of interest to landscape designers and planners. Organized around a stanza from T.S. Eliot’s poem “The Waste Land,” the case study film interrogates the significance of the current trend of films with a post-disaster narrative, and what apocalyptic cinema reveals about American culture and our relationship to the land. This work was undertaken to understand how those insights might inform design intervention and as a
model for future hermeneutical explorations in landscape scholarship and practice. By thoughtfully reviewing and combining clips of landscapes in Westerns and Post-apocalyptic Westerns as well as archival footage, emotions, feelings, and memories became a portal to deeper insight that guided the selection and editing process. This is the alchemical power of eidetic montage. Designers might employ similar processes to create a cinematic montage around the interpretation of specific landscapes represented in the movies.

The interview landscape essay film could incorporate interviews with those personally involved with the selected films, either implicitly or explicitly. An example of this type of landscape essay film is Room 237 (2012), which pairs interviews of four scholar’s takes on The Shining (1980) with imagery of the film and other historical and cinematic references. While Wasteland did not include filmed interviews in its sequence, I did review filmed, recorded, and written interviews of Director Jim Jarmusch, whose film Dead Man (1995) was the subtext for Wasteland. I also had the opportunity to personally interview the actor Gary Farmer, who was one of the main characters of the aforementioned film, for insight into this work. Designers may augment their understanding of a film about landscape with a variety of perspectives, including those close to the filmmaking process.

Wasteland unfolds much like a travelogue, referencing both the hero’s journey and the shamanic quest as a process of personal and reflexive self-discovery, also a theme of many of the films sampled. Since I have I previously suggested that the Post-apocalyptic Western actively and subliminally engages with the narrative of the desert ideology of the Western genre film to reference, reveal, and subvert its historically constructed meaning, clips from iconic movies were selected for their conscious referencing of all of the Westerns ever written and filmed, a historical and mythical overlay of the American settlement of the West, and a storyline that unfolds as a journey across the landscape. As such, these Post-apocalyptic Westerns interrogate the Western genre’s narrative of westbound movement across the landscape as associated with progress, success, and enlightenment. In addition, much like the films featured in the case study film whose odyssey is signified by the desert as a symbol of spiritual growth, Wasteland travels an inner
landscape of illumination. Designers might employ this process for their explorations of place as a pilgrimage across a landscape or as an illuminating exploration.

In the spirit of the editorial landscape essay film, *Wasteland* lays out an investigation of American settlement and expansionist narratives in the national consciousness. As a documentary practice, *Wasteland* takes a critical look at the spatialization of ideologies, the politicalization of landscape, and the implications of urbanization and Western culture on the natural environment and humanity. *Wasteland* suggests that a national agenda of unmediated growth is accomplished through design and planning practices via a three-pronged approach that undermines personal power, supported by institutional frameworks and the suggestive influence of mythology: a disconnect from the natural world (marketed as culture and development); contested space as a narrative of competition (inculcated as race, class, and exclusion); and urban renewal as a force of alienation, dislocation, and exclusion (promoted as a new opportunity or progress). The result is widespread alienation through the competitive forces of capitalism and resource extraction of labor and materials, with a meta-narrative of war on the self, nature, and Other. Eidetic montage capitalizes on the catalytic qualities of landscape that recall and create new memories, moment by moment. This is played out in *Wasteland* when the viewer is simultaneously remembering all of the Westerns they have ever seen, both in film and in television, as well as the embedded values of the Western as a national narrative in American politics, institutions, and policy. By bringing the mythical foundations of our nation into the forefront, landscape designers can more consciously engage with design and our communities.

As a pilgrimage of revelation, *Wasteland* reveals the cinema’s role as palimpsest of repressed trauma in the landscape, arguing that we each carry the historical wounds of indigenous genocide, and furthermore, that this is a symptom of a larger cultural disconnection from the natural world, buried deep in the collective subconscious, represented as a rupture symbolized as an apocalypse that leaves no plants or animals in a barren, deserted landscape. These two points are related, as it is our ability to reject our earthbound and animal selves (and project on others) that has allowed the industrial revolution to occur, and arguably persists in our individual and
collective distancing from the natural world. I suggest that these films with their landscapes devoid of flora or fauna reveal a profound but inchoate feeling of loss and disconnection from the natural world as a personal and communal tragedy.

At the same time, this loss is mostly ignored in the dominant narrative of urbanity, with a creeping numbness and repression of the catastrophic environmental loss present all around us. I submit that a deep despair for the deprivation of nature is represented by the wounded characters portrayed in the Post-apocalyptic Western that is in turn mirrored in the portrayed landscape: the absence of history and the forgotten garden of the outside world in *Logan’s Run* (1967); the mute humans and the dead zone in *Planet of the Apes* (1968); *Dead Man’s* (1995) sleeping and later, wounded, protagonist with the unlikely name of William Blake; the angry and ravenous zombies in *I Am Legend* (2007); the slow sickness of the man and the ashen landscape in *The Road* (2009); and the rampant blindness in *The Book of Eli* (2010). The protagonists in these films stand uneasily between the past and the future, as a bridge between tradition and progress, and many do not survive the final close of the film, simultaneously playing the role of victim, martyr, and savior. I submit that the desert(ed) landscape of the Post-apocalyptic Western represents alienation and an existential crisis brought on by a media-disseminated awareness of overwhelming urbanization and environmental destruction, paralleling an argument by media and cultural studies scholar David Melbye regarding Italian films made after World War II’s expansion of modernization. The prospect of a culturally held disconnection from the natural world has profound implications for landscape designers because of our affiliation with natural processes and a professional commitment to environmental sustainability. This is a concern because our beliefs certainly inform the design, management, and development of sites and places, and environmental designers may be unknowingly contributing to and perpetuating an incomplete sensibility of the human-nature bond. This dissertation seems to suggest that there is a disconnect between what the public is feeling and our professional services. As designers we are invited to revivify our commitment to the human-nature connection in our scholarship, pedagogy, and practice.
Secondly, *Wasteland* offers an explanation for increasing violence in public places and posits that Americans continue to perpetuate violence against the perceived Other in the imagined landscape of initiation. Here, every place becomes the blank slate of the archetypal iconic desert, a space of opportunity and claim-staking of resources through endless acts of genocide. Thus, the Other is no longer relegated to the movie screen but is everywhere, with more and more Americans seeking to protect themselves from imagined danger in our landscapes, profoundly illustrating how the cinema both reflects and perpetuates ideology in physical reality. If the cinema, and in particular, post-apocalyptic films reveal our repressed history like sleeping dreams and waking visions, the purpose of making *Wasteland* is to engender a dialogue around the cinematic construction of place and meaning in the context of the American narrative of war and contested space through a frontier ideology with embedded narratives on landscape, race, and power. I submit that these labels of Other are artificially constructed and have been co-opted by capitalism’s narrative of competition, aligning with political economic theory. This revelation provides insight into the vexing challenges of contested space and exclusionary practices in the designed and planned landscape and might be a way to quell animosity between groups and offer a starting point for negotiations.

Finally, *Wasteland* posits that a *tabula rasa* ideology, represented most iconically as an atomic bomb in the desert, has been played out on a variety of scales in the landscape, at home, and abroad. This is the narrative of both genocide and urban renewal, of public policy as well as the design process that literally starts with a blank piece of paper, although the “paper” is increasingly viewed on a computer screen. Influential historian Mircea Eliade has argued that creating a blank slate is historically associated with a sacred act.\(^{180}\) *Wasteland* also seems to suggest that the dream of the garden made anew has been hijacked for the purposes of expansionist and imperialist agendas, an implicit promise that the Garden of Eden will be our reward for our efforts. A longing to return to the Garden of Eden appears to be embedded in the national psyche, profoundly impelling the actions of individuals and communities. While this mythology has evolved since the image of America as Eden and the Promised Land was first
parleyed to the Puritans it still retains a sublime power. This insight is a testament to the power of
myth buried deep in the individual and collective psyche and revealed in popular film, which may
enliven our commitment to participatory processes and community engagement, and spark novel
means of stakeholder involvement.

The refractive type of landscape essay film is an opportunity to analyze the way in which
the cinema contextualizes and markets certain agendas through the cinematic techniques of
popular movies. Some have written that in the Western, space and time are selectively privileged
and de-privileged,\(^1\) while others argue that Westerns are framed in terms of a warrior’s gaze.\(^2\)
Borrowing from Kuleshov’s montage theory of artificial geographies, eidetic montage in
Wasteland creates intellectual, physical, mythic, and symbolic associations between landscapes
only connected on the screen, never possible in actual geography. When images of Western desert
landscapes from a variety of films are placed next to each other in Wasteland a new type of
geography is created, that of the mythic West as a ubiquitous presence in the American psyche.
The pervasiveness of these cinematic devices seems to suggest that a constant message of
domination removed from time may impel viewers to conceptualize their own experiences of the
American landscape as a milieu of contested space and perpetual war. By interrogating how
propaganda is disseminated through the cinema, the refractive film helps us think critically about
how images are found, manipulated, framed, and presented.

The self-portrait type of landscape essay film may be utilized to advertise one’s ability in
engaging eidetic montage in a hermeneutical fashion as a discursive research method that
straddles independent filmmaking, scholarly research, and artistic expression. A portfolio of these
works may be uploaded online to illustrate a designer’s skill in critical analysis, technological
ability, and thoughtful awareness for purposes of discussion, qualification, and dissemination.
Developing and posting Wasteland online is an example of this author’s ability to utilize
technology and develop a thought-provoking dialogue on landscapes for the purpose of scholarly
review and discussion on the value of the landscape essay film.
The development of *Wasteland* as a form of hermeneutical practice suggests that eidetic montage can be engaged to elucidate the meaning of landscape represented in the cinema, conceived of as a text. The benefits of hermeneutic readings for environmental design are threefold. First, I submit that landscape discourse and practice can gain from the analysis of filmic representations of landscape to assist in comprehending and appreciating ideas about place and site in the national conscience, including insight into unconscious ideas that have informed planning and development or prefigure trends that will influence landscape design and planning in the future. Secondly, the embedded meaning and associations of landscapes that have been portrayed in cinema provide specific land archetypes with which to discuss how the public perceives these places and how they believe they should be accessed, used, and managed, supporting land managers, designers, and policymakers alike. Lastly, designers are invited to find innovative ways to facilitate a deeper connection with the natural world and our clients, with opportunities for a dialogue on the nature-culture balance in design intervention.

**Summary of Case Study**

In conclusion, the landscape essay film offers several opportunities to support landscape discourse, education, and practice. Video and film’s verity provide a means to record, document, re-contextualize, analyze, and replay a site’s material characteristics, and offers an invitation to address the social and functional aspects that might otherwise be underserved in the traditional emphasis on physical, regulatory, and financial constraints. At the other end of the spectrum, conceiving the cinema as cultural palimpsest and engaging eidetic montage’s gnostic function, the landscape essay film provides a novel means with which to reveal unconscious or suppressed narratives about landscape that carry great power and impel our actions often without our conscious knowledge. If this review tells us anything it is that the landscape essay film need not be limited to only one type of modality but can be a combination of types depending on its intended purpose. As such, certain affordances will come forward while others retreat. The landscape essay film has the flexibility to address an endless array of tasks. However, every
landscape essay film will meet the modes of inquiry differentially and take a variety of forms, either focusing on one typology or a combination of filmic expressions.

**Evaluation of Case Study**

A series of matrices (Tables 1-4) were developed to evaluate the utility of using landscape essay films in landscape design practice, pedagogy, and scholarship. The criteria for analyzing this tool may be understood as an assignment of effectiveness in the film’s ability to address specific outcomes and intentions. This system employs a five part scale ranging from excellent, fair, poor, supportive, and not applicable to assess a landscape essay film’s organization, presentation, content, references, and applicability. Representational landscape essay films may be evaluated for their ability to represent physical characteristics, spatial conditions, and the more subtle landscape narratives in a site analysis, as well as analyzing the relationships between landscape imagery in the cinema and design outcomes, including aesthetics, morphology, and behavior. Analytic landscape essay films may be assessed for their ability to represent urban phenomena and spatial behavior, borrowing from anthropological traditions and social science methods. Theoretical landscape essay films provide an opportunity to link film production practices with design practices, and may be evaluated on how well they contribute to the landscape architecture and planning field. Hermeneutical landscape essay films maybe recruited to provide insight into collective and unconscious notions of landscape and may be assessed on how well they acknowledge the cinema as a rhetorical artifact with actively embedded meanings or as a palimpsest of suppressed narratives. These criteria were then used to assess the effectiveness of the landscape essay film *Wasteland* (Tables 5-8) in its intention to reveal otherwise invisible aspects of place and site in the American landscape.
### Table 1. Matrix: Effectiveness of Case Study - Representational Modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes of Inquiry</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Supportive</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diary</strong></td>
<td>Imagery is compelling; site is well represented; insight is thoughtful; high technical ability; and this work may inform future investigations.</td>
<td>Imagery is good; site is fairly well represented; fair technical ability; insight is developing; and its contribution is not obvious.</td>
<td>Imagery is poorly shot or reappropriated; site is poorly represented; poor technical ability; insight is nonexistent; and contribution potential is weak.</td>
<td>Imagery and insight is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modes.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notebook</strong></td>
<td>Imagery is compelling; site is well represented; high technical ability; film is well organized; insight is thoughtful; uses scholarly references; and has immediate applicability.</td>
<td>Imagery is good; site is fairly well represented; fair technical ability; insight is developing; few scholarly references; fair applicability.</td>
<td>Imagery is poorly shot or poorly reappropriated; site is poorly represented; poor technical ability; nonexistent insight; no scholarly references; no obvious applicability to the site analysis, research, or the field.</td>
<td>Imagery, insight, position, and organization is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview</strong></td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; excellent choice of interviewees who represent narratives of the site; thoughtful questions and responses; excellent context, including background.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair choice of interviewees who represent the narratives of the site; fairly good questions and responses; good context, including background.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor choice of interviewees because they lack perspective on the narratives or is skewed unfairly in one direction; poor questions and responses; poor context, including poor choice of background.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of interviews are not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travelogue</strong></td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; clear and thoughtful organization of story presented as an internal and/or physical journey; may include references.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair and somewhat thoughtful organization of story presented as an internal and/or physical journey; some references.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor organization of story presented as an internal and/or physical journey; no references.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of travelogue mode is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modes of Inquiry</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; clear and thoughtful organization around interrogation of historical events; clear development of a position; may include references.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair and somewhat thoughtful organization around interrogation of historical events; beginning to develop of a position; some references.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor organization around interrogation of historical events; no development of a position; no references.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of editorial mode is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refractive</td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; clear interrogation of the role of cinematic representations of landscape for propaganda purposes; may include references.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair interrogation of the role of cinematic representations of landscape for propaganda purposes; some references.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor interrogation of the role of cinematic representations of landscape for propaganda purposes; no references.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of refractive mode is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-portrait</td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; professional quality portfolio format; high technical and social media expertise.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair quality portfolio format; fair technical and social media expertise.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor quality portfolio format; poor technical and social media expertise.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of self-portrait mode is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Table 2. Matrix: Effectiveness of Case Study - Analytic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes of Inquiry</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Supportive</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diary</strong></td>
<td>Imagery and analysis explores flow patterns and social behavior as it relates to environmental design; employs social science informed methods of quantitative and qualitative research; thoughtful insight; high technical ability; and this work may inform future investigations.</td>
<td>Imagery and analysis somewhat explores flow patterns and social behavior as it relates to environmental design; fair employment of social science informed methods of quantitative and qualitative research; insight is fairly thoughtful; fair technical ability; and its contribution is not obvious.</td>
<td>Imagery and analysis does not explore flow patterns or social behavior as it relates to environmental design; poor or no employment of social science informed methods of quantitative and qualitative research; insight is lacking; low technical ability; and contribution potential is weak.</td>
<td>Imagery and analysis is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modes.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notebook</strong></td>
<td>Data and analysis on flow patterns and spatial behavior are clear; site is well represented; high technical ability; film is well organized; insight is thoughtful; uses scholarly references; and has immediate applicability.</td>
<td>Data and analysis on flow patterns and spatial behavior are clear; site is well represented; high technical ability; film is well organized; insight is thoughtful; some scholarly references; and has some applicability.</td>
<td>Data and analysis on flow patterns and spatial behavior are clear; site is well represented; high technical ability; film is well organized; insight is thoughtful; no scholarly references; no obvious applicability to the site analysis, research, or the field.</td>
<td>Data and analysis of flow patterns and spatial behavior, insight, position, and organization is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview</strong></td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; excellent choice of interviewees who represent social spatial phenomena of the site; thoughtful questions and responses; excellent context, including background.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair choice of interviewees who represent social spatial phenomena of the site; fairly thoughtful questions and responses; good context, including background.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor choice of interviewees to represent social spatial phenomena of the site; lacking thoughtful questions and responses; poor context, including background.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of interviews in context of analytic process are not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modes of Inquiry</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelogue</td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; clear and thoughtful organization of analysis presented as an internal and/or physical journey; may include references.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair and somewhat thoughtful organization of analysis presented as an internal and/or physical journey; some references.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor organization of analysis presented as an internal and/or physical journey; no references.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of travelogue mode in context of analytic process is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; clear and thoughtful organization around interrogation of data collection and analysis around historical events and spatial phenomena; clear development of a position; may include references.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair and somewhat thoughtful organization around interrogation of data collection and analysis around historical events and spatial phenomena; beginning to develop a position; some references.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor or nonexistent organization around interrogation of data collection and analysis around historical events and spatial phenomena; no development of a position; no references.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of editorial mode in context of analytic process is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refractive</td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; clear interrogation of the role of cinematic representations of landscape for analytic, social science, and anthropological purposes; may include references.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair interrogation of the role of cinematic representations of landscape for analytic, social science, and anthropological purposes; some references.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor interrogation of the role of cinematic representations of landscape for analytic, social science, and anthropological purposes; no references.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of refractive mode in the context of analytic process is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-portrait</td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; professional quality portfolio format; excellent presentation of analytic and social science informed research; high technical and social media expertise.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair quality portfolio format; fair presentation of analytic and social science informed research; fair technical and social media expertise.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor quality portfolio format; poor presentation of analytic and social science informed research; poor technical and social media expertise.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of self-portrait mode in the context of analytic process is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Matrix: Effectiveness of Case Study - Theoretical

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes of Inquiry</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Supportive</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diary</td>
<td>Clearly explores the links between film production practices and landscape design practices through the construction of an experience; thoughtful insight; high technical ability; and this work may inform future investigations.</td>
<td>Begins to explore the links between film production practices and landscape design practices through the construction of an experience; fairly thoughtful insight; fair technical ability; and its contribution is not obvious.</td>
<td>Poorly explores the links between film production practices and landscape design practices through the construction of an experience; poor insight; poor technical ability; and contribution potential is weak.</td>
<td>Exploration of the links between film production practices and landscape design practices is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notebook</td>
<td>Clearly explores the links between film production practices and landscape design practices through the construction of an experience; site is well represented; high technical ability; film is well organized; insight is thoughtful; uses scholarly references; and has immediate applicability.</td>
<td>Fair exploration of the links between film production practices and landscape design practices through the construction of an experience; site is fairly well represented; fair technical ability; film is fairly well organized; insight is fairly thoughtful; uses some scholarly references; its applicability is not obvious.</td>
<td>Poor exploration of the links between film production practices and landscape design practices through the construction of an experience; site is poorly represented; poor technical ability; film is poorly organized; poor or nonexistent insight; no scholarly references; no obvious applicability to the site analysis, research, or the field.</td>
<td>Exploration of the links between film production practices and landscape design practices through the construction of an experience, insight, position, and organization is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modes of Inquiry</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview</strong></td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; excellent choice of interviewees who contribute to theoretical explorations between film production practices and landscape design practices; thoughtful questions and responses; excellent context, including background.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair choice of interviewees who contribute to theoretical explorations between film production practices and landscape design practices; fairly thoughtful questions and responses; fair context, including background.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor choice of interviewees who contribute to theoretical explorations between film production practices and landscape design practices; poor questions and responses; poor context, including background.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of interviews in context of theoretical explorations between film production practices and landscape design practices are not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travelogue</strong></td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; clear and thoughtful organization of design experience and narratives in the landscape presented as an internal and/or physical journey; may include references.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair and somewhat thoughtful organization of design experience and narratives in the landscape presented as an internal and/or physical journey; some references.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor organization of design experience and narratives in the landscape presented as an internal and/or physical journey; no references.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of travelogue mode in the context of design experience and narratives in the landscape is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Editorial</strong></td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; clear and thoughtful organization around interrogation of how cinematic practices inform, and are informed by, design practices; clear development of a position; may include references.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair and somewhat thoughtful organization around interrogation of how cinematic practices inform, and are informed by, design practices; beginning to develop a position; some references.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor or nonexistent organization around interrogation of how cinematic practices inform, and are informed by, design practices; no development of a position; no references.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of editorial mode in context of how cinematic practices inform, and are informed by, design practices is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modes of Inquiry</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refractive</strong></td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; clear interrogation of the role of cinematic representations of landscape in promoting design ideas as cinematic; may include references.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair interrogation of the role of cinematic representations promoting design ideas as cinematic; some references.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor interrogation of the role of cinematic representations of landscape promoting design ideas as cinematic; no references.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of refractive mode in the context of promoting design ideas as cinematic is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-portrait</strong></td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; professional quality portfolio format; excellent presentation of the links between film production practices and landscape design practices; high technical and social media expertise.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair quality portfolio format; fair presentation of the links between film production practices and landscape design practices; fair technical and social media expertise.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor quality portfolio format; poor presentation of the links between film production practices and landscape design practices; poor technical and social media expertise.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of self-portrait mode in the context of the links between film production practices and landscape design practices; is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Matrix: Effectiveness of Case Study - Hermeneutical

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes of Inquiry</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Supportive</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diary</td>
<td>Imagery and analysis explores hermeneutic readings as embedded meaning from personal perspective; thoughtful insight; high technical ability; and this work may inform future investigations.</td>
<td>Imagery and analysis somewhat explores hermeneutic readings as embedded meaning from personal perspective; somewhat thoughtful insight; fair technical ability; and it is not obvious how this work may inform future investigations.</td>
<td>Imagery and analysis poorly explores hermeneutic readings as embedded meaning from personal perspective; poor insight; poor technical ability; and contribution potential is weak.</td>
<td>Hermeneutic reading of Imagery and analysis is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modes.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notebook</td>
<td>Excellent use of imagery and analysis to explore hermeneutic reading as a collective embedded meaning; obvious connection to a specific site; high technical ability; film is well organized; insight is thoughtful; clear development of a position; uses scholarly references; and has immediate applicability.</td>
<td>Fair use of imagery and analysis to explore hermeneutic reading as a collective embedded meaning; fair connection to a specific site; fair technical ability; film is fairly well organized; insight is fairly thoughtful; fairly clear development of a position; uses some scholarly references; and its applicability is not obvious.</td>
<td>Poor use of imagery and analysis to explore hermeneutic reading as a collective embedded meaning; poor connection to a specific site; poor technical ability; film is poorly organized; poor insight; poor development of a position; no scholarly references; and no obvious applicability to the site analysis, research, or the field.</td>
<td>Use of imagery and analysis to explore hermeneutic reading as a collective embedded meaning, insight, position, and organization is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modes of Inquiry</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Well shot, recorded, and edited; excellent choice of interviewees who provided insight into the films sampled; thoughtful questions and responses; excellent context, including background.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair choice of interviewees who provided insight into the films sampled; fairly thoughtful questions and responses; fair context, including background.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor choice of interviewees because they did not provide insight into the films sampled; poor questions and responses; poor context, including background.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of interviews in context of insight into films sampled are not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelogue</td>
<td>Well shot, captured, recorded, and edited; clear and thoughtful organization of hermeneutic analysis presented as an internal and/or physical journey; may include references.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, captured, recorded, and edited; clear fairly thoughtful organization of hermeneutic analysis presented as an internal and/or physical journey; few references.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, captured, recorded, and edited; poor organization of hermeneutic analysis presented as an internal and/or physical journey; no references.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of travelogue mode in hermeneutic analysis is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>Well shot, captured, recorded, and edited; clear and thoughtful organization around interrogation of historical events and ideological narratives; may include references.</td>
<td>Fairly well shot, captured, recorded, and edited; fairly thoughtful organization around interrogation of historical events and ideological narratives; few references.</td>
<td>Poorly shot, captured, recorded, and edited; poor organization around interrogation of historical events and ideological narratives; no references.</td>
<td>Capture, editing, and dialogue of editorial mode in context of around an interrogation of historical events and ideological narratives is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.</td>
<td>This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 5. Matrix: Analysis of Wasteland as Case Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes of Inquiry</th>
<th>Representational</th>
<th>Analytic</th>
<th>Theoretical</th>
<th>Hermeneutic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diary</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notebook</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelogue</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refractive</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-portrait</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Refractive**: Well shot, captured, recorded, and edited; clear interrogation of the role of cinematic representations of landscape for political and ideological agendas; may include references.
- **Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair interrogation of the role of cinematic representations of landscape for political and ideological agendas; few references.**
- **Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor interrogation of the role of cinematic representations of landscape for political and ideological agendas; no references.**
- **Capture, editing, and dialogue of refractive mode in the context of an interrogation of the role of cinematic representations of landscape for political and ideological agendas is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.**
- **This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.**

- **Self-portrait**: Well shot, recorded, and edited; professional quality portfolio format; excellent presentation of hermeneutic research of landscape representation; high technical and social media expertise.
- **Fairly well shot, recorded, and edited; fair quality portfolio format; fair presentation of hermeneutic research of landscape representation; fair technical and social media expertise.**
- **Poorly shot, recorded, and edited; poor quality portfolio format; poor presentation of hermeneutic research of landscape representation; poor technical and social media expertise.**
- **Capture, editing, and dialogue of self-portrait mode in the context of an interrogation of the role of cinematic representations of landscape is not directly connected to film but supports other modes of inquiry or research modalities.**
- **This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.**
Table 6. Evaluation of *Wasteland* as a Landscape Essay Film - Representational

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes of Inquiry</th>
<th>Supportive</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Supportive</th>
<th>Supportive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diary</td>
<td>The spatial and temporal representational affordances of film and video provide verity and realism to <em>Wasteland’s</em> strength as a hermeneutic interpretation. At the same time, diary type explorations of actual wastelands in a post-wildfire landscape in a series of vignettes supported and informed the development of <em>Wasteland</em>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notebook</td>
<td>The spatial and temporal representational affordances of film and video provide verity and realism to the representation of specific and iconic landscapes in clips that make up <em>Wasteland</em>. At the same time, the representational affordances of the cinema starts to interrogate the relationship between landscape imagery in the cinema and design and planning outcomes, drawing a line between mythology, ideologies, politics, and present day policy.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Interviews in the <em>Homelands</em> movie, developed as an investigation of the connections between ideologies and policy on public land in the West in preparation for assembling <em>Wasteland</em>, were not featured in the film but informed its work.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelogue</td>
<td>The spatial and temporal representational affordances of film and video provide verity and realism to the representation of American landscapes as a journey across the landscape, arguing that every American film is a Western, informing <em>Wasteland’s</em> hermeneutical reading and critique of the Western genre narrative.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>The spatial and temporal representational affordances of film and video provide verity and realism to an investigation of the representation of historical events. When <em>Wasteland</em> sampled archival footage of atomic testing the purpose was to interrogate a national narrative of everlasting war, and to frame iconic desert landscape imagery as a metaphor for the tabula rasa ideology that seems to characterize and inform American policy, management, and design.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refractive</td>
<td>The spatial and temporal representational affordances of film and video provide verity and realism to the interrogation of the cinema’s role in promulgating narratives of national ideology and identity, supporting <em>Wasteland’s</em> hermeneutic reading. One example is the gendered landscapes in Westerns, with long landscape vistas signifying the spaces of men and close-ups of domestic spaces signifying the space of women. Another example is how Westerns are shot in terms of the warriors gaze, as suggested by Jean Mottet. This observation later informed the hermeneutic reading of America as a landscape of war.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-portrait</td>
<td>The spatial and temporal representational affordances of film and video provide verity to <em>Wasteland</em> as a portfolio piece, informing <em>Wasteland’s</em> hermeneutic reading.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. Evaluation of *Wasteland* as a Landscape Essay Film - Theoretical

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes of Inquiry</th>
<th>Supportive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diary</td>
<td>By choosing to spend quite a bit of time shooting imagery of Western landscapes in other projects, especially around movement and the idea of the desert, a sense of how landscapes are conceptualized, experienced, formed, and re-presented began to coalesce around certain themes and interrogate the links between film production practices and design practices. Although not directly appearing in the film <em>Wasteland</em>, these diary like investigations supported its hermeneutic interpretation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notebook</td>
<td>As a more formal process than the diary mode of inquiry, the notebook mode of inquiry organized the structure of <em>Wasteland</em> and allowed the theories of eidetic montage, referential practice, predictive agency, and the tabula rasa ideology to emerge, informing the hermeneutic reading of the film. <em>Wasteland</em> as a cinematic montage also suggests a model for making transitions in landscapes (fade-in and fade-out), multiple and complex narratives (text and/or sound over imagery), storytelling (use of poem as organizing principle), metaphors as dominant themes (imagery of atomic bomb as metaphor for tabula rasa ideology), and multi-dimensional narratives (split screens and other technology of non-linear editing programs). There is an implicit invitation for these film production techniques to be used in landscape design, linking film production practices and landscape design practices, as well as a critique of design practices that are informed by the tabula rasa ideology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>N/A This mode of inquiry was not engaged for the landscape essay film in question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelogue</td>
<td>Fair The organization of <em>Wasteland</em> constructed as a journey begins to suggest how landscapes can be designed to be experienced like a story, with key concepts taken from films with monomythic narratives, linking the construction of an experience as a similarity between film production and design practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>Fair By referencing the ideology and imagery of Western genre films and the Post-apocalyptic Western, <em>Wasteland</em> interrogates how national ideals conflated with desert landscapes are embedded into our memories and find their way into popular and professional ideas about landscape and design interventions. This query suggests a more reflexive investigation into the links between cinematic representations of landscape and how landscapes are designed, experienced, and managed, including the rhythm, aesthetics, and expectations of geography, flora, fauna, and density of these places. An example is how public land in the West is a constant negotiation between business interests (resource extraction, ranching, recreation, etc.), natural management (ecosystems), and aesthetics (wide open places devoid of people, preferably).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refractive</td>
<td>Fair In the refractive mode, <em>Wasteland</em> interrogates the notion of Western landscapes (and by default, those that reference them in imagery or ideology) as having to be cinematic, that is, they must have drama, a certain type of lighting, engender an experience as a hero’s journey, and contain specific iconography, framing, and visual perspectives. The question is, what happens when one’s experience of the landscape does not meet preconceived notions, such as the uneventful drive in Monument Valley or the HOA that tells someone they can’t shoot guns and reenact their favorite Western in the neighborhood, a property that they probably chose for its visual similarity to their favorite Western.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 8. Evaluation of Wasteland as a Landscape Essay Film - Hermeneutical

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes of Inquiry</th>
<th>Self-portrait</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fair</strong></td>
<td>As a cinematic portfolio, <em>Wasteland</em> suggests that designers can illustrate how cinematic practices might inform design, particularly around presentation formats and multi-medium exchanges of information for the purposes of proposals, bids, marketing, as well as the importance of technical expertise and social media in design practice, pedagogy, and scholarship. These practices might not only inform the evolution of the portfolio but also how landscapes are analyzed, conceptualized, and designed, with a keen eye to the storytelling affordances of the cinema.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes of Inquiry</th>
<th>Diary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supportive</strong></td>
<td>Several years before assembling <em>Wasteland</em>, the landscape essay film <em>Ventana</em> (2009) was created to explore the imagery and meaning of American Westerns, Road genre films, representations of the desert, movement in the landscape, and urban dystopia. Retracing the landscapes of <em>Easy Rider</em> (1969) in a section from Colorado to Taos, New Mexico, this imagery was not included in <em>Wasteland</em> but ultimately informed its hermeneutic investigation of the tension between the representation of iconic landscapes and the actual experience of those places, as well as providing insight into other patterns of landscape design such as suburbia and the contemporary city.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes of Inquiry</th>
<th>Notebook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong></td>
<td>Organized around a stanza from T.S. Eliot’s poem “The Waste Land,” combining clips of landscapes in Westerns and Post-apocalyptic Westerns and archival footage in <em>Wasteland</em> became a portal to deeper insight guided by the emotions, feelings, memories, and associated meanings of these landscape for the author/artist. The alchemical power of eidetic montage seems to engender this process, leading to hermeneutic insights perhaps not realized in other formats. While the technical ability was only fair (transitions were a bit rough, text was too quick in some places, voiceover was amateur), and the site was more of a region or idea than a specific place, the film clearly develops a position conceptualized as the political, social, and design ramifications of the tabula rasa ideology. Scholarly references support this thesis and since designers start metaphorically with a blank sheet of paper with an implicit prerogative to create something new, there is immediate applicability to our field.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes of Inquiry</th>
<th>Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supportive</strong></td>
<td>While <em>Wasteland</em> did not include filmed interviews in its sequence, filmed, recorded, and written interviews of Director Jim Jarmusch, whose film <em>Dead Man</em> (1995) was the subtext for <em>Wasteland</em>, as well as a personal interview with the actor Gary Farmer, who was one of the main characters of the aforementioned film, informed the hermeneutic readings of <em>Wasteland</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes of Inquiry</th>
<th>Travelogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong></td>
<td><em>Wasteland</em>’s organization as a travelogue references and interrogates the Western genre film’s narrative of movement as progress by arguing that the purpose of the Post-apocalyptic Western is one of revelation, revealing insights of America as a landscape of trauma and death and loss for connection to the natural world, supporting the theory of biophilia and introducing the theory of the tabula rasa ideology. As such, <em>Wasteland</em> presented as a physical and internal journey champions the landscape essay film as a hermeneutic practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pragmatic Applications

Drawing from the four proposed modalities and seven modes of inquiry, landscape essay films may be recruited for scholarship, pedagogy, and practice. Scholars, students, and designers may consider the utility of these options (Tables 9-17) to guide their decisions as to which variations they might choose to engage with for a specific purpose, whether that be scholarship, marketing, participatory process, programming, site analysis, schematic design and design development, construction documents and project management, maintenance, and post-occupancy evaluation. In addition, educators, students, and professionals may consult the aforementioned rubrics (Tables 1-4) to advise and evaluate the efficacy of landscape essay films in research, classroom, and office settings.

Landscape scholars and researchers will lean toward the analytic, theoretical, and hermeneutic modalities of the landscape essay film in an effort to critically engage with the phenomena and meaning of place, including emergent patterns, theoretical and experiential

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<tr>
<th>Modes of Inquiry</th>
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<th>Refractive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>In the documentary tradition <em>Wasteland</em> interrogates American settlement and expansionist narratives promulgated through the media, including the pervasive imagery of the Western genre film as a method of delivery for national agendas, identities, and ideologies. This investigation results in an explicit critique of widespread alienation through the competitive forces of capitalism and resource extraction of labor and materials, with a meta-narrative of war on the self, nature, and Other. This position is supported by references and engages the compelling nature of landscape represented in high definition Blu-Ray.</td>
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<td>Refractive</td>
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<td>By interrogating how propaganda is disseminated through the cinema, the Refractive mode of inquiry helps us think critically about how images are found, manipulated, framed, and presented. If Wasteland had gone into more detail how this is accomplished it would start to approach an Excellent rating, but the film as it is has only a fair discussion of how cinema contextualizes and markets certain agendas through the cinematic techniques in popular movies. However, eidetic montage in <em>Wasteland</em> creates intellectual, physical, mythic, and symbolic associations between landscapes only connected on the screen, an artificial geography of endless Western desert landscapes that suggests the mythic West as a ubiquitous presence in the American psyche.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-portrait</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>As an example of the landscape essay film as a hermeneutic practice <em>Wasteland</em> illustrates fair quality capture of imagery, editing, and content. Because this film was posted to the Internet through a website with a protected password, this works shows fair technical and social media expertise.</td>
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contributions, and the latent aspects of landscape. Professionals will find the representational and analytic modalities more useful for the more accessible qualities, particularly the physical and contextual conditions of site analysis, including bounded spatial and temporal characteristics, historic use, significant patterns, natural processes, legal constrictions, neighborhood context, and precedent studies. The representational and analytic modes may also be used to record client and public meetings, participatory processes, project management, maintenance, and post-occupancy evaluations. Designers can look to theoretical interpretations for ideas on how cinematic practices may inform landscape design, and hermeneutic readings for the more subtle attributes of space and place. In this context, students may resource all four modalities, depending on the focus of their coursework as design, which revels in the representational mode, or at the other end of the spectrum, history and theory classes, which thrive on theoretical and hermeneutic interpretations. Although landscape design and site analysis studios are typically skewed toward material conditions that the representational mode excels in, the pedagogy may benefit from the addition of the analytic, theoretical, and hermeneutical modalities in landscape workshops to unearth the understated traits of a site. Students may go out into the field with video cameras to not only record landscape characteristics but also flow patterns and use over time, interviews, experiential impressions, and movement through a space. Back in the classroom, films may be screened to discuss spatial behavior in the analytic modality, design inspirations in the theoretical modality, and in the hermeneutical modality the more subterranean narratives of place in a local, regional, national, and global context. The self-portrait mode of inquiry may be employed to illustrate one’s skills, a marketing tool for design professionals, a multi-media portfolio for students, and a curriculum vitae (C.V.) for scholars and researchers.
Table 9. Utility Matrix: Pragmatic Applications - Scholarship

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<th>Modes of Inquiry</th>
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Table 10. Utility Matrix: Pragmatic Applications - Initial Client Consultation/Bid/Contest/Marketing

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Table 11. Matrix: Pragmatic Applications - Participatory Process, Public Meetings

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Table 12. Utility Matrix: Pragmatic Applications - Programming

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Table 13. Utility Matrix: Pragmatic Applications - Site Analysis

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Table 14. Matrix: Pragmatic Applications - Schematic Design, Design Development

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Table 15. Matrix: Pragmatic Applications - Construction Documents, Project Management

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Table 16. Matrix: Pragmatic Applications - Maintenance

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Table 17. Matrix: Pragmatic Applications - Post-occupancy Evaluation

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CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

The landscape essay film has the potential to re-present landscape experiences, analyze spatial dynamics, inspire novel practices, and unearth hypogeal notions, engendering rousing discussions around landscape and representation. This method could contribute to landscape theory and scholarship, be engaged in educational spheres, and be utilized by those in practice to assist in delving more deeply into a holistic sense of landscape, including those aspects not typically addressed in traditional ways of thinking about the land. As a revelatory practice, the landscape essay film may reveal hidden, forgotten, or suppressed aspects of landscape, engaging ways of seeing that encounter often marginalized dialogues about site and place, participating as social advocate, outspoken activist, and political voice.

Opportunities for Further Research

As a research method, discursive dialogue, and artistic practice, the landscape essay film can assist in understanding the complexity of site analysis, design context, and historical narratives. It may be employed to unpack ideas about aesthetics, morphology, and use while offering insights into the cultural, sociological, and political motivations behind design intervention. If design is the handmaiden of aspirations, dreams, and beliefs, then much may be gleaned from a close reading of films about landscape and its archetypes, presaging trends and movements as well as explicating contemporary contested issues. Future research may engage the four types of landscape essay films that I have introduced here through the seven modalities borrowed from the essay film practice to analyze the landscape as a site with physical characteristics; as a setting for human interaction; as the embodiment of theory; and as symbol through the affordances of cinematic montage.

As way of example, I offer four scales of American landscapes that landscape designers most frequently engage with to illustrate this potential: the city, suburbia, rural countryside, and wilderness. In the design studio, professionals, educators, scholars, and students may combine
landscape inventories and analytic recordings from the field with design ideas borrowed from cinematic production techniques and hermeneutical interpretations of place to develop a rich exploration of meaning of specific landscapes and their physical and social context. These methods can also be understood in the language of film studies as capture, portray, editing, and interpretation, as well as Helphand’s taxonomy of landscape in the cinema as subject, setting, character, and symbol.

The City as a Landscape of Contestation and Transgression

In addition to cinema documenting the rise of industrial capitalism as a paean to modernism or cautionary tale of alienation, planners and designers may analyze films for insight into how space is negotiated in the urban context. The authors of the edited anthology, *Space in America: History Theory Culture* contend that the nature of space in America has always been a contested terrain of social and cultural conflict.183 If cinema is an artifact that will “constitute a kind of empirical evidence for an understanding of urban space,” 184 as suggested by comparative literature scholar Ackbar Abbas, then a close reading of films that engage the role of power, identity, and space are fruitful discussions for landscape planning and design. If the organized street grid in film represents a restraint of male aggression and masculinity as suggested by cultural geographers Stuart C. Aiken and Chris Lukinbeal, 185 then it might be useful to explore how space and identity is navigated outside the constrictions of planned space. Film studies scholar Paula Masood has employed the concept of the chronotope to frame the discourse of contested space in film as the nexus of *topos* (place, person, figure) and *chronos* (time) to analyze African American cinematic narratives about place. Masood reinterpreted Mikhail Baktin’s concept of the chronotope as “…the play between visual and aural signifiers contributes meaning to film, anchors the narrative in a historical moment, and acknowledges the existence of complementary or contradictory spaces and times in a single text.” 186 This method has extraordinary utility for understanding the negotiation of space through the rubric of power and identity.
Since public spaces are of particular interest to designers their representation might be valuable in understanding how spaces are designed, used, and negotiated. Scholar Aili Zheng studies the relationships between language, literature, culture and film. She wrote, “In film, public spaces thus become palimpsests of physical attributes and cultural inscription.” Films may also illustrate how people think about our cities, informing how the public perceives and participates in planning issues, an argument also made by Carl Abbott. Cities have certain associations because of the media and historical representations, such as New York City and romance, Los Angeles and violence in public places or dystopia, New Orleans and the literal and mythic associations of the swamp, Detroit as ground zero for race relations and the site of deconstruction and reconstruction, as well as more recent sites covered in the media such as Ferguson, Missouri and Sandy Hook, Connecticut. If cinematic representations of the city have the ability to represent cultural shifts as suggested by Barbara Mennel, then movies about urbanity can be used to comprehend the philosophical and theoretical frameworks of contested space and the evolving agency of landscape for the mutual benefit of urban designers and city dwellers.

The Changing Perception of Suburbia

The ubiquity of the suburban landscape requires a thoughtful study of its representation. Media and communication studies scholar Roger Silverstone wrote, “the experience of suburbia is central if we are to make sense of our everyday life… in the twentieth century.” English scholar Robert Bueka argued that the suburban landscape both reflected and facilitated the physical manifestation of the dominant narrative as “a massive expansion of the middle-class, a heightened valorization of the nuclear family, and consequent reification of gender identities, a trend - both utopian and exclusionary in nature - toward cultural homogenization, and a collapsing of the distinction between public and private spaces.” Yet despite this apparent significance, “the suburbs have remained underrepresented in the increasingly popular theoretical study of place.” Perhaps because of its role as the “symbolic manifestation of the values and contradictions of dominant US culture,” suburbia as a locus of desperation looms large in the
national conscience inferred by the number of movies dedicated to suburban living dysfunction.\textsuperscript{194}

**Rural Places as Sites of Expansion and Contraction**

Planning scholar Colin McArthur has written that we can only understand the American city by probing what he refers to as the ‘country/city opposition’ that ebbs and wanes through history but is deeply ingrained in the national conscience. He believed this is typified as the valorization of the rural as “antiurban, pro-small town/agrarian/pastoral/wilderness ideologies in American life,” but also functions as an “icon of bigotry, small mindedness and explosive violence” in American cinema.\textsuperscript{195} Film studies scholars Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield contend that the city/country relationship is one of tension rather than contrast and that the representation of the rural has been underserved as a result of the dominant discourse of urban development. They wrote, “whereas the urban milieu defines ‘the national’ in terms of technology, progress, and forward development, the rural milieu provides its own definition, via its depiction of traditional folkways and mores and its evocation of continuity despite the march of time and change.” \textsuperscript{196}

While acknowledging this gap, Fowler and Helfield advocate for more critical analysis of these films for the opportunity to engage with a fuller spectrum of ideas about place, including the less popular narratives. As they put it, “The mise-en-scène of the urban milieu can express a strong sense of claustrophobia: compressed and clogged with the detritus of city life (telephone and electric wires, traffic lights), urban space may delimit, rather than amplify, opportunities for growth. Correspondingly, the mise-en-scène of the rural milieu, with its open, uncluttered vistas of big sky and expansive terrain, may suggest a barren and lonely place.” \textsuperscript{197} The rural landscape has an important role in the national conscience as the place where the urban dweller escapes to when their city life becomes too overwhelming, as well as the place where they escape from in a bid for a life of opportunity and stimulation, a relationship that warrants consideration in our study of the American landscape.
Wildness and Wilderness

Another topical subject for the landscape essay film is the representation of wildness and wilderness. This year we mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Wilderness Act, which defined wilderness as an "area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Yet, as we hear the warning bells of climate change, a debate has been brewing on the role of human intervention between those who advocate a hands-off philosophy and those who argue for the reluctant gardener. Reviewing films that engage with these stances might help us separate science from story and navigate a way to honor the public perception of how these places might be managed with actual ecological practices. Films such as Nanook of the North (1922) and Jeremiah Johnson (1972) promote beauty and awe in natural places canonized as untouched wilderness. However, most of the films of this genre combine a fascination of the natural environment with a journey of survival, where the hero meets and conquers a series of challenges in the classic monomyth format. Yet other films employ the wilderness landscape to signal a protagonist’s degenerating psychological condition, a departure from the Hero’s journey, where the “protagonist’s attempt to conquer a particular wilderness is an inward odyssey toward the core of his own psyche wherein the ‘error’ of his self-importance and will to power become increasingly apparent.”

Strengths and Limitations of the Landscape Essay Film

Drawing is immediate, requires simple, easily found tools, and is an archival representation of thoughts, images and ideas. Drawing is also dialogue, an iterative process of engaging with the site, client objectives and the designer’s creativity. Some have argued that drawing has a generative role; “drawing acts as a producing agent or ideational catalyst.” However, design is mediated, precipitating a distancing between the designer and the landscape. The creative process of making landscape essay films seeks to reconcile that distance, where research, creativity, and design meet. However, making landscape essay films also requires an additional layer of technology and time to accomplish even a short film, using hours instead of minutes to learn, download, and edit, in addition to access to a laptop, electricity, and software, creating another sort of separation between designer and landscape. This is a
concern echoed by architect and architecture scholar Juhani Pallasmaa, who has argued that the extensive amount of time that students spend in front of the computer further distances them from the real world, contributing to an incomplete sense of site.

In addition to accessibility and affordability as a strength of the landscape essay film, the current generation of students has grown up with a familiarity with digital technology and are facile in exploring and expressing themselves with software available today. However, while non-linear editing programs make putting together a landscape essay film both enjoyable and relatively effortless, accessing the original film files is not always straightforward, particularly when working with high definition formats such as HD and Blu-Ray. Media companies go to great lengths to protect their intellectual and artistic property so breaking encryption codes may involve some patience and require access to a variety of resources. While films about landscape are compelling for their imagery and are arguably best represented with the higher end formats, there are fewer software packages for breaking these high-definition files than regular DVD files, and one requires generous storage space and a fairly recent and fast computer, adding considerably to the cost. It may be best to encourage working with regular DVD files in a classroom setting because these files are a fraction in size of higher end formats, saving both time and money in both accessing and editing. In light of this, it is advisable to reserve the higher end films to landscape scholars, practitioners, and artists.

Another consideration is the age, education level, and role of the designer. A small collection of publications in this field, access to new research in the university setting, along with the technological barrier, may slant the use of this research method primarily to the younger generations. In addition, practitioners are unlikely to incorporate film-making into their billable hours so will be less likely undertake this activity themselves, mostly because of time constraints but also because of unfamiliarity with this method. However, perhaps there are opportunities for those working with community groups to research the unspoken aspects of landscape not typically found in the regular site analysis process or even the public participatory process. In addition to students and recent graduates, this method might appeal to landscape scholars, artists, and activists who long to engage with the politics of landscape and representation much as a
documentary filmmaker might use this method to educate and increase awareness around an issue. This is another reason that the high-definition files might appeal to this latter group because of the opportunity to show their films at film festivals and other public venues for the purpose of discussion and dialogue, where high quality is required for large screens.

The four-part typology also presents its own unique strengths and weaknesses. In terms of representational affordances, film and video’s ability to dynamically portray the sight and sound of landscape imparts a realism that cannot be met by drawings or still photographs alone. The affordability and availability of video cameras and digital cameras with video modes in educational and professional spheres lends itself well to landscape inventory and site analysis in studio practice. However, lens length and other techniques can be used to manipulate the perception of space and place, which may privilege certain characteristics while ignoring others, skewing design interventions in a direction not necessarily supported by actual characteristics, a point also made by urban design scholar Peter Bosselmann. At the same time, while some scholars contend that films about place influence aesthetics and morphology, the connection between portrayal of landscape and design outcomes is tenuous at best, mostly because we lack a systematic process to determine cause and effect relationships. However, urban design scholar Rafael E. Pizarro has suggested the employment of audience research (Screen Theory) combined with Stuart Hall’s “encoding/decoding” reception theory to study the relationship between viewer activity and design interventions.

While film and video’s visual and aural affordances provide verisimilitude to analytic purposes of environmental design research, the illusory ability of the cinematic arts contributes to a dubious reliance on film and video to elucidate urban experience and social spatial phenomena. Using filmic techniques such as storyboarding and computer animation in design pedagogy and practice is gaining momentum, particularly with studio instructors as a tool to assist designers in visualizing their projects. Yet, the inclusion of these techniques is few and far between, limited by financial and time resources, as well as unfamiliarity with these options. However, the possibility of developing novel theory through the landscape essay film and eidetic montage hold great promise for future research and scholarship. Similarly, reading films hermeneutically for
insights into landscape issues opens up a new realm of discourse, although it may be limited by
the fact that these interpretations are very personal and may not be shared by others.

**Summary**

In summary, the cinema as a repository of ideas about landscape and place can be
excavated like an archeologist unearthing artifacts in carefully laid layers of a culturally
constructed palimpsest. However, these shards and bones are often the political, social, and
symbolic relics long ignored in the glorified search for resplendent treasures at the main ruins
while the real story lies buried in the midden of a site. The opportunity of the landscape essay
film is to rediscover those narratives that have been abandoned, erased, lost, or omitted and bring
them back into the light, revivifying and resourcing the wisdom of what seems like a forgotten
civilization, uncovering ancient treasures that may have been left behind in the headlong dash
toward industrialization, acculturation, and urbanization. These revenants of time and space
embody the ancestral memories of the past and may provide inspiration for our future imaginings.
As such, the landscape essay film can be recruited to augment, galvanize, and invigorate site
analysis, historical documentation, precedent patterns, creative impulses, stakeholder input, and
design activism.

Film and landscape architecture share some salient similarities: a highly eidetic
presentation, a concern with the rhythm of experience, a reliance on movement and temporal
unfolding, a fascination with symbol and metaphor, the significance of memory, the importance
of reception practices, the tension between art and commerce, the social implications of the work,
a claim of salubrious effects, an association with the garden, not to mention landscape
architecture’s cinematic heritage and the cinema’s landscape tradition. The landscape essay film
honors this affinity and holds promise for a more collaborative role in the future.

As this research has shown, cinema has had a hand in constructing the narratives and forms
of our landscapes, in both the rural and urban context, quietly informing design practice,
pedagogy, and scholarship. At the same time, this resource has not been fully capitalized upon.
Yet these three areas of influence are in need of further attention in the environmental design literature, as a studio subject, and through paid client projects. While the influence of the cinematic arts and the utility of creating cinematic montages around landscape dialogues suggests further research, the benefits of those discourses may only be realized if these influences are acknowledged by published research, discussed in trade conferences, incorporated in the curricula of design schools, and used in professional practice.

It is the intention of this dissertation to provide a toolkit to investigate narratives of place through methodological, theoretical, and technological contributions. As a methodology, the landscape essay film as a discursive practice offers a research method and site analysis tool for landscape design and planning that encourages a greater inclusion of voices and landscape meanings. Stakeholder involvement might increase through the dual forces of affordability and medium, actively supporting a social justice agenda. Engaging low-cost technology levels the playing field in how people articulate space and meaning, while providing a new language of landscape through imagery that bypasses elitist associations of written text, expanding democratic access to dialogues around space and place.

As a method, the four-part methods of analysis typology suggests film and video as representational, analytic, theoretical, and hermeneutic resource for designers and planners. This research also promotes seven modes of inquiry through the diary, notebook, interview, travelogue, editorial, refractive, and self-portrait types of landscape essay film. Theoretical contributions include eidetic montage as a unique quality of landscape discourse through moving imagery; referential practice as a model for landscape design to quote other forms, patterns, and ideas, linking film production practices with design practices; predictive agency provides insight into contemporary issues and reveal patterns and ideals that might inform future design and policy; the tabula rasa ideology as a force behind design and planning interventions as well as individual behavior; and support for the biophilia hypothesis that encourages landscape architects and planners to revivify our connection wit the natural world. In terms of technology, this research offers a process for breaking encryption codes on digital files and transcoding them for use with
non-linear editing tools. As such, this research is an open invitation for these resources to guide future research, discourses, and practices.
ENDNOTES

1 Also known as the Three E’s of Sustainability, as well as the imperative of landscape architecture professionals.


4 Moore and Webber wrote, “Philosophers of technology have long established that each tool brings with it very different types of knowledge and practices that already have social values embedded in them.” Steven A. Moore and Rebecca Webber, “Expert Culture, Representation, and Public Choice: Architectural Renderings as the Editing of Reality,” in Philosophy and Design: From Engineering to Architecture, ed. Pieter E. Vermaas and Peter Kroes (New York: Springer, 2008), 288.


Anne Spirn wrote, “I believe the lack of a language that embodies the full scope of our concerns is the essential crisis in our discipline today…exaggerated by our habit of borrowing theory, methods, and vocabulary from other fields…We need a language of design that represents the scope and concerns of our discipline. We need a language that integrates natural processes and human purpose; a language that will enhance how we experience and ‘read’ the landscape and how we design it, a language that will permit us to assess how well the landscapes we make satisfy our fundamental physical, social, and spiritual needs, a language that will link the everyday with art, the past with the future, and the scale of the garden with the scale of the region.” Anne Whiston Spirn, “Most Important Questions,” Landscape Journal 11, no. 2 (1992): 80; James Corner, “Representation and Landscape: Drawing and Making in the Landscape Medium,” Word & Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry 8, no. 3 (1992): 243-275; Joern Langhorst argues that in the age of globalism finding appropriate forms of representation is one of the more pressing obligations of the profession. “This challenge has increased in both scope and urgency as these disciplines are dealing with increasingly complex systems and forces, as these disciplines are dealing with increasingly complex, multi-valent, multi-variant, nested and coupled systems and forces, and, as resources become more limited, with increasingly contested situations involving a multitude of participants and stakeholders.” Joern Langhorst, “Between and Rock and a Hard Place: On the Dialectics of Landscape and Representation,” (proceedings from the 2009 Design & Communication Conference, ‘Bridging Communication- Consilience: Connect – Include – Mediate,’ Southern Polytechnic University, March 25-28, 2009).


Kelvin Shawn Sealey, ed., Film, Politics, & Education: Cinematic Pedagogy Across the Disciplines (New York: Peter Lang, 2008).

Landscape practitioner and scholar James Corner promoted an ever evolving theorizing of landscape as an “ongoing medium of exchange,” and has championed novel forms of representation to supplement the landscape discourse. He wrote, “Over time, landscapes accrue layers with every new representation, and these inevitably thicken and enrich the range of interpretations and possibilities.” James Corner, “Introduction: Recovering Landscape as a Critical Cultural Practice,” in Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture, ed. James Corner (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 5.


18 Referencing Berlin at the turn of the century but applicable to other cities of that time, Uricchio noted the symbiotic relationship between the city and the cinema. William Uricchio, “The City Reviewed: Berlin’s Film Image on the Occasion of its 750th Anniversary,” *Film and History*, 18, No. 1 (1988), 17.

19 Ackbar Abbas, building upon Georg Simmel’s thesis at the turn of the century that city dwellers develop a set of defensive responses to the hyperstimulation of the city, argued that the invigoration of urban life engendered the cinema. Abbas wrote that “city life, because of its exigencies, produces a kind of training or conditioning. It conditions us to respond to multiple stimuli simultaneously and so establishes the conditions for imagining a new type of image, the moving or cinematic image.” Ackbar Abbas, “Cinema, the City, and the Cinematic,” in *Global Cities: Cinema, Architecture, and Urbanism in a Digital Age*, ed. Linda Krause and Patrice Petro (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 144. Urban scholar Frederic Stout has suggested that the emergence of a novel type of visual culture that included journalism, photography, and the cinema evolved from a need to represent the complexity of the city during the Industrial Revolution to document social realism, often focusing on the story of young immigrants experiencing the city for the first time. He wrote, “For the cities of the Industrial Revolution, a number of forms of expression and modes of critical analysis arose to make sense of the dramatic and rapidly changing social reality.” Frederic Stout, “Visions of a New Reality: The City and the Emergence of the Modern Visual Culture,” in *The City Reader*, Third Edition, ed. Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout (New York: Routledge, 2003), 150, 143.

20 Abbas, “Cinema, the City, and the Cinematic,” 144.


23 The dark side of the cinema’s power was its ability to serve the dominant agenda at the expense of the marginalized. William Uricchio has suggested that the economic and social reality of nineteenth century urbanism – overcrowding, unhealthy living conditions, excessive crime, and exclusionary zoning – were largely ignored through active discrimination as well as through the representation of control. He wrote, “By maintaining a fixed, formally ordered and almost geometrically pure encounter with city (structured through simple pans, tracks and tilts with an emphatic insistence on creating a time-space continuum), the process of image structuring itself created a deep sense of order.” Uricchio, “The City Reviewed: Berlin’s Film Image on the Occasion of its 750th Anniversary,” 18.

25 See Tom Gunning, “The World Within Reach’: Travel Images without Borders,” in Travel Culture: Essays on What Makes Us Go, ed. C.T. Williams (Westport CT: Praeger, 1998), 30; Iris Cahn, “The Changing Landscape of Modernity: Early Film and America's 'Great Picture' Tradition,” Wide Angle 18, No. 3 (1996): 85-100. Martin Lefebvre wrote, “Cinema...developed at a time when our relation to space was undergoing important changes: nineteenth century colonialism; the development of ethnography in the context of Darwinism; the emergence of a traveling leisure class and of tourism (the word comes from the Grand Tour that young European aristocrats were expected to take during their formative years); new and faster means of locomotion; and the “discovery” and aesthetic appreciation of novel locations such as mountainous terrains, ocean shorelines, etc.” Martin Lefebvre, ed., Landscape and Film (New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2006), xx.

26 In the United States, films about the rural landscape are based upon the myths of one’s relationship to the land, with strong ties to national, regional, and individual identity. Scott MacDonald, The Garden in the Machine: a field guide to independent films about place (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001). This identity has its origins in the legacy of exploration and acquisition of land, informed by Manifest Destiny, the Western paradigm of rationalism, and the vision of the Garden of Eden as the Promised Land. David Jacobson, Place and Belonging in America (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002). The myth of the pristine American landscape, untouched until the arrival of European explorers, played an important role in transplanting a large newcomer population upon the colonized landscape. William M. Denevan, “The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492,” Annals of the Association of American Geographers 82, no. 3 (1992): 369-385.


29 Martin Lefebvre, ed., Landscape and Film (New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2006), xx.

Alan Williams, Film and Nationalism (New Brunswick, N.J. : Rutgers University Press, 2002).

Film theorist Andre’ Bazin proposed that the western owes its popularity to its mythic power, which in turn is inseparable from the landscape. Andre Bazin, What is Cinema?, Vol. II, trans. Hugh Grey (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), 141.

Richard Slotkin wrote that the Frontier narrative in the Western genre film promotes the ideals of American society and our sense of identity. He wrote, “According to this myth-historiography, the conquest of the wilderness and the subjugation or displacement of the Native Americans who originally inhabited it have been the means to our achievement of a national identity, a democratic party, and ever-expanding economy, and the phenomally dynamic and “progressive” civilization. The original ideological task of the Myth was to explain and justify the establishment of the American colonies; but as the colonies expanded and developed, the Myth was called on to account for our rapid economic growth, our emergence as a powerful nation-state, and our distinctively American approach to the socially and culturally disruptive processes of modernization.” Richard Slotkin, Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America (Norman, OA: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 10.


Even at a recent Sundance Film Festival the preponderance of Apocalyptic films was noted. “The Sundance Film Festival is not only a showcase for the best of new independent cinema, it's also a rollercoaster ride through some of the planet's most exciting and hidden stories. If the picture that emerged from the 26th festival is to be believed, the end of the world is very nigh. The vast majority of the festival's 186 films - or at least the 38 features and 10 shorts that this correspondent viewed - suggest we are all hurtling towards Armageddon.” Sebastian Doggart, “Sundancing Into the Apocalypse.” Huffington Post, 04/05/2010. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sebastian-doggart/sundancing-into-the-apoca_b_447775.html


Several scholars have offered interpretations of Western plot formulas. Historian John Cawelti, author of The Six-Gun Mystique, proposes three categories that define the Western film: Setting, “the Western is a story which takes place on or near the frontier;” Complex of Characters, “there are three central roles in the Western: the townspeople or agents of civilization, the savages or outlaws who threaten this first group, and the heroes who are above all ‘men in the middle,’ that is, they possess many qualities and skills of the savages, but are fundamentally committed to the townspeople;” and Types of Situations and Patterns of Actions, “there is a basic kind of basic situation which various Western plots tend to embody…this situation develops out of what I have called the epic moment when the values and disciplines of American society stand balanced against the savage wilderness.” (John G. Cawelti, The Six-Gun Mystique (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1971): 35, 46, 66-67; In The American West in Film: Critical Approaches to the Western, Jon Tuska analyzes Westerns in terms of seven formulas: The Pioneer Achievement Story, including the construction of infrastructure, businesses and other symbols of “progress;” Picaresque Wanderers and Searchers, the roving hero – a cowboy, gunfighter, or mountain man - journeys through the landscape seeking adventure; The Ranch Story/Town (sic) Western, the conflict between ranchers and other groups; The Justice/Revenge (sic) Theme, where justice is equated with revenge; The Indian Story, where the principal focus is an Indian or Indian tribe; The Outlaw Story, where the hero is an outlaw; and The Law Man Story, featuring men in uniform hired to maintain order, such as marshals and rangers. Jon Tusca, “The Structure of the Western Film,” in The American West in Film: Critical Approaches to the Western. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985): 17-38).

Pat Brereton noted the similarities between the Western and Road Movies when he wrote, “In many ways, road movies are similar to the trajectory of westerns, since both build on a physical and mental landscape and ‘compose a specific cultural grammar that stands behind the way the journey is organized from start to finish’ using ‘several alternative destinations.’ The romantic movement invented a kind of traveler, usually codified as a wandering male, on the road of endless nostalgic desire. For this romantic traveler the whole world and all space become a vast, homeless home, helplessly drawing on fantasies and idealizations which insured the endlessness of (his) desire. The journey became in many ways the object itself, loved as much for deferring what was equally feared and desired. Pat Brereton, Hollywood Utopia: Ecology in Contemporary American Cinema (Portland, OR: Intellect Books, 2005), 102.
Charles P. Mitchell explicates the distinction between the apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic storyline as, "A basic definition of apocalyptic cinema is a motion picture that depicts a credible threat to the continuing existence of humankind as a species or the existence of Earth as a planet capable of supporting human life. The genre of apocalyptic cinema is closely related to, yet distinct from, a similar genre known as post-apocalyptic cinema, which concentrates on survivors of a catastrophic event struggling to reestablish a livable society. In order to be classified as an apocalyptic film, the event threatening the extinction of humanity has to be presented within the story. If this catastrophe occurs prior to the events depicted on the screen, the film is post-apocalyptic. Naturally there can be a blurring of the lines of these two genres, and a number of pictures can legitimately be labeled as both." Charles P. Mitchell, *A Guide to Apocalyptic Cinema* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), xi.


43 Some have suggested that landscapes in the cinema play an allegorical role, that is, they symbolize something recognized through an accrual of layers of meaning by a specific culture. David Melbye wrote that this symbolism has its roots in Greco-Roman mythology, where characters in stories turned into features in the landscape or stood in for taboo subjects. Today these landscapes might be employed by filmmakers to reflect the inner states of the characters as 'landscapes of the mind.' Melbye, *Landscape Allegory in Cinema: From Wilderness to Wasteland*, 1, 4.


45 Bartter wrote, “In our cultural mythology, we canonize the frontiersman, who, untrammeled by law and undisturbed by neighbors, carves a living from the virgin land. Like the typical Heinlein hero, he has to be competent or die; he has no one to depend on but himself. Unlike the pioneer, who sets out to create a community in the wilderness, the frontiersman sees the city as pure evil: it represents physical pollution of the landscape and moral pollution of its inhabitants through overcrowding, exposure to the peculiarities of other kinds of people, and forced interdependence.” Bartter, “Nuclear Holocaust as Urban Renewal,” 149.
In 1975 J.B. Jackson expounded on landscape’s association with setting as a result of its burden of history. According to Jackson, the word ‘landscape’ not only fell into the public domain as a poetic metaphor but also became linked with a theatrical setting. J.B. Jackson, “The Word Itself,” in Discovering the Vernacular Landscape (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 5-6; James Corner has bemoaned the dearth in scholarship on landscape in film, which, according to him, has remained in the background of “cultural, imagery, and art.” James Corner, “Introduction: Recovering Landscape as a Critical Cultural Practice,” in Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture, ed. James Corner (Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 2; Kenneth Helphand expressed, “aesthetic…increasing attention to the landscape in recent scholarship and critique, there has been little explicit discussion of our topic, the designed landscape…” Kenneth Helphand, “Set and Location: The Garden and Film,” in Representing Landscape Architecture, ed. Marc Treib (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2008), 205; In 2004 John W. Danahy wrote, “Dynamic and immersive forms of visual media remain largely underdeveloped both technically and in terms of intellectual discipline in landscape architecture and planning.” John W. Danahy, “Dynamic Immersive Visualization: Negotiating Landscape Images,” in The real and the virtual worlds of spatial planning, ed. Martina Koll-Schretzenmayr, Marco Keiner, Gustav Nussbaumer (New York: Springer, 2004), 157.

This method is informed by the work of landscape scholar and documentary filmmaker Dr. Austin Allen, building upon the work of experimental filmmakers who have theorized with the filmic medium and adapted to explore ideas about landscape, a process he calls the Digital Essay.

Narrative cinema is characterized by a fictionalized story, event or narrative whereby all efforts are focused on making the story seem real. It is thought to be informed by the theatrical tradition and usually follows the Aristotelian structure of three acts. In *Poetics*, the Greek philosopher Aristotle described this as, “A whole is what has a beginning and middle and end,” defined as protasis, epitasis, and catastrophe (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Aristot.+Poet.+1450b&redirect=true). Most film scholars point to George Méliès’ film, *A Trip to the Moon* (1902), which featured an imagined, rather than recorded, reality as the originator of narrative cinema. Tom Gunning associated narrative cinema with, “…the narration of stories and the creation of a self-enclosed diegetic universe.” Tom Gunning, “The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avante-Garde,” *Wide Angle* 8, no. 3/4, Fall 1986, 68.

Documentary cinema can be understood as “a different kind of new filmmaking aimed at penetrating the surface of an exterior world to reveal the truth of real people and events.” Timothy Corrigan et al., *Critical Visions in Film Theory: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, (Boston, MA: Bedfords/St. Martin’s Press, 2011), 645. Many film scholars believe that the roots of the realist paradigm that later informed the documentary tradition are in Auguste and Louis Lumière’s projected image of a train arriving at a station using their Cinematographe machine in Paris in 1895. The original intention of this type of cinema utilized the camera as a tool to capture reality as an unmediated image.

Edward S. Small defined experimental filmmaking as acollaborative; auteur; economically independent; brief; a celebration of technology mental imagery; non-linear; and reflexive. Edward S. Small, *Direct Theory: Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre* (Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994), 19-22.


Tim Corrigan believes that the essayist’s ability to reconfigures temporality is realized “as a form of public thinking, as a kind of public diary.” Timothy Corrigan, *The Essay Film: From Montaigne, After Marker* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 132. In addition to the essay filmmaker’s ability to rearrange time, Rascaroli is also interested in the communication structures of the essay film as diary, engaging questions of authorship and identity, its potential as historical document and record, and the relationship to fictional writing. Laura Rascaroli, *The Personal Camera: Subjective Cinema and the Essay Film* (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2009), 116.


Corrigan wrote that experiential encounters with place sit uneasily with encounters of the self, where the landscape echoes the personal journey just as often highlights a sense of dislocation and placelessness. Corrigan, *The Essay Film: From Montaigne, After Marker*, 104-30.


The philosophical divide that originated in France at the turn of the century between the Méliès and the Lumières brothers was renewed in post-revolution Soviet Union by Bolshevik filmmakers in service of the agenda of the state, with filmmakers taking hard line stances between the dramatic montage theory of the formalists and the documentary theory of the realists. While their intentions were developed for rhetorical purposes, several revolutionary theories were realized from these propaganda objectives, including the montage theory still used by filmmakers today. While their contemporary Dziga Vertov was driven by a search for “cinematic truth” through the newsreel documentary in the everyday dramas of the street, Lev Kuleshov and Sergei Eisenstein preferred the theatrical conventions of narrative drama. See Dziga Vertov, *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O’Brien (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984); Sergie Eisenstein, *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, tran. Jay Leyda. (San Diego and New York: Harcourt Press, 1977).


This concept had humble beginnings. Using existing footage left over from the Tsarist film industry and documentary footage from the civil war, Kuleshov developed a montage theory known later as the ‘The Kuleshov Effect,’ whereby meaning is constructed through the conscious arrangement of the images. When Kuleshov re-appropriated imagery from the American film, *The White House in Washington*, to make it appear as if the White House existed in Moscow, he demonstrated that the cinema could create its own “artificial landscape” or “creative geography.” James Goodwin, *Eisenstein, Cinema and History* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 34; Lev Kuleshov, *Kuleshov on Film: Writings by Lev Kuleshov*, trans. Ronald Levaco (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 200; Kuleshov, *Kuleshov on Film: Writings by Lev Kuleshov*, 52-3.
Jenny Kwok Wah Lau, "‘Judou’: A hermeneutical reading of cross-cultural cinema,” *Film Quarterly* 45 (1991): 4. This idea has its roots in early the twenties when utopian theorists promoted film’s gnostic capacity. Film historian Tom Gunning wrote that for them, “The motion picture camera had the ability to not only to capture reality, but to penetrate it as a new instrument of the visible which had a revelatory mission.” Tom Gunning, “In Your Face: Physiognomy, Photography, and the Gnostic Mission of Early Film,” *Modernism/Modernity* 4.1 (1997): 1.

Considering the theoretical contributions of Christian Metz, Martin Lefebvre made a distinction between the phenomenological experience of film as art, which he refers to as *filmic discourse*, and the cinema’s superior ability to point to larger meaning, known as *image discourse*. A refinement between expression and signification is what made Metz known as the father of film semiology. Dominique Chateau and Martin Lefebvre, "Dance and Fetish: Phenomenology and Metz's Epistemological Shift," *OCTOBER Magazine* 148 (Spring 2014): 106.

Roland Barthes would say that the meaning of an essay lies not with the author but in the audience, who is charged with deciphering their own meaning, because a text is a conversation with innumerable cultures and authors. He wrote, “… a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, [and] contestation.” Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *Image /Music/Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 148.


Recent changes to copyright laws and the abundance of software programs available to extract, combine, and share digital media have allowed digital files that are easily transferred over the Internet to be available to the public. While film and media educators may use copyrighted material without permission for purposes of teaching and criticism under the safe harbors of the doctrine of Fair Use, for purposes of “criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research,” (see 17 U.S.C. § 107) only recently have film and media students been able to legally bypass access-control technology. As of July 2010 the Librarian of Congress announced exemptions to the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act (“DMCA”), which had previously prevented the bypassing of copyright controls on digital media, to allow for student use. (see 37 CFR Part 201, Exemption to Prohibition on Circumvention of Copyright Protection Systems for Access Control Technologies (17 U.S.C. § 1201(a)(1)) U.S. Copyright Office – Anticircumvention Ruling. [http://www.copyright.gov/1201/](http://www.copyright.gov/1201/)


This research utilized software from Aiseesoft, Pavtube, MPEG Streamclip, MDRP, and Slysoft.
See Edward S. Small, “Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre,” in Direct Theory: Experimental Film/Video as Major Genre. (Carbondale & Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press, 1994). Small wrote, “…I examine a type of film and video production that I contend does not function mainly as (fictive) popular entertainment nor as (documentary) information. Its major function is rather to theorize upon its own substance by reflecting back on its own intrinsic semiotic system(s)” (5); “…experimental film/video’s remarkable reflexivity helps allow this often overlooked, greatly misunderstood major genre to function as a type of theory, a manifest, immediate, direct theory that bypasses the limiting intervention of separate semiotic systems, especially the spoken or written language upon which the accepted history of film theory depends. This final thesis may prove the most controversial in that our culture implicitly equates discourse with logos.” (xv). Scott MacDonald wrote, “[I]nstead of foregrounding recognizable characters and narratives, the [experimental] theoretical films foreground the mechanical, chemical, perceptual, and conceptual structures that underlie the theatrical film experience in general.” Scott MacDonald, A Critical Cinema (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 2-3.


French contemporary philosopher Jacques Derrida criticized the dominant discourses of Western culture that perpetuated the hegemonic agenda of power through the privileging of the written and spoken word, and offered a strategy of deconstruction to break down hierarchical binary systems of thought, including the distinctions between mind/body, word/image, text/spoken word, etc. Arthur Bradley, Derrida’s Of Grammatology (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008). Media theorist Marcel O’Gorman argued that the Republic of Scholars, the tradition of academics that grew out of the Enlightenment and the development of the Kantian critique, along with the advent of the printing press, inform the mode of scholarship in academia, ultimately affecting how students are taught and scholars advance in their field. O’Gorman wrote, “This Republic of Scholars, with its faith in transparent language, scientific proof, and the text-based, linear, sequential essay, provides the methodology and discourse for all who wish to maintain affiliation within the academic apparatus.” Marcel O’Gorman, “The Search for Exemplars: Discourse Networks and the Pictorial Turn,” in E-Crit: Digital Media, Critical Theory and the Humanities (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 24. Others are concerned that logocentric scholarship might stifle creativity and the advancement of new knowledge by relying mostly on the known rather than through curiosity and personal discovery. Gregory L. Ulmer, Heuritics: The Logic of Invention (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1994), xii. In addition, recent research suggests that the cinema has been associated with better recall than text, regardless of the order of presentation. Paul S. Cowen, “Film and Text: Order Effects in Recall and Social Inferences,” Educational Technology Research and Development 32, no. 3 (1984):131-144.


Corner wrote, “…a mental conception that may be picturable, but may be equally acoustic, tactile or imaginative, unlike purely retinal impressions of pictures, eidetic images contain ideas, and lie at the core of processes of creativity.” James Corner, “Eidetic operations and new landscapes,” 153.

James Corner, "Eidetic operations and new landscapes,” 154.

James Corner, "Eidetic operations and new landscapes,” 158.

James Corner, "Eidetic operations and new landscapes,” 158.
Anne Spirn wrote, “We need a language of design that represents the scope and concerns of our discipline. We need a language that integrates natural processes and human purpose; a language that will enhance how we experience and ‘read’ the landscape and how we design it, a language that will permit us to assess how well the landscapes we make satisfy our fundamental physical, social, and spiritual needs, a language that will link the everyday with art, the past with the future, and the scale of the garden with the scale of the region.” Spirn, “Most Important Questions,” 80.


Phillip Lopate wrote, “Often the essay follows a helically descending path, working through preliminary supposition to reach a more difficult core of honesty[…]. The essayist often begins with a confession of pathology, prejudice, or limitation, and then in the best cases rises to a level of general wisdom that might be generously called philosophy.” Phillip Lopate, “In Search of the Centaur: the Essay-Film,” in Beyond Document: Essays in Nonfiction Film, ed. Charles Warren (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press), 244-5.

97 Stella Bruzzi wrote, “Most [documentary] practitioners recognize, by now, that documentary film can never offer a representation of real events indistinguishable from the events themselves, although theory has not yet come to terms with the value of such realization.” Stella Bruzzi, New Documentary: A Critical Introduction (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2000), 68.


100 Laura Rascaroli proposes that the Essay Film is structured around interpolation, which is dependent on an active viewer who is “called upon to engage in a dialogical relationship” with the enunciator and the text. Laura Rascaroli, The Personal Camera: Subjective Cinema and the Essay Film (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2009), 35.

101 Balázs’ argued that landscape in the cinema could be read like a human face for its mood (44), supported the dramatic narrative (57, 156), has a role in character development (126), and is never neutral (52). Béla Balázs, Bela Balazs’ Early Film Theory: Visible Man and the Spirit of Film, ed. Erica Carter, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Berghahn Books; Reprint edition, 2011).
Balázs wrote, “There can be no doubt that film has uncovered a new world that had been previously covered up. It has uncovered the visible world surrounding man and his relation to it. Space and landscape, the face of things, the rhythm of the masses, as well as the secret language of mute existence.” Balázs, Bela Balazs’ Early Film Theory: Visible Man and the Spirit of Film, 99.

Balázs, Bela Balazs’ Early Film Theory: Visible Man and the Spirit of Film, 54.

Frank Manchel, Film Study: An Analytical Bibliography, 1869.


http://vimeo.com/89677053 password is Wasteland

Vertov, Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov, 72.


Vertov, Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov, 17.

One example of the power of social media in the participatory process of design is Nader Afzalan and Brian Muller, “The Role of Social Media in Green Infrastructure Planning: A Case Study of Neighborhood Participation in Park Siting,” in Journal of Urban Technology 21, No. 3 (2014): 67-83.


Before receiving an MFA in Filmmaking from the University of Wisconsin Benning dropped out of graduate school to deny a military deferment, as he empathized with his friends who were dying in Viet Nam. He worked with migrant workers in Colorado teaching children how to read and write, and then helped start a commodities food program that fed the poor in the Missouri Ozarks. He has taught at major universities and currently teaches film and mathematics at CalArts. CalArts Faculty/Staff Directory. http://directory.calarts.edu/directory/james-benning; Benning broke into American independent cinema in the mid-1970s with images of working class cityscapes and landscapes around his home in Milwaukee and areas of the Midwest previously referred to as “flyover states,” by bringing some recognition to these locales as distinct places, defying the hegemonies of the coasts in commercial and independent cinema. He then moved to New York City in the early 80s and California in the late 80s, where he has been ever since. Scott MacDonald, *The Garden in the Machine: a field guide to independent films about place* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 97. Many of Benning’s films and lectures can be found at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLobmEoMcV_kMYG3_R2xaheUoBS8uDaK4h


In films such as *One Way Boogie Woogie* (1977), a series of vignettes of working class locations in Milwaukee, peopled by workers on break or going to work set against the desolation and alienation of an industrial landscape, and *One Way Boogie/27 Years Later* (2005), the working class work and live in alienating and often dangerous industrial landscapes.
In the 80s and 90s Benning, following in the footsteps of American pioneers and later, the Beat generation, takes his exploration on the road, traveling across the country and lingering at times in the southwest. *North on Evers* (1991) is an homage to the fictional voyage of *Easy Rider*, taken from the west coast to the Deep South, to the east coast and back again. Images are accompanied by crawling written text at the bottom of the frame, providing a personal history of these places. *North on Evers* is a bridge between his early films about people in landscapes and his later film about landscapes that speak of human presence but rarely show a human. *North on Evers* is punctuated by portraits of people, just as he would later make portraits of Western landscapes. In his “Westerns” he undertook the history and geography of the American Southwest, first in *Deseret* (1995), which juxtaposes images of the Utah landscape with lines from historical New York Times stories of the land as a contested terrain that bore the scars of settlement. Scott MacDonald wrote of *Deseret*, “…the history of Utah becomes a cinematic synecdoche for the evolution of American empire.” Scott MacDonald, “Interview with James Benning,” *Critical Cinema 5: interviews with independent filmmakers* (University of California Press, 1988-2006), 256. *Four Corners* (1997) employs imagery with voiceover to illustrate the geographic area’s history of cultural tension. Four scrolling texts of painters - Claude Monet; Mose Tolliver, a black laborer; an unknown Native American artist; and Jasper Johns - initiate each of the four landscape studies: the archeological “discovery” of Chaco Canyon in New Mexico by a pothunter who treated the locals poorly; Milwaukee’s history of uneasy race relations between black and whites; Mesa Verde’s ancient culture, and the tension between Anglos and Native Americans in Farmington, New Mexico. Historical layers are reconstructed around the datum of landscape. Jonathan Rosebaum argues that Benning employs formal structures to illustrate a historical narrative of race in *Four Corners*. “Image and text inform each other in a powerful way throughout the film, because there’s an interesting formal relationship between the way Benning constructs images and the way he recounts history - favoring landscapes that are blocked off in discrete layers, describing the means by which various racial and ethnic groups have displaced one another (which constructs narratives composed of various historical layers.” Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Essential Cinema: on the necessity of film canons* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 115.
Benning’s California Trilogy abides by carefully constructed 2 1/2 - minute shots from a stationary camera, enough time to watch clouds move, changes in light, and details often lost in shorter shots, while taking up issues of water, land use and population growth. In *El Valley Centro* (1999) Benning turned his lens on the agriculture of California’s central valley, revealing the miles of rows of food being grown to be shipped to places near and far. It opens with a breathtaking image of the drain that gathers water from the mountains to the expanded population below. *Los* (2000) portrays Los Angeles as a decaying city rather than the one glorified by Hollywood. *Sogobi* (2001) explores the interstitial spaces of wilderness in the California mountains. This series is best screened in one viewing, as one begins to become aware of thematic messages pulled through all three films of the enormous implications of urbanization and Western culture on the natural environment. Similarly, *RR* (2006) consists of 43 long takes of trains traveling through the landscape of America, Benning’s last film in celluloid. *RR* invites the viewer to reconsider the history of landscape painting, landscape photography, the temporal, the standardization of time, trains and locomotion, touring, capitalism and consumption, and patterns of settlement and diaspora. Benning said that *RR* is about a “sound-image relationship,” where he endeavored to distinguish between the different sounds from each train, even individual cars. Diegetic (the sound of the wheels on the tracks, a whistle blown, crickets, coyotes, geese) and non-diegetic sound (a baseball game, a nostalgic song, an old Coca Cola radio commercial, a preacher reading from Revelations, a refrain from a folk song) accompany the image of trains moving through the landscape. Sound gives us a different sense of place than without it: it both situates us, as with the diegetic sound, and also pulls us out of time, guided by nostalgia - a sort of Proustian time where memory brings us to perhaps another place and time. Humor and politics is also inherent. One asks, “is this my land and was it made for you and me?” when a train with hundreds of containers passes through a green field of young wheat is accompanied by the refrains of Arlo Guthrie’s “This Is Your Land.” Or the surprise of a train that passes by an RV park set next to the ocean, accompanied by the words of an offensive rap song. One is not sure if the music is coming from the RVs (typically owned by wealthy white retirees), the field nearby, the mind of the artist, or the personal opinion of the viewer. One of the more memorable shots is the last: a train pulls in front of a wind farm, with the mountains beyond and cast off vehicle tires in the foreground, carefully composed in thirds, an ironic twist on picturesque representation.


Trailer of *Los Angeles Plays Itself* (2003) and opportunity to view at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1MZ9rUby4s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w1MZ9rUby4s)


“The architects, engineers, and city designers trained in the design of cities acquire the skills necessary to represent what exists and what might become reality. But because the richness and complexity of the real world cannot be completely represented, they must, out of necessity, select from reality an abstraction of actual conditions…What they chose to represent influences their view of reality and very significantly defines the outcomes of designs and plans, and thus the future form of cities.” Peter Bosselmann, *Representation of Places: Reality and Realism in City Design* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1998), xiii; Christophe Girot, “Vision in Motion: Representing Landscape in Time,” in *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*, ed. Charles Waldheim (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), 99.


“Let us find the means somehow to explore time as well as space … Through its variable lens aperture, which is more true to life than to banal appearance, the cinema divulges the existence of this fourth dimension because it treats time in perspective.” Richard Abel, *French Film Theory and Criticism, 1907-1939: Volume 2, 1929-1939* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), 65.

“Since landscape architects are responding…to the representation of place and not to place itself, the static qualities of plans, maps, drawings and perspectives lead to a static understanding and static qualities of the proposed landscape. Dynamic media, such as film or animation, seem to avoid this implicit communication of static qualities through the static character of media. Their dynamic qualities, however, are often different than the landscape qualities they are trying to represent, and they are again limited in what part of a landscape experience they can communicate.” Joern Langhorst, “Between and Rock and a Hard Place: On the Dialectics of Landscape and Representation.” Proceedings from the 2009 Design & Communication Conference, ‘Bridging Communication- Consilience: Connect – Include – Mediate,’ Southern Polytechnic University, March 25-28, 2009.

Alan Spearman, *As I Am*, video, directed by Alan Spearman, cinematography by Mark Adams. (2012). Description reads, “Chris Dean’s heart stopped when he was two. He died but he came back. When Chris was five, his father was murdered, riddled by more than 20 bullets in a gang shootout. At age 18, Chris gained national attention when he introduced President Barack Obama at his high school graduation. Chris is an observer and philosopher who has always had a few things to say about life from his vantage point in South Memphis. He and Emmy-Award winning filmmaker Alan Spearman walked the neighborhood for eight weeks observing and recording what became the script of *As I Am*. This film floats through this remarkable young man's landscape, revealing the lives that have shaped his world. Poetic and powerful imagery, captured by Spearman and cinematographer Mark Adams, combines with the young philosopher’s trenchant observations about life”  
[https://vimeo.com/48312847](https://vimeo.com/48312847)


Reece Auguiste, *Twilight City* (1989, Produced by Black Audio Film Collective) 
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8LkstQ3YO-I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8LkstQ3YO-I)


Edward Soja, *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 6. Don Mitchell has noted that in the last few decades significant scholarship has taken place around the spatialization of landscape, including the construction of landscape concurrent with capitalism; landscape’s relationship with national identity; the relationship between capital and landscape representation; the privatization of space and nature; the relationship between landscape and social justice; feminist theories about landscape; the relationship between law and property to the production of landscapes; the relationship between labor and landscape; the relationship between locale and landscapes; and the political landscape. Don Mitchell, “The lure of the local: landscape studies at the end of a troubled century,” *Progress in Human Geography* 25, no. 2 (2001): 269.


Escapes to nature and road trips already have this association in the American psyche, something that landscape design can capitalize on in a more conscious way. Highly memorable film sequences such as the chase scene in *Thelma and Louise* (1991) involving the passage under a bridge as means of escape come to mind as symbolic of initiations and crossing of thresholds referred to Joseph Campell’s work. This sequence also seems to refer to Taylor and Smithson’s analysis of Central Park’s tunnels as allegory: it represents both a path to the ‘garden’ and, for the ecologists, the tunnel –representing the evils of technology - leads to Purgatory. If a discussion of art and nature implies morality, then metaphor is part of that dialogue. Taylor, Mark and Robert Smithson. “Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape” in Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings, ed. Jack Flam. (University of California Press, 1996), 162.

While taking in images of landscape, both real and projected, there is another set of images replaying in our minds. Personal experience overlays symbolic associations, memories of similar places, and even trajectories of thought - both originating from something seen as well as random thoughts - on the actual experience of landscape itself. This recalls Maya Deren’s theory that human perception is essentially cinematic. She wrote, “As we watch a film, the continuous act of recognition in which we are involved is like a strip of memory unrolling beneath the images of the film itself, to form the invisible layer of an implicit double exposure. Deren, “Cinematography: The Creative Use of Reality,” 116.

Landscapes could follow the stages outlined by Joseph Campbell as The Ordinary World; The Call to Adventure; Refusal of the Call; Meeting with the Mentor; Crossing the Threshold; Tests, Allies, and Enemies; Approach; The Ordeal; The Reward; The Road Back; The Resurrection; Return with the Elixir. Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (Novato, CA: New World Library, Third ed., 2008).


Eisenstein, Film Form: Essays in Film Theory, 37.
168 Sergie Eisenstein, “A Dialectic Approach to Film Form” in *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, tran. Jay Leyda. (San Diego and New York: Harcourt Press, 1977), 49. Eisenstein argued that meaning is created in the brain as one views the collision of dialectical principles, resulting in a dynamic expression of wholeness greater than the sum of the parts. In his seminal work, *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, Eisenstein introduced five types of cinematic montage that build upon each other: Metric montage (meaning created from mathematically-determined arrangements of footage); Rhythmic montage (how rhythmic repetition either supports or creates tension in a scene); Tonal montage (the emotional tone of imagery); Overtonal montage (the physiological impact of montage arising from the conflict between the principal tone of the piece and the overtone); and Intellectual montage (the intellectual effects of montage). Sergie Eisenstein, “Methods of Montage” in *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, tran. Jay Leyda. (San Diego and New York: Harcourt Press, 1977), 72-83.


174 Key thinkers include Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, and Jürgen Habermas.

175 One example is *Ventana* (2009). Description reads, “Footage shot with a Canon XL1s between the Front Range of Colorado and Taos, New Mexico, tracing the landscapes of *Easy Rider* (1969), with the ever-presence of the Rio Grande and a conclusion at the hot springs in the film. I was working with the dialectic between home and the road, and how the road calls one like the flowing river. I was also working with the idea of a mediated and framed screen the references the history of film: the window in an abandoned mobile home with the shirt as evidence of its former life; the window of a collapsed mining shack, with the vestiges of a bed flung outside on the land; the window of the car as it screens passing landscapes and other vehicles; and the window in an old building that used to house the warm waters of a hot spring on the banks of the Rio Grande. Ventana means Window in Spanish, a reference to the rich Hispanic history and culture in this region. Effects include Keyer, Hue/Saturation, Glow, and Projector.” see film at [https://vimeo.com/80134426](https://vimeo.com/80134426)

176 *Room 237* (2012), Directed by Rodney Ascher. The film may be seen here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y18NlwTHGoQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y18NlwTHGoQ)

177 Farmer also agreed to provide a voiceover for future versions of *Wasteland*.

178 “Several prominent Italian directors of this period…incorporate landscapes of desolation, shot on location, in order to reflect a larger spiritual crisis symptomatic of the increasingly urban, ‘technologized’ climate of an expanding middle class.” Melbye, *Landscape Allegory in Cinema: From Wilderness to Wasteland*, 85.
Designers might consider the idea of ReWilding our interventions with more indigenous plants in more natural arrangements and encouraging habitats for more wild animals. Places like Lurie Gardens in Chicago and the Highline, both designed by Piet Oudolf, are enormously popular. At the same time, some have argued that ReWilding is not only good for wildlife but for humans as well. See George Monbiot, *Feral: Rewilding the Land, the Sea, and Human Life* (University of Chicago, 2014) and Marc Bekoff, *Rewilding Our Hearts: Building Pathways of Compassion and Coexistence* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2014). This argument has been supported by empirical research on the benefits of access to nature on concentration, productivity, test scores, and emotional health.


In *Cinema I* Gilles Deleuze proposes that classic cinema, particularly Westerns, embody a spatiotemporal matrix. He distinguishes between respiration-space, an organic, all-encompassing milieu of action under a Big Sky, where individuals have agency acting as representatives of the collective, and skeleton-space, landscapes connected by action but not necessarily contingent with each other as in respiration-space. However, these landscapes don’t treat time and space equally. In respiration-space time is privileged and space is de-privileged, while in skeleton-space time is de-privileged while space is privileged. Where respiration-space is ambient space, skeleton-space is vectorial space. To illustrate his point Gilles Deleuze contrasts the respiration-space of Monument Valley in John Ford’s Westerns, where the landscape supports the action as a rarified place, with Anthony Mann’s Westerns, where spaces are connected by explosive actions rather than physical geography. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: the Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis, MN: 2009): 141-168.

Jean Mottet used the landscapes of filmmaker D.W. Griffith to support his point. In the early Griffith films, including *The Massacre* (1913), *Ramona* (1910), and *The Battle of Elderbrush Gulch* (1913), it is a question of who possesses the landscape, a contest that alternates between the white settlers and native inhabitants. Mottett provided a taxonomy of American mythical landscapes - America as Garden of Eden and America as Untamed Nature – and proposes that Westerns emphasize the latter. Jean Mottett, “Toward a Genealogy of the American Landscape,” in *Landscape and Film*, ed. Martin Lefebvre (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2006).


“The streets are metaphorical places where masculinity’s public and private constitution meet, where acts of virility, heroism and hysteria are played out and where the ‘boundaries of conventional and aberrant behavior are frequently drawn.’” Stuart C. Aiken and Chris Lukinbeal, “Of Heroes, Fools and Fisher Kings: Cinematic Representations of Street Myths and Hysterical Males” in *Images of the Street: Planning, Control and Identity in Public Space*, ed. Nicholas Fyfe (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 142.


Bueka, *SuburbiaNation*, 11.


Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield, *Representing the Rural: Space, Place, and Identity in Films about the Land: Space, Place and Identity in Films about the Land* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 2.

Fowler and Helfield, *Representing the Rural*, 3.


David Melbye names the films, *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *Aguirre: The Wrath of God* (1972), and *Apocalypse Now* (1979), as following this narrative.

James Corner, “Representation and Landscape: Drawing and Making in the Landscape Medium,” 244.

Corner wrote, “Creative access to the actual landscape is therefore remote and indirect.” Corner, “Representation and Landscape: Drawing and Making in the Landscape Medium,” 245.


Peter Bosselman argues that the image of a building or public space can be manipulated by the focal length of a camera lens. Thus, this finessing of space that informs all forms of two-dimensional representation is a “geometric fiction called ‘central projection’” that offers a “somewhat limited representation of reality.” Peter Bosselmann, Representation of Places: Reality and Realism in City Design (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998): 3-9.


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Auguste, Reece. *Twilight City*. 1989, Produced by Black Audio Film Collective, Film. 
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8LkstQ3YO-I


The film may be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y18NlwTHGoQ
