

# THE DISINTEGRATION OF LANDSCAPE

Philip II, Petrarch and the astronauts  
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Moon 2009/04/03 16:02UT

Rima Ariadenus, Rima Hyginus,  
Agrippa, Ulbert, Manilius, Monclusus

Maksutov-Cassegrain Sattel D=230mm F=3000mm, barlow 2x, Unibrain Fire-i 712 CCD b/w camera (IEEE-1394, 1386x1040, 18fps),  
Astronomik Red Mer. Processing in Regulus, Avastack and Maxim DL.  
Altitude of Moon 53deg, altitude of Sun 6deg. Seeing 7/10, frame 3/5.

Photo by Mikhail Abgazin, Yuri Goryachko, Konstantin Morozov (Minsk, Belarus)



to Teresa Dillon

People should know the Universe itself as a road, as many roads, as roads for travelling souls.

Walt Whitman

*We are walking in the sense of a worldwide scale civilization (...) I no longer belong to this world. The world I knew, the world I loved, had 1.5 billion people. The present one has 6 billion. It is no longer "mine". Nowadays, for me there is a real "I" that is no more than a quarter or even a half of a human, and a virtual "I" that conserves the idea of the whole.*

Claude Lévi-Strauss

I'll tell you some stories. Because, inevitably, anyone who is seriously involved with *landscape* will be also dealing with a *story*.

Both *history* and *story* are deeply linked in their logical structures.

Of course, it is not about the *content* of a story, but yes about history while a civilisational technology.

The first one tells us about Philip II of Macedonia, friend of Aristotle, father of Alexander the Great.

It is said that Philip, who lived between 382 and 336 BC, made a legendary escalate to the top of a mountain, with the aim of finding a place from where he could see both the Aegean and the Adriatic seas, controlling all military movements in the region.

But that climbing, beyond its military consequences, radically changed his personal life. Along centuries, the rise of Philip on the Mount Hemus, nowadays known as part of the Balkan Mountains, was surrounded by mystery.

The legendary climb of Philip II on the Mount Hemus certainly was the most important event of the kind in antiquity, and remained for centuries in people's minds as something like the triumph of human consciousness, something like a remarkable transformation in the structure of knowledge.

It was not like the ascent to Olympus, place of the gods. Philip II did not approach the gods as the kings before him would inevitably have done, but he was able, very probably as no one before him, to look at human beings as a whole, becoming himself even more human with such action.

It was the omnipotent vision of a king – but not a divine king.

Later, Titus Livius, also known as Livy, denied the historical veracity of that event, against the position of the cosmographer Pomponius Mela – who wrote on it around twenty-five years after the famous Roman historian death.

That's how Petrarch starts his famous letter, presumably written on the Windy Mount, reportedly in April twenty-six of 1336, to his friend, the priest Dionigi Roberti, who lived in a village knew as Borgo San Sepolcro, near the city of Florence.

And it is with Petrarch that we start the second story.

Some scholars assume that Petrarch probably joined and organised his own correspondence after a notable discovery made in Verona in the year of 1345, almost ten years after his proclaimed climb on the Windy Mount: a manuscript with Cicero's letters.

The discovery of Cicero's letters in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, almost one thousand and five hundred years from when they were written, created a generalized wave of admiration generating a new value for epistolary dialogues.

The nature of *letters* – manifested in Cicero's correspondence – then taken as content of the new literary medium, surely was the essential impulse for Petrarch to join his own ones and, possibly, even to elaborate some of them – because conceptually only letters really tell the truth, only they are intimate part of the events, and only in them writer's interpretations are key elements of the action, of the phenomenon, of the event.

As to use a famous expression by Walter Benjamin, we have two leaps of tiger to the Roman universe with Petrarch: Philip II, who announced Rome, and Cicero, who was indissoluble part of its core.

Gradually, after Petrarch and the Renaissance, the story of Philip II was fading out from the collective memory. In the same way, few people at the beginning of the twenty-first century knew the other one on Petrarch.

It was said that the disturbance caused by the sight of the humankind, people and cities, from the top of the mountain, making him aware of his dimension as an individual, was so strong that the great poet started committing grammatical errors in the moment he described his shock.

Some hundreds of years later, already in the nineteenth century, the genius Jacob Buckhardt would come to consider, in his magnificent *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien*, that Petrarch's letter had been the first discovery of the *landscape* – «Petrarch already knows the beauty of rock formations and knows very well how to separate in a landscape the pictorial meaning and its usefulness».

One can argue that landscape scenes already existed much before that epoch, and even in prehistory like the representation of a volcano eruption found in Çatal Hüyük and dated of around 6150 BC, which can be a notable example.



Çatal Hüyük, volcano in eruption, circa 6150 BC

But then, the fundamental element of what constituted the modern concept of landscape – diversity of the panorama oriented to a unique singularity: the observer – did not happen yet.

What we have in Çatal Hüyük, for example, is a kind of diagram with the apparent objective of representing a specific event.

The same happens with the famous scene of Tutankhamon's hunting, dated of circa 1340 BC.



Iconography depicting Tutankhamun firing arrows from a chariot, circa 1340 BC. His mummy's broken leg, and possibly his death through its infection, might have been caused by the crash of such a chariot in a hunting expedition. (Canada Space Reference)

The objective of a true landscape is the observer, never its historical content.

Petrarch starts his letter exactly with the story about Philip II of Macedonia and the polemic between Titus Livius and Pomponius Mela.

He describes the difficulty in finding a partner for the adventure. Everyone seemed exaggerated in some sense, without the ideal of equilibrium as Aristotle, friend of Philip II, argued.

Finally, he chose Gherardo, his youngest brother.

In the beginning of the climbing, they met an old shepherd who strongly advised them to quit. The shepherd said that, when young, he had himself succumbed to the fascination of the mountain. Since then, the poor man was never more the same.

He was definitively and irrevocably transformed. No one could return intact from an experience like that.

Petrarch and Gherardo did not pay attention to the old man and continued, together with two other companions, the temerarious expedition.

When he arrived to the top, face to face with the astonishing beauty of the landscape, Petrarch reflected about his own personal transformations, taking himself as an independent and sovereign entity: «... how many changes, and what changes, in his behaviour!» – it is the poet talking himself as a third person.

Amazed, he continues describing his experience: «You can clearly see the mounts at the right of the province of Lyon, and at the left it is the sea surrounding Marseille... the Rhone was under our eyes» – vividly remind us William Shakespeare when, in *King Lear*, Edgar calls Gloucester:

*Come on, sir; here's the place: stand still. How fearful  
And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low!  
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air  
Show scarce so gross as beetles: half way down  
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!  
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head:  
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,  
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark,  
Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy  
Almost too small for sight: the murmuring surge,  
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,  
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more;  
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight  
Topple down headlong.*

Gloucester is blind and Edgar constructs that stunning three-dimensional scene, a real landscape, trying to convince his friend not to continue his journey.

Then, Petrarch launches himself to the *book X* of Saint Augustine's *Confessions*: «Human beings do not stop admiring the top of the mountains, the large movement of the waves in the sea, the wide paths of the rivers, the ocean that receive them, the course the stars, but they forget to examine themselves».

And the great Italian poet concludes: «I decided, having sufficiently admired the mountain, to turn my attention to myself».

Apparently, his letter has been written or corrected years later. Some put in doubt if the climb on the Windy Mount really happened, or if it was just a simple allegory of Augustine's journey of ascension by Petrarch.

Jérôme Vérain puts in doubt the veracity of the event, questioning himself how Petrarch was able to do that journey in a single day as it is described in the letter, because the distance from the village of Malaucène, where the poet was, and the top of the Windy Mount, which is composed by very difficult parts, is around twelve miles.

Considering that the letter may have been corrected years later, the temporal precision becomes relatively negligible. Thus, other scholars believe that Petrarch actually came to the Windy Mount and wrote there his fundamental thoughts, later translated into letter.

One of the fundamental ideas about that climbing is that a person changes when his or her scale of information is changed.

The other essential idea is that a person only realizes that such a thing happened only after the phenomenon had already occurred.

When Petrarch climbed the Windy Mountain, like the old shepherd had announced, many people came to believe that the poet himself was no longer the same. He had been transformed. He became a different person. Great part of the information about that possible transformation, often belonging to oral memory, was lost in time... probably like what happened with what was said about Philip II.

But, along several years I studied with the music composer Hans Joachim Koellreutter, whose direct line of masters directly launched him to Jacob Buckhardt.

Koellreutter told what had been orally transmitted to him, yet common knowledge in Europe of the early twentieth century: Petrarch returned transformed, definitely disturbed, he no longer was the same person.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century few people remembered a popular belief very common in the years 1960 and 1970, and that I witnessed in different countries: many people thought that an astronaut who went to space would come back inevitably with mental disorders.

Stories about astronauts who had become completely insane in their return to Earth were relatively common. In the 1960s and early 1970s there were popular accounts telling about suicides, madness and all sorts of mental illness among astronauts returned to Earth. There were rumours that, despite false, revealed something else.

This is the third story.

Why did Philip II, Petrarch and the astronauts supposedly change? Or: why the experience to be in a different altitude and be faced to an overwhelming landscape was seen as a change in the structure of thought?

In his short essay *Distance and Images* Walter Benjamin said: «I wonder whether enjoyment of the world of images isn't fed by a sullen defiance of knowledge. I gaze out over the landscape. Before me lies the sea, smooth as a mirror in the bay; forest extend up to the hilltop – an immobile, silent mass; to one side, ruined castle walls lie there as they have been for centuries; the sky is cloudless, a heavenly blue. This is what the dreamer wants to see».

The dreamer as the *non-thinker*, one who travels guided by non-domesticated and uncontrolled oneiric images.

Thus, the thinker is who domesticates ideas, giving them a specialised order, a stable degree of differentiation. Hence the ancient roots of the words *mind* and *man* had appeared from the Indo European *\*ma*, which indicated the idea of *measurement*.

In the three stories – Philip II, Petrarch and the astronauts – we don't have Walter Benjamin's dream, but the overwhelming tension between to be and not to be.

The three stories reveal us common elements. They became, along more or less time, myths related to the change of thought structures. They three indicate a change of scale in information and a mutation of its configuration. And these three stories have a kind of connection at a technological level.

When Philip II climbed the Mount Hemus, Greece had already been relatively flooded by the production of papyrus produced in Egypt – a medium more flexible and lighter than



parchment. The affluence of papyrus, and with it a specialized exercise of vision, generated not only Plato and Aristotle but also Solon, Euripides, Aristophanes, Thucydides, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Pindar, Hippocrates and Demosthenes.

When Philip climbed the Hemus, ancient Greece was at its end. However, at the same time it was the announcement of Rome, the end of the Greek dream.

The beginning of the importation of papyrus by the ancient Greece happened around 1200 BC, in a slow and gradual evolution, sedimenting Homer, coining the pre-Socratic universe and launching the basis for a future collapse of Nation States and the emergence of Rome.

The reason for the immense importance of the use of papyrus in the emergence and dissolution of social structures is due to its symbiotic relation with writing, and more particularly, to the writing of phonetic alphabet.

When wrote down, phonetic alphabet establishes as fundamental element for its reading and understanding an exercise of saccadic eye movements that combines central and peripheral vision in linear scans and by blocks of information.

Something similar happens when we are transported in high speed through a straight line. Because of this, the invention of the wheel coincides with the first written in Sumeria.

Such exercise involves *systasis* and establishes a strong hierarchical framework in its structure, which we know as *predication*.

*Systasis* means *taking everything in a single shot*. The Polish philosopher Jean Gebser, long-time friend and collaborator of Carl Gustav Jung, elaborated this expression, indicating a simultaneous sensory approach.

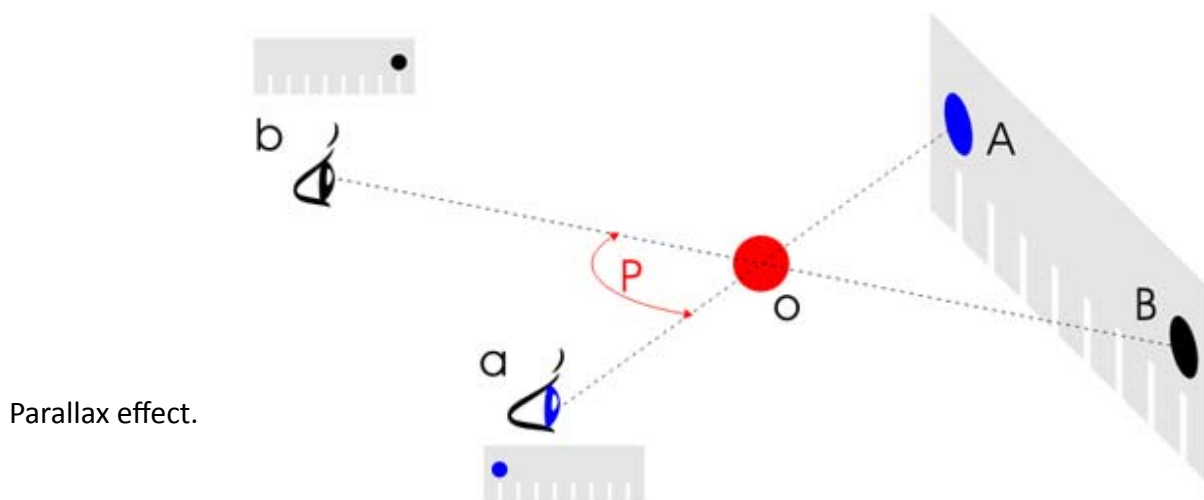
Gebser defined *systasis* as «the conjunction or fit of the parts in a totality ... a process where the parts merge or are merged in the whole».

The word *systasis* was frequently used by medieval Gnostic sects with the meaning of mystical union, of transcendental totality.

Its etymological Indo European root \*s pointed to the idea of “link” – and from there we also have other words, like *similarity*, or the Romantic words for *to be*, as in the Italian *essere*, *ser* in Portuguese and Spanish, or the conjugation of the French verb *être*. *Similarity* and *to be* sharing a same root.

*Systasis* is the essential condition of vision as well as of the skin while sensory systems.

When associated with parallax, *systasis* generates a logical complex which is similar, in some way, to *flat perspective* technology. As an observer moves in a straight line in velocity, the structure of his visual field articulates different speeds of dislocations depending on the depth, a phenomenon that is known as *parallax*; then, his saccadic movements mix in fast switching central vision, which is sensitive to colour and shape, and peripheral vision, which is designed to movement and light.



In this way, the observer becomes the *vanishing point* of the entire sensory structure. When the observer emerges as vanishing point, he becomes individual. Because of that we are dealing with Philip II and Petrarch, two *individuals*.

Such logical structure is what characterizes *history* while technology – a system of causal enchainment in a strongly hypotactic polar structure.

The word *history* appears from the Indo European roots *\*wid* and *\*tôr*. While *\*wid* was born from *\*weid*, which meant *to see* and passed almost directly to the Greek *eidos*, *\*tôr* indicated the idea of *movement between two points*. Thus, the sum of *\*wid* and *\*tôr*, in the formation of the word *history*, originally pointed to the idea of “what moves towards the sense of vision, of what is seeing”.

The technology of *history* is profoundly related to vision, but even more especially to a very particular, specialized and systematic use of it.

Because of that, *history* – as we made conventional – arose in ancient Greece, not before. It needed thousands of years of intensified use of vision through the various kinds of writing and the papyrus.

Over thousands of years, starting in Mesopotamia, such strongly predicative logical structure was intensified, especially since the advent of papyrus.

When, around 1200 BC, papyrus started to be introduced in Greece, its increasingly use established the structure of State Cities, which coincides with a determined scale of that logical complex. But when the use of papyrus exceeds a certain boundary, the interaction between people, already more individual, disintegrates that model of State Cities and unchains what would become the Roman Empire.

Philip II is in the frontier between two worlds – the Greek and the Roman. He lives in the moment when the intensive use of papyrus will implicate the disintegration of the Greek State Cities and the emergence of the centralised Roman universe.

In a same way, Petrarch lives the moment of great intensification of the use of paper in Europe, announcing the end of the Middle Ages and the emergence of Renaissance with *flat perspective*, intercontinental travels and the Gutenberg printing press among other inventions and discoveries.

Petrarch is a witness of the end of medieval reality.

What we call *landscape* can only happen with movement. Even who judges himself stopped in front of a fabulous panorama, is looking at all sides, measuring the depth, the scale, and taking what he sees as a whole.

It is the apparently paradoxical conjunction between to take everything in a single shot and the movement, what forms the *landscape*.

The term *landscape*, from a Latin origin, appeared from the Indo European word *\*pag*, which meant *to bury, to spike, to set a milestone*. Its Indo European root *\*p* indicated the idea of *purification* – and in it we find the remote origin of our word *purity*, the Romantic expression for *country* like *pays* in French or *país* in Portuguese, and *pact*.

For the Indo European universe, the idea of *purity* was a fundamental condition to reach immortality. Purity in food avoided illnesses, as well as baths and, therefore, it meant life. Thus, cleaning the body and the food were directly related to non-death, the non-degeneration. Because of this, the Latin word *pater*, origin of the term *father* also comes from the Indo European *\*p*, because the father was responsible for the rituals of purification, of cleaning, in the community.

It is curious, to say the least, that the origin of the Romantic words for *landscape* – like *paysage* – are based on the principle of *purification*. Wouldn't be this a profound and veiled reference to what Walter Benjamin called the dream?

When Petrarch described his vision on the Windy Mount, he did not use the term *landscape*, because it did not exist yet. The word *landscape* would appear only in the sixteenth century.

The Romantic words for *landscape* – *paysage* in French, and *paisagem* in Portuguese and Spanish, for example – appeared as a direct reference to who lives in the countryside, the *peasant*. It is the image of his world. The peasant world taken as *content*. A phenomenon that emerges in a world made of great distances.

On the other hand, the English word *landscape* is formed by the fusion of two words. The first, *land*, came from the Indo European *\*lendh*. The root of this ancient Indo European root, the *\*l* indicated the idea of *liberation*, of *liberty*. *Land* and *freedom* associated in a single root.

The other word is *scap* that meant, in Mid Dutch, *ship*.

Thus, *landscape* is the image of land saw from a ship.

Borrowed from Dutch painters who inaugurated a new style of painting, the word *landscape*, first recorded in 1598, would only be incorporated as official expression in 1603.

In its beginning, the Dutch word *landschap* originally meant just “plot of land”.

No wonder that such a fusion between *land* and *ship*, as indication of a specialised visual approach, had appeared in the Netherlands.

Philip II lived in the fourth century BC, anticipating Rome and its famous parietal paintings, especially those of Pompeii, many of them with landscaped themes, although the concept of landscape did not exist yet. Therefore, they were not totally *free* landscapes yet.

When Rome loses control over the production of papyrus in Alexandria, the Empire is gradually disintegrated.

St. Augustine, who lived between the fourth and fifth centuries witnessed that disintegration and critically alerted those who forgot to regularly «examine themselves». Augustine was a last and nostalgic literary dreamer trying to rescue a world that collapsed around him, where the individual had less and less value.



Wall painting of Ulysses and the Sirens, from a villa at Pompeii. Roman, mid-1st century AD. Picture copyright The British Museum.



Wall painting from a villa at Pompeii. Roman, mid-1st century AD.

Petrarch is in a situation that is in mirror terms, inverse to that of Augustine.

What aspired to be landscape in Rome, simply disappeared in the following centuries.

It will return to the scene, even if timidly in the beginning, only at Petrarch's time and, more specifically, exactly one year before his climbing on the Windy Mount, in 1335, with Ambrogio Lorenzetti – or Ambruogio Laurati – who is considered the first painter dedicated to landscape.



Ambrogio Lorenzetti, The Allegory of Good Government, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena. 14th century.

Lorenzetti was born in 1290 and died in 1348. He was only fourteen years older than Petrarch. Both were from nearby cities – Lorenzetti from Siena, Petrarch from Arezzo.

In any case, the question was already important at that epoch, as it is evidenced by a famous fresco by Giotto at the Church of St. Francis in Assisi, Italy, made between 1297 and 1299, when Lorenzetti was a child!



Giotto di Bondone, St Francis Giving his Mantle to a Poor Man (detail) 1297-99. Fresco, 270 x 230 cm  
Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi.

About one hundred years after Lorenzetti's death, Johannes Gutenberg became the responsible for one of the most revolutionary inventions of all times: the printing press with movable metallic types.

Gutenberg's press represented a fabulous acceleration in that entire process. In short time thousands of people started to exercise vision in a special way, more and more hours every day.

If we take each person as an isolated element, as it is indicated by the logical principle established by the fusion of phonetic alphabet and media like the papyrus and the paper, an isolated individual, Gutenberg's printing press would be a weak factor in such process of mental structures transformation. But if each individual is connected to another one, forming an *ideosphere*, then the rule of the movable types press as a powerful synergistic catalyst is notable, explosively amplifying the new mindset.

Even so, nearly fifty years of intensification and acceleration produced by Gutenberg's press were necessary for that Joachim Patinir could emerge – considered as the first painter almost exclusively devoted to landscape.

It is when the word *landscape* is coined and the first *landscape* painters appear.

Joachim Patinir – also known as Patinier or Patiner – was born in 1480, about forty years after Gutenberg's invention, in Dinant or Bouvigne, Belgium, and died in 1524. At thirty-five years, he moved to Antwerp, which he took as his country for the rest of life. It was from his move to Antwerp, then an important centre of trade, that his painting became strongly focused on landscape.



Joachim Patinir, *Überfahrt in die Unterwelt*, 1515-1524, 64 × 103 cm, Museo del Prado.



In the autumn of 1494 Dürer seems to have undertaken his first journey to Italy, where he remained until the spring of 1495. A number of bold landscape watercolours dealing with subjects from the Alps of the southern Tirol were made on this journey and are among Dürer's most interesting creations.  
(Britannica)

Albrecht Dürer was his great friend, arriving even to paint his portrait in 1521. He said that Patinir was *der gute Landschaftmaler* – a good *landscape* painter, creating the neologism which would be quickly translated into French.

We do not know to what extent Dürer influenced Patinir. But his famous *Italian Mountains*, dated of 1495, ten years before Patinir settled in Antwerp provides us some interesting clues.

It is believed that Patinir was uncle of the mannerist painter Herri met de Bles. Both finished to be responsible for the institutionalisation of landscape painting.



Herri met de Bles, Das Kupferbergwerk, Mid-16th century, 83 × 114 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi.

Both established the conditions for those artists like Jan van Goyen and Nicholas Poussin could appear, among many other famous landscape painters.



Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), Landscape Phocion 1648, Landscape with the Burial of Phocion, 1648, 1.19 x 1.78 m, Louvre, Paris.



Unfortunately, now there are only five paintings signed by Patinir.

Dürer also influenced Hieronymus Bosch, who lived between 1450 and 1506, therefore thirty years older than Patinir. But his fascinating work was beyond the construction of the landscape.

Hieronymus Bosch,  
ca. 1450-1516, The  
Garden of Earthly  
Delights, 220 × 389  
cm, Museo del Prado.  
Probably his most  
celebrated painting.



About twenty-five years after the death of Patinir, Pieter Bruegel the Elder accomplished the first landscapes free from any references beyond themselves.

And after Bruegel, Peter Paul Rubens.

Peter Paul Rubens, Herbstlandschaft und die Ansicht  
des Schlosses von Steen, 1st half of 17th century, 137 ×  
235 cm. London National Gallery.



Pieter Bruegel, The Harvesters, 1565,  
118.1 x 160.7 cm. Metropolitan Museum  
of Art, New York.



But there is another story, announcing its own dissolution.

In the sixteenth century, when landscape painting appeared, the word *ambient* also emerged – which was *ambient* in French – meaning the idea of the surroundings of a specific place, of a specialized compartment, with physical nature.

Four hundred years later, in the nineteenth century, the word *ambiance* would appear – both in French and English – indicating the concept of environment not only in its physical sense, but also immaterial, like the idea of a social or intellectual environment and so on.

Like *ambient*, the word *ambiance* also launches its etymological meaning in the expression *ambi*, indicating the idea of circularity, and in the Indo European *\*i* that indicated the idea of to go to somewhere and that passed almost directly to the word Latin *ire* – to go – meaning in its fusion *to walk around something*.

On the other hand, the radical Indo European *\*an* and the term *\*ambhi*, generator of the term *ambi*, indicated the idea of *breath*.

So, the radical meaning of the word *ambiance* is *something surrounded by a blow*.

On the other hand, the word *environment* appeared from the medieval French *environner*, which became *environ* in 1350, Petrarch's epoch, meaning *something surrounding an object*.

Only in 1665 is that such word ceased to mean something surrounding an object and begun to indicate the areas around the city.

And only in 1827, through the works of the writer and historian Thomas Carlyle is that the word *environment* passed to mean the *conditions that affect a living being*.

The nineteenth century witnessed discoveries and inventions such as the photography, telephone, radio, cinema, electricity, whose, in one or other way, can be considered as the embryo of a process of dematerialization of the material culture.

So, the words *environment* and *ambiance*, with the meanings we use in the beginning of the twenty-first century, appeared in the nineteenth century.

Then, we have the astronauts and the rumours that they would return always mad, transformed.

The invention of cinema, first in black and white, made intensive use of peripheral vision. For one to penetrate into a movie, it is necessary to focus about one meter beyond the screen, what is to say: you need to know how to *liberate* peripheral vision to a central flow of images.

When movie became in colour, it passed to oblige a greater involvement of central vision, requiring a new learning.

But soon television arrived, and the frequency of cathode ray tubes scanning quickly replaced saccadic eye movements in the establishment of form. Thus, television revealed itself as a strongly hypnotic and cold medium.

Television produced another reversion: it focuses on central vision, especially around the region of *fovea centralis*, an immense amount of light and movement, reversing the normal functioning of the eye.

So, gradually, landscape started to disappear in the end of the twentieth century.

Although we have a figure like Ansel Adams, landscape passed to be recognized as something easy, common to everyone, where you only need to be present with a photographic camera. But the original concept of landscape is always construction!

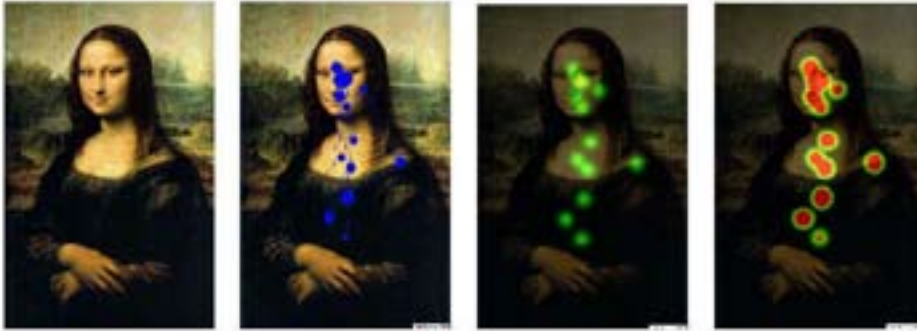


Ansel Adams (1902–1984)  
“The Tetons--Snake River” Wyoming, 1942.  
Records of the National Park Service.

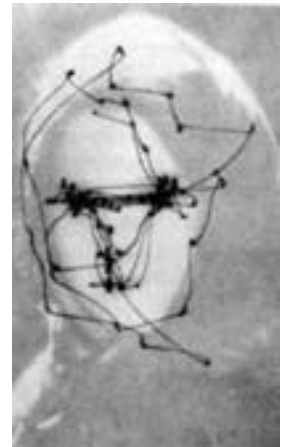
Gradually landscape is transformed into environment, announcing the probable end of a particular consciousness data.

When John Cage composed his *Imaginary Landscape No. 1* in 1939, it was about music and not something visual. And sound, by its own nature, is much more coherent with the principles of the environment than with those of landscape.

If we have in mind how saccadic eye movements happen, we can reach a clear idea of such process of metamorphosis.



Eye-tracking on Mona Lisa.



Eye-tracking on an image of a face.

Saccadic movements when reading a text in the literary period happened in linear fluxus and by blocks. In the cyberspace era they work in a totally different way, forming clouds of attention.



Eye-tracking a text.



Eye-tracking a traditional music score.

Thus, the appearance of personal computers evidenced the great metamorphosis announced by false rumours about astronauts' mental health on their return to Earth.

Not only the frequency of computer screens interact and partially replace saccadic movements but also redesign them.

If before, wheel and rectilinear motion, the parallax, established a logical structure that is a direct reference to the structure of reading a text, now saccadic movements start to obey to an organization with a totally different nature.

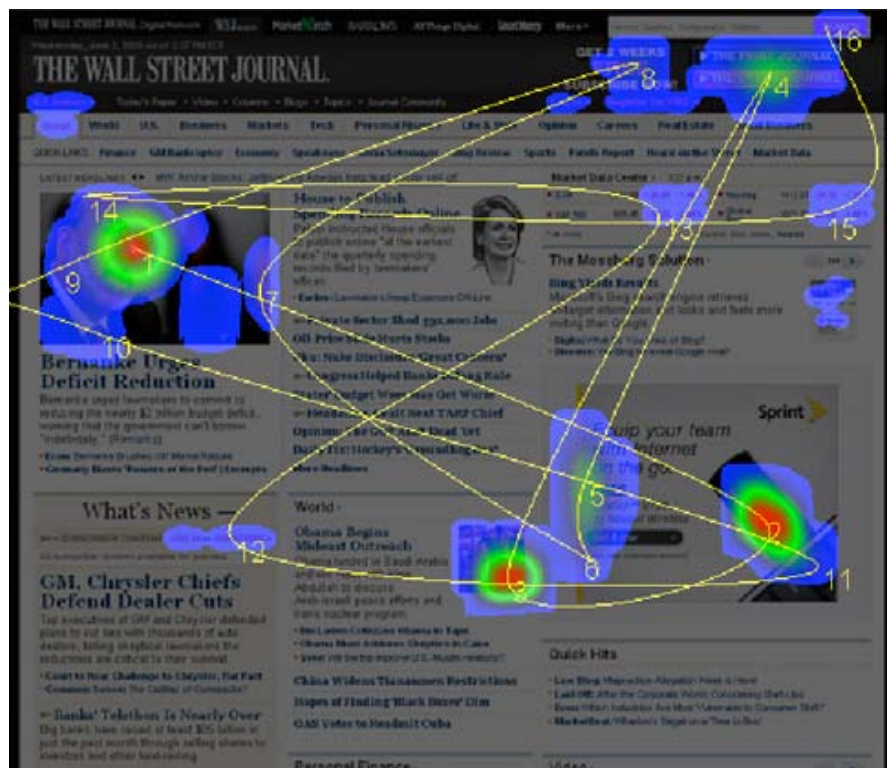
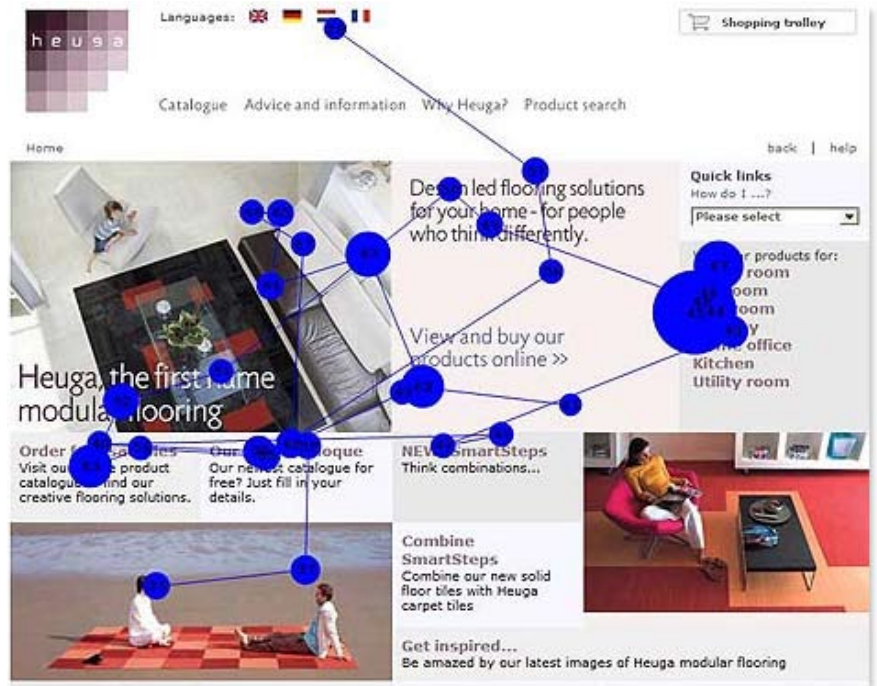
How our eyes started to see  
(eye-tracking) new visual fields.  
Above a Google page, bellow  
Apple's home page.



Eyes start to cover wider areas, in an open and unstable process, eliminating the virtual vanishing point that characterized literature over the centuries.

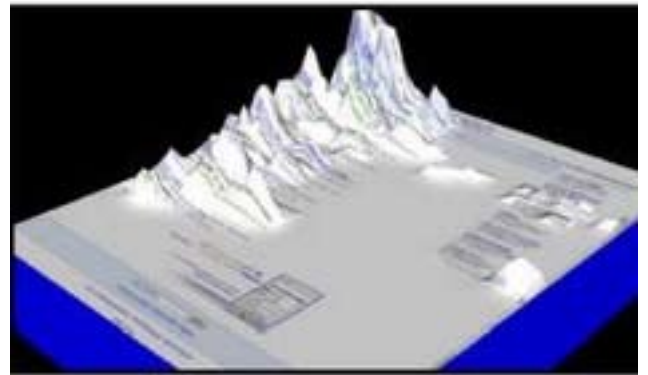
The change of strategy in the flux of vision shows us a transformation in the form of thought, establishing a condition in which the consciousness of landscape will tend to disappear, to be disintegrated.

How our vision changed also on regular printed images. Above, a Heuga's page of catalog; bellow, cover page of the Wall Street Journal.





Eye-tracking. Above: when someone looks at a page in Internet with objective of research. Bellow: when someone looks at the same page but now with the objective of buying something.



But, this metamorphosis is not restricted to the reading of a text.

In the same way headphones reversed stereo hearing – with them sounds passed to be heard in the centre of the head rather in the exterior, manifesting a curious neuronal phenomenon – Virtual Reality also has inverted landscape, turning it interior rather than exterior.

To complete this story we have the *real time* phenomenon– that happens for the first time in human history, establishing an unprecedented revolution: it eliminated physical distance in terms of information and turned the planet as content of itself, giving rise to the so-called environmental movements.

These sensory transformations reveal the emergence of a new civilisational universe, to which landscape could practically disappear, or be incorporated as a minor occurrence, slowly erased from our memories.

Everything is quickly mutated into environment, becoming total involvement, like a blow around something, like hunting in action.

That is, a story to end with all stories.

Dream and landscape that reminds us a poem by the genius of Fernando Pessoa:

*Crossing this landscape my dream of an infinite port  
And the colour of flowers is transparent of the sails of great ships  
That leave the quay dragging as shadows through the waters  
Into the sun the forms of those ancient trees...*

*The port I dream of is sombre and pallid  
And the landscape is bright sunlight on this side...  
But in my spirit this day's sun is a sombre port  
And the ships that leave this port are these trees in the sun...*

*Doubly free, I leave the landscape below...  
The outline of the quay is the clear calm road  
Which lifts and rises like a wall,  
And the ships pass through the trunks of trees  
With a vertical horizontality,  
And let fall the cables in water through leaves one by one within...*

*I do not know who I dream myself...  
Suddenly all the water of the sea of the port is transparent  
I see the bottom, like an enormous print that was shining there,  
All this landscape, torn from the tree, the road burning in that port.*

*And the shadow of a ship more ancient than the passing port  
Between my dream of the port and my view of this landscape  
And it comes close to me, and enters into me,  
And passes to the other side of my soul...\**

\* Translation by Mick Greer and Graça Margarido, *Chuva Oblíqua*, The Portuguese Language, an Ocean of Cultures, Instituto Camões 1998



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