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Author

Kullmann, Karl

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The Gravity of Things

Grounding landscape parliaments in California's borderlands

Karl Kullmann

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Throughout 2017, an imaginative form of protest took place on the other side of the world as some Australians took to rolling down grassy slopes at the heart of the nation's capital.¹ Although it appeared lighthearted, the motivations of these tumbling citizens were entirely serious. They were rolling down *Parliament Hill*, which is situated at the heart of Canberra's constellation of avenues and topographic landmarks. They were rolling to exercise an egalitarian ideal that was originally embedded in the design of the New Parliament House.

When conceptualizing the design in the 1980s, the New Parliament House architect Romaldo Giurgola sought to place the people above the parliament, rather than subservient to it. While this ideal has since been expressed in other parliaments—such as Foster and Partner's gravity defying ramp that spirals above the Reichstag in Berlin—the design for Australia's Parliament took the radical approach of burying the parliamentary chambers beneath a publicly accessible grassy knoll. This fusion of parliament and landscape sought to embrace the aspirations of all inhabitants and their interdependence with the timeless landscapes of the Island Continent.



Rolling down under: protesting the proposed fencing off of the people's hill at New Parliament House, Canberra, Australia.



The people's hill: New Parliament House, Canberra, Australia. *Image credit: John Gollings, reproduced with permission.*

As landscape poetics go, it is a beautiful notion. Yet it is also selective, in the sense that First Australians have never identified with, or felt included in, the narrative of the people's hill. The Aboriginal Tent Embassy, which for almost half a century has continuously occupied the lawn at the foot of Australia's Parliament House, embodies this implicit exclusion.²

This exclusion remains unresolved, with global events overtaking Giurgola's egalitarian gesture after little more than a quarter of a century in the ground. The concept of the people's hill was initially eroded with the tightening of security following the trauma of September 11, 2001. Then, in September 2017, the object of the people's protest materialized: a 9ft high welded steel security fence was erected around the hill to finish the job once and for all.³ By sealing the knoll—and its legislature—off from its citizens, the new fence invokes a fortified medieval hill town that has shut the gate on its hinterland.



Shutting the gate on the people's hill: fencing off New Parliament House, Canberra, Australia. *Image credit: Kym Smith / Newspix, reproduced with permission.*

And so, the people roll no more. As is also evident in the worldwide barricading of public space to repel vehicular terrorism, fencing off Australia's Landscape Parliament is deeply symbolic. It reveals a feedback loop, whereby political systems are pushed further and further away, even as the ideal encapsulated in the people's hill would seem ever more relevant to many political predicaments on other continents, including here in California.

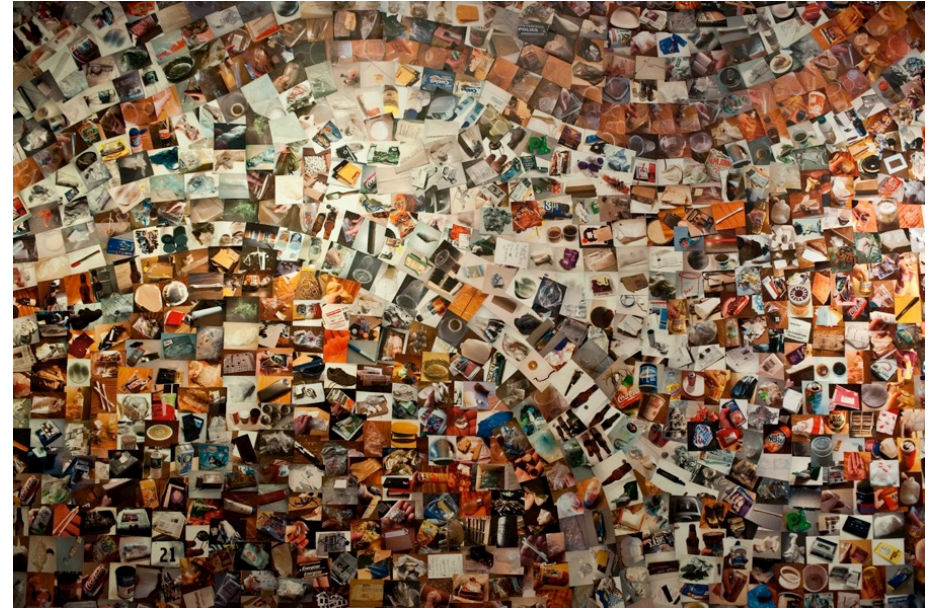
To comprehend why a landscape parliament in the land Down Under was worth rolling for—and why it is relevant to California—entails venturing a thousand years back in time to Iceland. The land of ice and fire is steeped in geysers, glaciers, volcanoes, and Sagas. Amidst this storied landscape lies Iceland's most hallowed ground, where from the year 930 to 1798, *Thingvellir* (*Pingvellir*) served as the dramatic venue for the world's first parliament. Unlike the climate-controlled buildings that house contemporary political forums, Iceland's parliament was held out under the open sky. Each year,



Site of the ancient landscape parliament of Thingvellir, Iceland. *Image credit: Karl Kullmann.*

Icelanders gathered amidst the rocky fissures formed by diverging tectonic plates to discuss important matters of concern.⁴

In reference to its topographic setting, the name *Þingvellir* translates loosely as *meeting valley* in English. And while the correlation between *vellir* and *valley* is self-evident, understanding the other half of the name is more complicated. Although *Þing* is etymologically connected to the English word *thing*, it is unlike *anything* we know today. In Old Norse, *Þings* referred to landscape-based forums for discussing important community matters. Indeed, while the dramatic setting and near millennium of constant use make Thingvellir the most celebrated example, Thing parliaments were established in many locations throughout the Viking world. Their names live on in places such as *Gulating* in Norway, *Tingwalla* in Sweden, *Tinganes* in the Faroe Islands, *Tingwall* in Shetland and Orkney, and *Tynwald* on the Isle of Man.



Dispensing with things. *Self Portrait as Revealed by Trash: 365 days of photographing everything I threw out*, gallery exhibit, 2004-2008, Tim Gaudreau. *Image credit: Tim Gaudreau, reproduced with permission.*

The etymology of *Þing* can also be traced further back to the ancient Germanic proto-parliamentary *Ding*.⁵ Referring to a general assembly or court of law in Old High German, *Dings* were typically sited in topographically prominent locations that typically included megaliths, springs, or distinctive trees. These meanings were also absorbed into English, with traces of *Þing* and *Ding* still retained in *thing*, in the sense that we might say that someone “knows a *thing* or two” to imply that they comprehend the issues at hand.⁶

But these traces hang by a thread. In today’s industrialized world, we are far more likely to understand *things* as the many inanimate objects that surround us with our own indifference. Today, things are just the peripheral stuff that we overlook and often can’t be bothered to call by name. We might run an errand to “buy some things” or observe that we “forgot something”. And as the Internet of Things vaporizes our interaction with everyday appliances into the Cloud, our collective ambivalence towards things seems destined to increase.



The Sea of Plastic: the fully enclosed agricultural landscape of *Mar del Plástico*, Almería, Spain. *Image credit: George Steinmetz, reproduced with permission.*

To understand why the language of *things* changed so profoundly over the centuries—from the discussion of important matters to the trivialization of dispensable objects—entails travelling again. Even as Thingvellir’s parliament continued to operate within the unique and isolated landscapes of Iceland, *things* were subject to new forces of transformation in Continental Europe. As Europe modernized and political control centralized, the process of land enclosure began to displace the feudal commons that Thing parliaments had traditionally occupied. With no place left in the landscape, Thing parliaments moved undercover, and in time, into the fully enclosed buildings that inhabitants of the industrialized world take for granted today.⁷

In addition to parliaments, other culturally significant forums such as markets, performance spaces, and religious ceremonies also came in from the cold. Extrapolating this process to the present day, enclosure takes the form of industrially scaled agriculture within endless fields of climate-controlled hydroponic greenhouses.



Gathering at the edges: migrants attempting to cross the Macedonian Border from Greece, 2015. *Image credit: Nikos Arvanitidis, reproduced with permission.*

Whereas *Things* once referred to landscape-based community assemblies for discussing important issues, the enclosure of these forums led to *things* becoming understood more as the objects that surround them. With things now conceived more as *objects* than as *issues*, this shift also had profound implications for conceptions of landscape. Divested of its *thingness*, the landscape became more of a passive receptacle of physical things than a political Thing in of itself.⁸ So much so, that today it is hard to imagine landscape in any other way than as a benign scene or as ‘threatened’ nature in need of human assistance.

In this world, the landscape bears the scars of objects and events, but no longer takes a seat in the parliament that it once cultivated. And despite the promise of a seamless globe in which, people, capital and wildebeest move without friction, the landscape is riven with more fissures than ever before.⁹ These divisions take the form of walls between nation states, infrastructural ruptures within communities,

socio-economic inequality, fragmentation of ecological biomes and so forth.

And yet, many of the most pressing issues that define the present Age of the Anthropocene transcend these barriers with impunity.¹⁰ Walls do not readily circumscribe global warming, nuclear radiation, antibiotic resistance, non-biodegradable plastics, or global human migration. And unlike the everyday things that surround us all, these *hyper-things* are so vast and enduring that they often defy human scales of comprehension. They reveal a yawning gulf between our hazy awareness of the things that matter and our limited capacity to discuss, let alone address them.¹¹

What to do? The issue here is one of horizons. From within houses of legislature or parliament, our shared *political* horizons are simply too inhibited to accommodate the scale and scope of the Anthropocene. In response, a city, a state, a nation, or even a coalition of nations, may seek to construct more expansive parliaments under which to gather ever-larger political assemblies.¹² And yet, even if these forums were to rival in enormity the largest sporting stadiums on Earth, they would still be buildings. And as buildings, they remain historically bound to the enclosure of political gatherings, and subsequent diminishment of *Things* into *things*.

For all their proficiency in keeping the rain out and the politicians in, buildings can never truly become Things. How, then, might the ancient conception of the landscape parliament be re-imagined to stretch our shared political horizons to more adequately encompass contemporary matters of concern? That is, how might some of the lost agency of landscape be rediscovered within the political process? How might some of the *Thingness* of *things* be recovered?

This is not to imply that Californians begin dissolving Capitol Hills and City Halls and repatriating venues of governance out into the landscape in a futile attempt at refashioning Thingvellir. It is not possible to just recreate Things because the nature of contemporary political processes and assemblies has profoundly changed. To take



Taking Things literally: abandoned amphitheater, Foster Park, Ventura County, California. *Image credit: Karl Kullmann.*

Things literally in this way would probably just add to the assortment of unused public amphitheaters that unwittingly reify nostalgic yearnings for community congregations of yesteryear.

Nor is cultivating Thingness in landscape akin to invoking some form of animism that imbues inanimate objects with a mystical life force. And to be clear, re-connecting landscape and politics has nothing to do with the “blood and soil” that the Third Reich used to such catastrophic effect by weaponizing the power of place on an industrial scale. What it *is* about is feeling connected to a process. It is about leveraging the public landscape to embolden the public in politics.¹³

To begin this process, the first instinct may be to take down the fences. De-fencing parliaments and legislatures would be a revolution of sorts. It suggests comparisons with the eighteenth and nineteenth century process of *dis-parking*, whereby the royal hunting grounds of Europe were gradually opened up to public use.¹⁴ This process was initiated by unlocking the gates, and ultimately—as Californians now



US/Mexico border zone, Jacumba Hot Springs, California. *Image credit: Karl Kullmann.*

take for granted in city parks that remain open 24/7—demolishing the boundary walls altogether.

If we return Down Under for a moment and think through *dis-parking* Australia's freshly fortified landscape parliament, the flaw in this venture becomes apparent. To remain functional in the current climate, new, more sophisticated, invisible, and insidious forms of security would inevitably emerge to offset a de-fenced house of legislature. Albeit at a vaster scale, this phenomenon is demonstrated along the US southern border. From California to Texas, the heavily surveilled and profiled 100-mile-wide thickened zone that shadows the border puts fences and walls in context; material expressions of a more pervasive filtering process that occurs before a traveler even knows they have arrived and persists long after they think they have left.

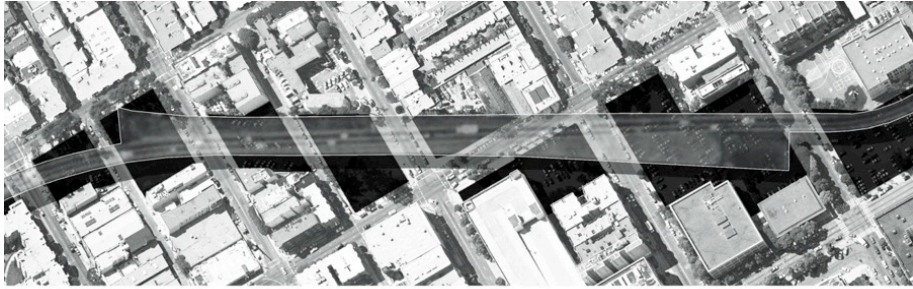
And as the deplorable scenes from the January 2021 breaching of the US Capitol demonstrate, even the most hallowed ramparts can be

scaled with sufficient incitement. As at the border, the walls of the Capitol proved more performative than impervious; something reassuringly concrete to assail as a diversion from thinking through what one hopes to accomplish once inside. Here, as at Australia's parliament, walls and fences are a symptom not a cause. The parliament's fence is going to remain somewhere; if not encircling the building in full view, then as a thickened zone on the margins, or, most perniciously, as a wall in the minds of those who feel shut out from the political process.¹⁵

Instead of *deconstructing* the walls and roofs of official houses of parliament and legislature of the State (only for other more pervasive barriers to raise in their place), a more constructive path could lay in *devolving* landscape parliaments as parallel processes. That is, perhaps the role of landscape Things today is not to be reprised as (non)representative parliaments for making laws, but to operate as moral shadow parliaments for discussing the issues that really matter; issues that dithering bricks-and-mortar parliaments and legislatures seem to habitually forfeit under the weight of earmarks and the fog of obfuscation.

With Things no longer satisfactorily represented in conventional parliaments and legislatures, where might these shadow landscape parliaments be situated? Perhaps everywhere and nowhere, in the sense that today a great deal of political assembly occurs in online forums that transcend borders and censors. But being digitally untethered from time and place has the significant downside of conveniently enabling individuals to insulate themselves from divisive issues within polarized online communities.

Yet even as social media spins its wheels, when people really need their voices heard, they still take to the streets on foot. If these issue-driven gatherings are to stick for any longer than an outrage-news-cycle, momentarily occupying the frictionless ground of polished airport foyers and online echo chambers is insufficient.¹⁶ To stop Things from just slipping away into a capsicum haze of unfulfilled aspirations, landscape shadow parliaments would need to somehow



Interstitial spaces in Northern California, (top) freeway teardown in Hayes Valley, San Francisco, and (bottom) freeway easement in Santa Rosa, California. *Image credit: Karl Kullmann.*

lodge into the fissures that permeate everyday Californian environments. The Occupy Wall Street movement in New York and the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Australia's capital Canberra are recent and continuing precedents for this enduring act of literally digging in on an issue.¹⁷

Although often overlooked in our individual cognitive maps, California's cultural landscapes are riven with local borderlands that cleave between neighborhoods, discordant land-uses, maintained and derelict sites, and most insidiously, between planning visions and their lived reality.¹⁸

In many situations, agencies or communities have valid rationales and useful mechanisms with which to heal rifts in the urban fabric. Consider, for example, the re-stitching of San Francisco's Hayes Valley neighborhood following the demolition of the earthquake damaged double-tiered Central Freeway. Yet in other circumstances, adjacent

locales march to decidedly different tunes. Consider a neighborhood 'on the other side of the tracks' that is vulnerable to runaway change when the tracks are sunken or removed. Richmond's Iron Triangle, which circumscribes an underprivileged neighborhood in the shadow of the oil refinery, encapsulates this condition.

In certain circumstances, this latter type of linear no-man's-land could provide fertile sites for snagging shadow landscape parliaments. Dug into these thin borderland situations, landscape Things could be configured to thicken the jump-cut between two conditions with a third space that is neither one, nor the other. Here, ancient Thingvellir is instructive, with the geological fissures of the Icelandic setting cleaving space between local clans, into which the parliament occupied an interstitial every-man's-land over which no single clan held jurisdiction.

While California's coastal conurbations are riddled with manmade fissures that suggest potential thickening into landscape Things, one of most potent (and confounding) sites surely lies at the State's southernmost edge. *Friendship Park* straddles the US/Mexico border on the last high ground before the border fence spills down into the surf.¹⁹ As one of the few locations where in-person cross-border interaction is condoned for a few hours on weekends, Friendship Park is a place of family reunions, mixed emotions, sit-in protests and coordinated trans-border activities. Twin fences define the site; one on the border, and a second inside US soil. This second fence is furnished with a disproportionately monumental gateway that promises thoroughfare but leads only to no-man's-land.

Considered in the context of other heavily fortified no-man's lands in urban areas, one may continue to hope for a future 'Berlin moment', whereby the fortification of California's southern border is eventually demolished as a relic of history. But in the meantime, working within current geopolitical realities, how might a site such as Friendship Park be thickened into a third space? How might the fledgling aspirations Friendship Park be amplified into a landscape Thing?



The parliament of tears: Friendship Park, California/Mexico border at the Pacific Ocean. *Image credit: Karl Kullmann.²⁰*

At present, the challenges of the site and situation are immense. The fences are too insistent, admission to the controlled no-man’s-land too selective, and the shared horizon glistening out across the Pacific Ocean too bittersweet. Indeed, as the semantic distinction between fences and walls becomes increasingly partisan, the border ‘fence’ at Friendship Park is now so heavily armored with welded mesh—leaving apertures barely wider than a human finger—that it is, in substance, already a ‘wall’.

And although walls ably defended territories for thousands of years, their presence today is decidedly regressive.²¹ In the sixteenth century, as medieval fortifications proved increasingly ineffective against advancements in ballistic technology, horizontal defensive earthworks supplanted vertical masonry walls. Reaching its zenith in Europe’s Renaissance star forts, this strategy can still be explored today in the Batteries that were built along the Californian coast in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, the advent of long-range ballistics pushed defensive earthworks to new extremes. As



Battery Cavallo, Fort Baker, California, circa 1938. *Image credit: National Archives and Records Administration, Aerial Photographs Collection, image in the public domain.*

threats materialized from over the horizon in every direction, people retreated underground, relying on the thickness and shape of the land as their primary mode of defense.

This brief fortification primer illuminates the superiority of strategically shaped landform over masonry walls and reinforced fences. By shifting this capability from a defensive to a public conception of space, the shaping of landscape thickness becomes an intriguing proposition. Through the medium of land shaping, what form could a shadow landscape forum at Friendship Park—or elsewhere—take?

Mounding the landscape up into a hill would seem the obvious answer. As was (until recently) possible on Australia’s Parliament House hill, Californians from all walks of life may seek to fabricate the moral high ground from which to better foresee and understand the expansive issues at hand. If the concept of a political horizon is conflated with the physical horizon (as formed by the curvature of the



The Earth becomes a *thing*: Southern California and Mexico seen from the International Space Station. *Image credit: © 2011 NASA, ISS, reproduced in accordance with NASA/ISS non-commercial use policy.*

earth), climbing a hill would appear to expand one's horizons, allowing each of us to see more things—to literally see over the wall.

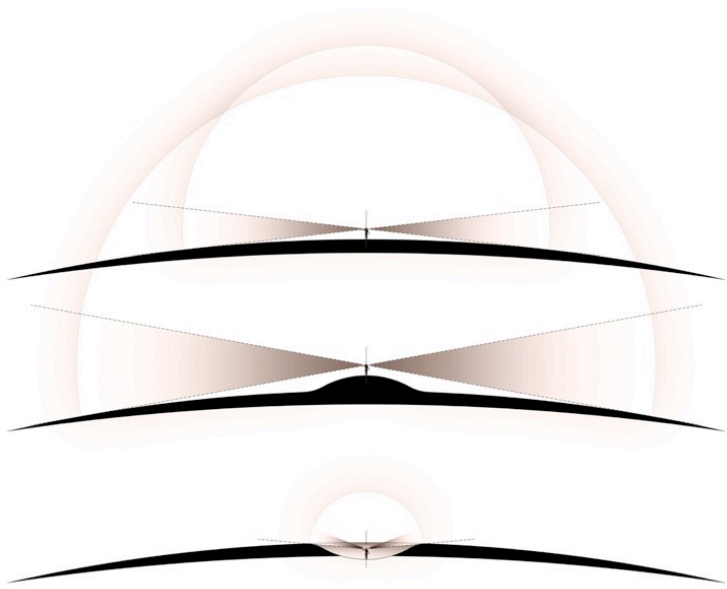
To take things to the next level, those who are so inclined could go a little higher in the basket of a hot air balloon and expand their political horizons a little further. Or they could liftoff into the low Earth-orbit of the International Space Station and see what satellites see. Or, like the astronauts on Apollo 17, travel halfway to the moon to catch the lonely blue marble within the single frame of a Hasselblad; revealing that the whole Earth is itself a *thing*, albeit one that no human can see both sides of at the same time. In the sense that this epiphany energized the environmental movement, humanity has been metaphorically trying to get back down to Earth ever since.²²

The point is that the higher an individual goes, the more likely they are to feel as though they are on top of things. And yet, from up on the hill (or space station) their horizons defer further outwards, circumscribing more and more issues while leaving them no closer to grasping or acting on the issues that matter. But what if this yearning to climb is upended, and instead of seeking landscape Things up on hills, we think of Things as forming down in hollows? Once again, ancient Thingvellir offers guidance here, with the geologically fissured Icelandic landscape providing a range of crevices that drew in gatherings of varied scale and scope within their embrace.

Through the organizational pull of gravity, hollows instinctively collect things. Consider the dunes on the floor of California's Death Valley, where over the eons each grain of sand made its way to a gathering of like-minded grains at the lowest point in North America. Or in a more general sense, consider how water—access to which is a defining wall-crossing issue of the twenty-first century—converges fluidly into hollowed out landforms.

And like the water that makes up about 60 percent of our bodily mass, hollows can also collect humans. If the people rolling off Australia's parliament hill were to repeat their mass tumble from the rim of a hollow, they would all end up drawn together at the bottom. What they may find there could be confronting, since hollows have also served historically as dumping grounds; as places where all the *things* that humans discard end up, out of sight and out of mind. It turns out that many of these things are still there, decaying on a geological timescale. Confronted with these *things*, the parliamentary hollow impels its occupants to *recall*; not in the sense of officially ordering someone (such as a Governor) to return, but in the other sense of bringing an event or situation back into one's mind.²³

Hollows foreground these *things* by compressing space and time by retraining the horizons of those who enter them. When going down into a hollow, everyone's personal horizon temporarily retracts to the rim of the concave landform.²⁴ A kind of horizontal hand-over occurs,



Gathering things: the horizon as formed by the curvature of the Earth from (top to bottom) on the plain; up on the hill; and down in the hollow. *Image credit: Karl Kullmann.*

whereby instead of retreating unceasingly into the distance (and off into the future) as each individual moves around, the horizon stays tethered to the landform. As a result, everyone in the hollow sees the same horizon. That is, they share a collective horizon with the many other *things*—human, non-human, and inanimate—that are gathered in the present moment.

The other thing about hollows is that they leak. Through either infiltration or evaporation, hollow landforms leak water (otherwise they would become lakes), and unfortunately hollows often leak toxins when associated with dumping grounds. Yet in a positive sense, hollows also potentially leak people and ideas. In contrast to the illusion of a hermetically sealed leak-proof house of parliament, the landscape parliament shaped as a hollow makes no claims to being

watertight. Unlike a wall or fence, the rim that encircles the hollow landform remains permeable. Freed of the limitations that architectural containment places on access and participation, humans, along with many other things, can cross over this topographic threshold and gather to discuss matters of concern. And when the time for discussion has passed and the time for action is present, they can move back over the collective threshold and leave.

Outside of the hollow, the Earth's horizon comes back into focus and the wider world, with its myriad issues, comes back into play. Out here individuals are potentially primed to extend issues of concern beyond a preoccupation with their own and immediate futures, which from ecological crises to genetic design, encompass vast and miniscule scales and temporalities.

However, potential does not necessarily translate into actuality. While this can be true in any situation, it is doubly so in the landscape. Whereas the programmatic capacity of buildings is reasonably predictable, predetermining the usefulness of a landscape in advance remains an imprecise art.²⁵ Buildings have doors and roofs with which to encapsulate and regulate the activities of their occupants. Landscape, on the other hand, is less obliging; think of landscape in terms of the vagaries of the weather upon which it is beholden, or in terms of the indeterminate flow of the rivers that run through it.

The landscape's inherent uncertainty can be extended to humans, who often do not adopt landscapes in the way in which planners intended. Part of this is undoubtedly down to the preponderance of poorly designed public spaces (in California and elsewhere) that fail both functionally and expressively. Yet even with the best intentions, landscapes can fall flat. In this context, expecting landscape parliaments to routinely perform as places for actual discussion could backfire. The weight of expectation could create intimidating spaces that people completely avoid, unwittingly adding to the existing trove of empty amphitheaters.



Fluid horizons: “View of Sacramento City as it appeared during the great inundation in January 1850 / Drawn from nature by Geo. W. Casilear & Henry Bainbridge. New York: Lith. of Sarony c1850.” *Source: California State Library, image in the public domain.*

Instead of pressuring landscape things to be routinely parliamentary from the outset, perhaps their role needs to be initiated in more down to earth terms. Positioned more humbly, landscape Things would principally seek to simply collect people in situ, essentially drawing each of us out of our internet of things and into the shared world of Things. Once drawn—like moths to a lamp—into the public realm, we are more likely to participate in, and engage with, the issues (or *things*) that concern us all.

From this unassuming basis, in certain situations where particularly potent matters of concern converge on the ground, contemporary landscape Things might emerge. While there is a great deal of indeterminacy involved, we can assume that these Things are unlikely to leaven on Capitol hills. Just as legislatures and issues are not progressing, forums and gatherings are not aligning. The forums that govern Californians are fixed at the center, on the hill, while the



Drawn together: groups around bonfires on Ocean Beach, San Francisco. *Image credit: Kim Komenich / San Francisco Chronicle / Polaris, reproduced with permission.*

gatherings that matter dig in at the edges, in the fissures. It is here that shadow landscape parliaments are at most likely to be at home.

Given that they are not tied to the conventional apparatuses of federal, state, or local governance, to which other scales might landscape shadow parliaments extend? And, in addition to Friendship Park, where else in California might these reimagined landscape shadow parliaments (Things) be dispersed? As nature and politics increasingly converge, perhaps Things might draw within their horizons each of the world’s 867 bioregions, ten of which intersect with California.²⁶ Or, across the Sierras, perhaps Landscape Parliaments might grip onto the salty banks of the overdrawn Mono Lake, stripped of inflows that are gravity-fed southbound along the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Or, as traditional zoological gardens become less and less defensible, Things might colonize the naturalistic habitats of decommissioned animal exhibits in San Francisco zoo.

Or, perhaps the position of Landscape Parliaments might be calibrated to sea level rise projections: not safely on higher ground, but at the waterline near vulnerable communities such as East Palo Alto, to be intentionally inundated as a wet-feet reality check on rising tides. Or find niches amidst the fragmented ruins of the aptly named Sunken City near Long Beach, where buildings and streets slumped into the Pacific Ocean. Or ride the precipice of vanishing ground, by convening Things on the concrete pads of recently demolished buildings atop Pacifica's rapidly receding cliff line. Or inhabit the new ground that results when landfill is decommissioned, such as that of the Albany Bulb wasteland that protrudes into the tidelands of San Francisco Bay's eastern shore. By gathering Californians together within the contours of these settings, Landscape Things might help us to recall the gravity of the things that matter, nearer to where they matter.



Drawn to the edge: Sunken City, Sn Pedro, California. *Image credit: Karl Kullmann.*

University of California, Berkeley

Notes

¹ Editorial, 'Australians Roll Down Lawns of Parliament House to Protest Against Fence' (17 December 2016), <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-38349994>

² Gregory Cowan, 'Collapsing Australian Architecture: The Aboriginal Tent Embassy', *Journal of Australian Studies* 25/67 (2001), 30–36.

³ Henry Belot, 'Parliament House's Iconic Grass Lawns Blocked Off by New Security Fences' (11 September 2017), <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-12/security-fences-shut-patrons-out-parliament-house-grassy-slopes/8896074>

⁴ Agust Gudmundsson, 'Tectonics of the Thingvellir Fissure Swarm, SW Iceland', *Journal of Structural Geology* 9/1 (1987), 61–69. Richard Beck, 'Iceland's Thousand Year Old Parliament', *Scandinavian Studies and Notes* 10/5 (1929), 149–153.

⁵ Refer to: Kenneth R. Olwig, 'Liminality, Seasonality and Landscape', *Landscape Research* 30/2 (2005), 259–271.

⁶ Here I draw on: Martin Heidegger, 'The Thing', in: Albert Hofstadter (trans.), *Poetry Language Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 161–180: 173.

⁷ Refer to: Álvaro Sevilla-Buitrago, 'Urbs in Rure: Historical Enclosure and the Extended Urbanization of the Countryside', in: Neil Brenner (ed.), *Implosions / Explosions* (Berlin: Jovis Verlag, 2014), 236–259.

⁸ Refer to: Kenneth R. Olwig, 'Heidegger, Latour and the Reification of Things: The Inversion and Spatial Enclosure of the Substantive Landscape of Things – The Lake District Case', *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 95/3 (2013), 251–273: 256.

⁹ Refer to: Karl Kullmann, 'Route Fittko: Tracing Walter Benjamin's Path of No Return', *Ground Up (Delineations)* 5 (2016), 70–75.

¹⁰ In the current epoch that Paul Crutzen famously labelled the Anthropocene, human activity is permanently recorded in the geological record. Paul J. Crutzen, 'The "Anthropocene"', in: Eckart Ehlers and Thomas Krafft (eds.), *Earth System Science in the Anthropocene* (Berlin & Heidelberg: Springer 2006), 13–18.

¹¹ Here I draw on: Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

¹² Here I draw on: Bruno Latour, 'From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public', in: Latour and Weibel, *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 4–31. Bruno Latour, 'A Cautious Prometheus?', Keynote lecture for the *Networks of Design* meeting of the Design History Society, Falmouth, Cornwall, 3rd September 2008.

¹³ The public landscape is not limited to the bucolic countryside or the protected wilderness. Today it also includes the burgeoning urban landscape; the streets, the parks, the appropriated interstitial spaces, the postindustrial wastelands, the cultural precincts, and even the external surfaces of buildings.

¹⁴ The archaic verb *dispark* means to 'divest a park of its private use' by 'throw[ing] parkland open'. Charles Talbot Onions (ed.), *The Shorter English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964): 530.

¹⁵ This is a reference to the *Mauer im Kopf* (the wall in the head), that persists in the psycho-geographies of Berliners long after the fall of the concrete Berlin Wall.

¹⁶ This is a reference to the spontaneous airport demonstrations that followed the Trump administration's January 2017 Muslim travel ban.

¹⁷ For a site-specific mapping of an Occupy site, refer to: Jonathan Massey and Brett Snyder, 'Occupying Wall Street: Places and Spaces of Political Action: Surveying a

Hypercity Built of Granite and Asphalt, Algorithms And Information', *Places Journal* (September 2012), <https://placesjournal.org/article/occupying-wall-street-places-and-spaces-of-political-action/>

¹⁸ Refer to: Karl Kullmann, 'Thin Parks / Thick Edges: Towards a Linear Park Typology for (Post)infrastructural Sites', *Journal of Landscape Architecture* 6/2 (2011), 70–81.

¹⁹ For in depth explorations of the Mexico/US borderlands, refer to: Michael Dear, 'Imagining a Third Nation: US-Mexico Border', *Ground Up (Delineations)* 5 (2016), 46–55.

²⁰ I use the term "parliament of tears" in homage to the *Tränenpalast* (Palace of Tears), a border post between divided East and West Berlin that was the scene of many tearful family partings.

²¹ The return of border walls has revived some decidedly medieval devices for their circumvention in the form of ladders, catapults, and tunnels.

²² On the cultural impact of the whole earth image, see: Denis Cosgrove, *Geography and Vision: Seeing, Imagining and Representing the World* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2008), chapter 1.

²³ As defined by *The Oxford English Dictionary: Second Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

²⁴ Refer to: James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Hillsdale NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1986).

²⁵ Refer to: Karl Kullmann, 'The Usefulness of Uselessness: Towards a Landscape Framework for Un-activated Urban Public Space', *Architectural Theory Review* 19/2 (2015), 154–173.

²⁶ As classified by the World Wide Fund for Nature, *bioregions* are ecologically and geographically distinct areas.