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## Narrative Hunger

### GIS Mapping, Google Street View and the Colonial Prospectus

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ROSS GIBSON

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

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Flat as the table  
it's placed on.  
Nothing moves beneath it  
and it seeks no outlet.  
Above—my human breath  
creates no stirring air  
and leaves its total surface  
undisturbed.

'Map', Wislawa Szymborska<sup>1</sup>

There are millions of maps like the one Wislawa Szymborska describes. But in this essay I'll be looking at another kind: geographical information systems, which *do* get stirred when people engage with them. Arrayed on screens, the surfaces of these interactive maps are designed to get unsettled. There's electricity and constant data-

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accrual agitating them, letting them change with context and consultation. They are still accounts of space, these new kinds of maps, but they do not stay still. They alter from moment to moment, tracking time, showing—albeit mainly at the somewhat occluded level of metadata—a record of everyone who visits them, who gets folded into them.

When users are continuously implicated as stimuli that activate updates within a map, then it is no longer the old Cartesian thing we thought we knew, no longer an abstract and rigidly coordinated arraignment purporting to offer disinterested orientation by addressing every surveyor equally and objectively. Once you have become a participant and have etched some of your experience into a cartographic system, thereby changing it with your actions, then the system is dynamic, reactive and not separate from you. It is not simply an object to your subject. It is not the flat thing Szyborska scrutinises. Moreover, an interactive map stores a *narrative* that involves you as a character. Indeed with each newly recorded visitation from you, the narrative grows around your character. And while you might want to regard this character as the protagonist in the mapped setting, you know in fact that computationally you are no more special than the legion of other data-packages—animal, vegetable, mineral and commercial—that make up the network you are negotiating.

See how dubious, how shifty and ruffled the new mapping system really is? This notion of an *active mapping network* plainly disturbs the two orthodoxies that have customarily contended to boss the definition of cartography: namely, the map as a perspectival setting for narrative and the map as an invariant abstraction that coordinates fixed information. More about these old contenders, presently.

As Laura Kurgan has acknowledged recently in her handsomely designed Zone Books publication, *Close Up at a Distance*, 'we do not stand at a distance from [the] technologies that support geographical information systems'. Rather we 'are addressed by and embedded within them'.<sup>2</sup> In her role as director of the Spatial Information Design lab at Columbia University, therefore, Kurgan pursues research projects that:

explicitly reject the ideology, the stance, and the security of 'critical distance' and reflect a basic operational commitment to a practice that explores spatial data and its processing from within. Only through a

certain intimacy with these technologies —an encounter with their opacities, their assumptions, their intended aims—can we begin to assess their full ethical and political stakes.<sup>3</sup>

They are maps too, of course, the GIS-based systems interrogated by Kurgan, but not as the West has preferred to know cartography for at least six hundred years. The received wisdom is that maps locate the world for us, that they are stable and dependable out in front of us. You can read them as if they offer a natural language because, from the earliest explorations in which you used maps to find your way and assert your agency in the wide world, you have absorbed and appreciated the efficacy of all their ‘conventions, ranging from their legend, scale and codes of graphic representation to what counts as the information that they represent’ as they give you ‘a system of notation or coordinates that places things in relation to one another’.<sup>4</sup>

When these traditional maps serve well, they do not seem to deserve interrogation, doubt or disturbance. They take you places; so endorse them, treat them as natural, and carry on. Which is another way of saying that the classic Cartesian map lets the viewer hover potently outside its chart; no participant breath shifts the well-composed data, which is trusted to stay constant and clarifying.

We know this implicitly and most people trust those solid-state coordinates comfortably. But with Kurgan’s help, let’s not dodge what we’ve come to understand since our phones got smart and started talking among themselves while we carried them around:

This drive to locate, to coordinate, however revelatory and even emancipatory it can be, also has its price. It seems as though in the end, maps—the successful ones, the ones that show us where we are and get us from here to there—risk offering only two alternatives. They let us see too much, and hence blind us to what we cannot see, imposing a quiet tyranny of orientation that erases the possibility of disoriented discovery, or they lose sight of all the other things that we ought to see. They omit, according to their conventions, those invisible lines of people, places, and networks that create the most common spaces that we live in today.<sup>5</sup>

So what happens if you take one of Kurgan’s more quixotic provocations seriously, once you’ve paused and glommed to how GIS systems really do work in

the palm of your hand, now that all people with phone accounts (rather than only national-security agencies) have access to the GIS datascape even as they contribute to its massification? Kurgan puts it like this:

The word 'data' ... means nothing more or less than representations, delegates or emissaries of reality ... not presentations of things themselves but representations, figures, mediations—subject, then, to all the conventions and aesthetics and rhetorics that we have come to expect of our images and narratives. All data, then, are not empirical, not irreducible facts about the world, but exist as not quite or almost, alongside the world; they are para-empirical.<sup>6</sup>

What might happen is that you could step off from your 'comfortable sense of orientation, of there being a fixed point, a center from which we can determine with certainty where we are, who we are, or where we are going'.<sup>7</sup> And by doing so you might comprehend yourself not as a sovereign point blessed with an executive overview of a conclusively quantified and invariant field, but rather as a flowing, ever-contingent and shifting agglomeration within a relational network. You could begin to know a world in which change is definitive rather than regulated into charted stasis. The coordinates that Cartesian systems install against doubt and contingency would float more freely. Relativity would abide instead—for good as well as for dread.

The objective, as Kurgan offers it, is to 'put the project of orientation—visibility, location, use, action and exploration—into question ... [but] without dispensing with maps'. Thus one might get a more telling access to everyday reality as it actually roils nowadays—the world as it is rather than as we might wish it to be—which old-style Cartesian maps can occlude or ignore. To finish this thought and to agitate the solid world, Kurgan borrows a tagline from Rosalyn Deutsche, declaring that contemporary reality is actually 'constituted in a complex of representations' which realign and re-charge constantly, depending on the valences operational at any particular time and place in the network.<sup>8</sup>

Kurgan works a canny gambit to get us used to interrogating 'the project of orientation'. She displays two NASA images of Planet Earth: File AS8-14-2383, which is popularly known as 'Earthrise'; and File AD17-148-22727, which is celebrated as 'The Blue Marble'. These public-domain pictures, with their striking backgrounds of



Figure 1: 'Earthrise'

Source: NASA, File AS8-14-2383



Figure 2: 'The Blue Marble'

Source: NASA, File AD17-148-22727

deep-space black, are usually celebrated as gorgeous colour studies. They have been printed out and posted on walls to brighten countless dorms and bedrooms. The powdered foreground of musks and greys in the first photo offsets the chilly southern blues counter-posed with beckoning northern reds in the second. But for the cartographically inclined, the important difference is that one image is a landscape that acts as a narrative setting and the other is an abstract figure which usually gets regarded as a map of Africa.

Addressing a protagonist standing sovereign at the apex of its scene, 'Earthrise' offers a perspectival track into a journey—how did you get here on this lunar plain and where are you about to go? 'The Blue Marble', however, displays the 'total surface' (to invoke Szyborska again) of the planet's primordial continent and it hovers you nowhere, without a particular standpoint. The first image involves you in a narrative, suggesting possible trajectories for yourself foreground to yonder; the second extracts you schematically, offering an empirical, Cartesian assay of space outside of you. In this difference between the two images—the poetics of a first-person narration versus the empirics of an encompassing survey—we have a spectrum that helps us understand the range of contemporary mapping. Toggling between 'The Blue Marble' and 'Earthrise', you can shift back and forth from over there to in here, and so on, becoming evermore implicated in a landscape that hosts a story for you and seems to hide nothing from you

Nowadays GIS takes this interpolation into endless, ever altering real-time as every point in the updating network cross-references against every other point; and it refuses to line up perspectivally or lie still Cartesianally. Which brings us back to Kurgan's interest in the collapse of critical distance, seeing that a landscape, a Cartesian map and a metadata-rich information network are all somehow spatial but by no means commensurate. It is this move from the planar abstraction of Cartesian mapping to the landscape-view of journey-tracing and beyond into continuously updating feedback systems that is presently redefining how maps are made and used.

Pinging satellites have been crucial in this move, allowing a more axonometric kind of view that transitions the surveyor from the affectless hover-point above a map to something closer to a 'real-world' witness-proximity, even though the viewing device is actually in outer space. To this end, Kurgan features (and pays for)

a striking image in her book. She describes it as follows, and it is well worth seeking out online, to feel the vertigo and the narrative poignancy that springs from the plummeting vantage point. It presents:

a one-meter resolution satellite image of Manhattan ... collected at 11.43 a.m. EDT on September 12, 2001, by Space Imaging's Ikonos satellite. The image shows an area of white dust and smoke at the location where the 1,350-foot towers of the World Trade Center once stood. Ikonos travels 423 miles above the Earth's surface at a speed of 17,500 miles per hour.<sup>9</sup>

The column of vapour gyring up toward you is a bridge between the abstract world of mapping and the closely felt testimonial world of time-coded and landscape-set storytelling. You can almost smell it. This poignant index of an actual event—which occurred in real time in a space you can visit—shifts the image back and forth between map and scenario, between information and all the emotion-laden complexity that stories carry even as they freight and delineate great loads of data.

With all this melding of scene-setting and mapping, the paradigm-shifter has been Google Street View, which links 'on-the-ground' landscape renditions to traditional coordinate-charting via GIS surveys and networked user tracking. At will, you can shift yourself inside and outside the scene then back inside again, and so on, blending distance and involvement within a mode of knowing that is both intensive and extensive.

Try monitoring yourself as you work with Google Maps. Most likely you'll start by typing a location-search. These words will give you a schematic map that you can change into a zoom-able satellite view before you go back to the map in order to activate Street View. At this moment you get folded into a grounded vista, 'travelling' and narrating along perspective-lines that you select within the 360-degree half-dome of vision that is availed by your cursor-clicking within the website. And all the while, you know that you can float out to abstraction again at any moment, to hover at a critical distance outside the 'total surface' that is always offered by the Google Map schema, as distinct from the Google Earth setting or the Google Street View trajectory. Inside, outside, inside, and so on.

For me, the most striking aspect of journeys taken along Street View's infinite itineraries is the 'narrative hunger' they stimulate. I fashion this term from David Shields' popular study of non-fiction writing, *Reality Hunger*, in which he accounts

for the amplifying interest in witness-reportage.<sup>10</sup> With a *narrative* hunger, I suggest viewers encounter a setting that compels them to scan for cues about what to feel and what to tell in response to the scene. The hunger intensifies if the scene befuddles or if it fails to divulge, if the viewers *find no reliable cues*, nothing semantic or affective to prompt a satisfying story. Coming up empty, lost in blankness, the viewers know narrative hunger. And they may respond with utterance.

Go travelling with Street View. You'll see what I mean. The blankness emanates from the aesthetic qualities in each image but also from the automated rhythm of image-capture as the Google Car trundles along. The 360-degree Google Camera makes no subjectively nuanced selection with each framed and snapped image; it just operates indiscriminately all around itself on clock-time. It just blinks and plods on. Vernacular parlance has dubbed it 'zombie-cam'. This nickname evokes well the amorality of the images. But I'd like to add 'stumble-cam' to the lexicon, for it's as if the mobile camera is concussed and unfocused as it travels, thoughtless and uncaring, on autopilot, nothing invested. As it moves implacably into the landscape, the Google Camera gobbles up a vast territory of future prospects. It stitches no obvious stories into its journeys, but it lays out a plethora of settings in anticipation of future values that could be poured into them.

In this regard, the journeys of the Google Camera are prospectuses awaiting 'investors', be they monetary speculators, be they narrative. Of course, there are thousands of projects online that have been roused by the narrative hunger. A profusion of artists, for example, have poured significance into the blank scenes, offering narrative texts, providing soundtracks and musical cues, or selecting poignant images that lift the viewing experience out of the automatic daze that zombie-cam engenders.<sup>11</sup> But overall the daze prevails. Image sequences in Street View almost always arise with a rhythm that feels somnolent rather than pointed, predestined or sovereign. In other words, there's currently not much triumphalist colonialism or energetic modernism on display in Street View. (Which is not to say the system will always be so wide open, so blank and multivalent.) In the myriad postcolonial scenes of sociological and ecological devastation that the Google Car has captured all around Australia, one cannot help but feel that the sovereign viewer has been rendered catatonic somehow. There's been a shift of gears. Centuries of manifest destiny and perspectival privilege have led to lost-ness, to paralysis, to a



befuddlement about where you can drive next for satisfaction or profit. Perhaps this is melancholic: the cessation of movement. Or perhaps it is optimistic: the call for a surge in new kinds of spatio-temporal encompassment.

It's the process of moving through the landscape—specifically of moving for the purposes of *surveying and mapping*—that demands and rewards our attention here. John Barrell, in his landmark books, *The Dark Side of the Landscape* and *The Idea of Landscape*, offers astute guidance for this topic, with his canny analyses of rural politics and poetics in early-industrial England.<sup>12</sup> He examines the assault that fell upon the commons during the eighteenth century when land tenure was forcibly altered across most of Britain so that extensive tracts that had long been held, farmed and husbanded communally, in a 'traditional' way, were transformed to become intensive, enclosed estates that were owned personally, sequestered and exploited, in a 'modern' way. Barrell shows how the twinned phenomena of the Industrial Revolution and the Agricultural Revolution coincided in Britain not so much because farming was revamped by the invention and sudden availability of new machinery, as has been long surmised. Rather a change in *mentality* probably occurred first throughout the most powerful section of the populace, Barrell contends, causing a cultural change that encouraged land grabbing and the adoption of an entrepreneurial attitude to estates. Which led to the countryside being treated as an object full of raw materials and natural resources. Among the class of men who realised they could exert their influence, the rural world was redefined as an agricultural object that could be processed with the efficiency afforded by the mechanical advantage and energy-transfer that were the drivers of the Industrial Revolution. The change in the culture governing farm tenure brought a reason for the Industrial Revolution to lock on to rural economies as well as to urban factories.<sup>13</sup>

As they acquired portfolios of estates, the new landed speculators became owners rather than tenders. No longer was it obvious that a person should come from and *belong to* one particular place. And someone who owns many places can quickly become accustomed to the idea that it is good to *move through* these places and to move from place to place as a celebration of personal sovereignty. These parvenu property-owners were part of a new 'rural professional class ... whose interest in the land was not primarily aesthetic', who were 'accustomed, by their

culture, to the *notion* of mobility and could easily imagine other landscapes'.<sup>14</sup> They had found a modern, industrially efficient way to be in the spaces that they had requisitioned, encompassed and reaped with a mobility that afforded them a kind of proprietorial ubiquity.

It is a simple next step to regard all land as matter waiting to be landscaped. In this process every representation of the countryside quickly appears like a profiteer's prospectus, like an offer to convert raw or natural resources to product and property. For good and for bad, Google Street View is the latest phase in this long march across the planet's territories. In Australia, with Google's extensive photographic coverage of the continent's vastness, Street View mapping allows a mode of virtual travelling that feels like free and benign browsing, as if the intensively enclosed territories of the gridded world have been opened up and held in common again. (That little Google Car has been to an extraordinary proportion of Australia; not just to the cities and suburbs, but also along tens of thousands of dirt tracks and corduroy roads that very few citizens have ever traversed.) But dating from 1788, when the first colonising garrison was established at Sydney Cove, there has been a long and troublesome history of this style of movement, this 'prospectus mode' of mobility.

In post-1788 Australia many of the explorers and settlers who forged into the landscape published travel accounts. Or more precisely, they produced *traversal* accounts. Celebrating acquisitive movement in the way Barrell has explained, these accounts compiled inventories that assayed a vast stockyard. The accounts were guidebooks for prospective entrepreneurs looking to launch their ambitions across new fields of profit. Of course, the new terrains could be credited so long as the traversers did not tarry to witness the methodical land husbandry performed by Indigenous custodians; so long as the traversers declined to note that the entire country was already braced with infrastructure and design that had been made and maintained during centuries of native diligence. In this sense, all the traversal tales, even today's, are colonial prospectuses, tabulations of assets and entrepreneurial opportunities. Self-assertion and continuous acquisition, rather than communal and ecological custodianship, are paramount in these traversal ventures.

Here's a bravura example from the middle of the nineteenth century, a whooping paean to territorial mobility. It was published by Major Thomas Mitchell,

first Surveyor-General of New South Wales and keeper of the colony's cadastral records. Mitchell reminisces about an invigorating day exploring a wild tract out past a hamlet's edges:

The calls of the natives, first heard at a distance in the woods, having become more loud, and at length incessant, I answered them in a similar tone; and having halted the carts, I galloped over a bit of clear rising-ground, towards the place from whence they came.<sup>15</sup>

Such momentum carries him imperially as well as imperiously:

We now advanced with feelings of intense interest into the country before us, and impressed with the responsibility of commencing the first chapter of its history. All was still new and nameless there, but by this beginning we were to open a way for the many other beginnings of civilised man and thus extend his dominion over the last holds of barbarism.<sup>16</sup>

Motoring forward one hundred and fifty years, I think it's not too fanciful to regard the Kennedy-Miller Company's *Mad Max* films as part of this cultural tradition. Actually, the films are critiques rather than continuations of the mania for mobility. With their dystopian vision of what the urge to roam and rule can produce, they play out a scatological and thrilling endgame for voracious momentum. Offering a raucous completion to the hollering that Mitchell initiated, the films have struck a chord with massed audiences for more than thirty years, from the period of their production when the oil crisis and ecological collapse first smacked into popular consciousness worldwide. They drive the imperial tale of acquisitive traversal to a mad kind of apogee. They are hypercharged with an explicit narrative mission: ride the white line fever to a flaming climax. This is unequivocal. The viewer need not supply any extra meanings or thematics.

By contrast, what's striking about the road movies that Google Street View supplies is that the narrative repletion driving the *Mad Max* films has evaporated from the landscapes. Even while it takes account of tracts of land that can be tagged as data to be leased out as a type of real estate—much as Thomas Mitchell did when he published his journals—the Google Car seems stuck in first gear, so unlike the turbo-boosted muscle cars in the *Mad Max* films. Indeed, so unlike Mitchell's galloping steed! Something has changed in the vantage we now have on space and place and time.

It's this. Even as Google continues the project of acquisitive traversal that capitalism and colonialism have impelled for centuries, it is doing something else too, perhaps inadvertently. The Street View and GIS nexus have brought the narrative hunger. Which is an unexpected affordance, I suggest, of the new technology. With the Google Car, the story that is meant to be ascribed to the journey is no longer obvious, no longer presumed and credited, as it was when an avid sense of manifest destiny sustained the colonial venturers. With the zombie-affect of the stumbling, nine-eyed camera, no singular trajectory gets comfortably proposed. Instead of the colonialist narrative drive, instead of the modernist energy, we encounter diffused or 'ambient' perspectives and divergent through lines.<sup>17</sup> The settings in Street View feel unfocused and 'agnostic' of destination; if you were to stitch traversers' tales into the scenes they would be plotted along several trajectories, out of several memories or toward many dissociated intrigues. The concussed and extensified journeys availed by Street View feel different from the rifling paths, so focused and intensified, that have already been scored by Mitchell and Kennedy-Miller. There's a feeling of blankness in the Googlescape, a manifest lack of narrative prescription. Encountering Street View, the traveller feels a strong yen to get involved with systems of stories. Ironically, the traveller yearns for something 'indigenous': a kind of orienting and all-encompassing story-network or mythology. The yearning that you sense in Google's blank land is a hankering for 'country', a hunger for the system of place-tagged fabulations, dances, songs, paintings, rituals and embodied memories that are kept and cosseted by the inhabitants (as distinct from the temporary travellers) in a storied domain. Country crisscrosses a terrain in all directions, netting the meanings and emotions, the obligations and warnings that need to be acknowledged and retained as you find yourself and make your way through the place where you've landed, where you live. It's easy to invoke—this notion of country—but arduous to install and sustain, millennial in duration. So it's a naïve and alarmingly rudimentary emotion, this parvenu hankering for country that one feels in the Street View blanklands. But there it is, calling for a new start.

With Street View, the undead landscapes that the stumble-cam captures all have a vacuum in them. But they are strangely rousing nevertheless, no matter how meagre, how depleted. I'm reminded of Jay Leyda's brilliant insight that Emily

Dickinson's utterances are so compelling because they have at their core an absence or silence where you would expect to hear divulgence, and in response to this 'omitted center' the reader floods feelings and notions into the exquisitely composed void.<sup>18</sup> Dickinson created this effect deliberately. With Google, I think, the structuring absence is accidental. But it's there nevertheless.

In summary, then, here is my thesis, offered with thanks to Kurgan and Barrell for lighting up Thomas Mitchell's journals and the *Mad Max* movies with a fresh orientation:

There is an activating void in Google Street View which is an effect both of aesthetic qualities of the Google Camera's 360-degree pictorial field and of the mechanical triggering of the camera's automatic sequencing. The absence of meanings and feelings plus the lack of a singular perspectival impetus in the imagery stimulates in the viewer an urge both to offer stories that account for the appearance of the scenes and to inhabit those scenes with human history. Effectively, the wraparound landscapes of Street View spur viewers to append tales to the journeys via Google's pinning systems and via their own blogs and aggregation communities. Thus viewers can begin to participate in the narrative enrichment of the Googlescape's vacuous settings. More than being *receivers* of stored-up information, the viewers have the chance—singly and communally—to be *contributors* to the meanings and structures of feelings that give value to these landscapes which have been mapped as Google have compiled a kind of prospectus for future profitable uses of the traversed territories. Thus in their networked communality, these contributors have a chance to integrate a shared system of narratives which invest the traversed spaces with significance so that the most basic rudiments of a new kind of country-telling might start to take shape. Over time, as people offer their tales to fill the absences all over the Googlescapes, these contributors could become participants in country-keeping as they interact to make and maintain an ever-adjusting weave of plenteous and demotic narratives that hold information and emotion suffusing the entire, interconnected environment that hosts all the participant storytellers. Immersed, and involved. Not critically distanced, these participants could make what

James Agee once envisaged as a 'living map' created by the prodigious testimonial work he craved to facilitate in this account of Alabama in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*:

let me hope the whole of that landscape we shall essay to travel in is visible and may be known as there all at once; let this be borne in mind, in order that, when we descend among its windings and blockades, into examination of slender particulars, this its wholeness and simultaneous living map may not be neglected, however lost the breadth of the country may be in the winding walk of each sentence.<sup>19</sup>

To finish, resolving not to be stymied by the fact that this new, online mode of country-keeping is almost risibly inchoate at present, let's work a little harder with this idea of the *participant* in the living map. Let's see what can be done. With Google Street View, even as you serve the company by making data with your every action, you also become more than a participant; to a significant extent you are an *operator* of the viewing field, as you select the perspective and the trajectory of the Google Camera's journey. You attain a modicum of agency and responsibility. Operators are not readers or receivers. They can respond actively to the narrative hunger that presently aches in the Street View landscapes. Life in the Data Republic of Google is no utopia. Indeed it feels increasingly like an oligarchy as well as a kind of political octopus, plainly, but there *is* something substantively fresh—for the moment at least—about the scenes that the company displays via its mapping systems.

In the Australian footprint of the Googleverse, we seem to be at a point of balance between plenitude and vacuity, a special point where the extensively measured and photographed environment is uncannily open for reimagining even as it is also being thoroughly itemised by the stocktaking of Google. For a myth can sometimes cause history to happen (as Ernst Cassirer so famously asserted)<sup>20</sup> and a map can lead people back into country where no one has ventured in several generations, if ever at all. So we have a chance to undercut, enrich and overlay the new acquisitive actions of Google and all the other data-miners. We can do this with fresh accounting, fresh narrating and fresh place-making in this our hyper-colonised sector of the dataverse. Curiously, unintentionally, we have been given a machine—this zombie-cam and its attendant satellites and networks—that might help us care

for country in some new way, instead of just continuing to grab land in the old colonial way.

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Ross Gibson is Centenary Professor in Creative and Cultural Research at the University of Canberra. Recent works include *The Summer Exercises* (2009) and *26 Views of the Starburst World* (2012).

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<sup>1</sup> Wislawa Szymborska, 'Map', translated from the Polish by Clare Cavanagh, *The New Yorker*, 14 April 2014, pp. 46–7.

<sup>2</sup> Laura Kurgan, *Close Up at a Distance: Mapping, Technology, and Politics*, Zone Books, New York, 2013, p. 14

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 16–17.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>10</sup> David Shields, *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto*, Knopf, New York, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Three instances of this can be found in Mishka Henner's 'No Man's Land', <<http://www.mishkahenner.com/No-Man-s-Land>>; Jon Rafman's '9 Eyes' which ponders the aesthetics and the seeming amorality of the 9-lensed surround-camera, <<http://9-eyes.com/>>; Ross Gibson's 'Wayfaring Strangers', <[rossgibson.com.au](http://rossgibson.com.au)>.

<sup>12</sup> John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: the Rural Poor in English Painting 1730–1840*, Cambridge University Press, 1980; and John Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place 1730–1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare*, Cambridge University Press, 1972.

<sup>13</sup> Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape*, pp. 60–1.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 62–3.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, *Three Expeditions into the Interior of Eastern Australia*, Vol. 1, T. & W. Boone, London, 1838, p. 210.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>17</sup> Thanks to Nikos Papastergiadis, personal conversation with the author for this idea of ‘ambient perspective’.

<sup>18</sup> Jay Leyda, *The Years and Hours of Emily Dickinson*, Volume 1, Archon Press, Connecticut, 1970 (first published 1960), p. xxi.

<sup>19</sup> James Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, Picador Classic, first published 1941, reprinted London 1988, p. 111.

<sup>20</sup> Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, Vol. 2: *Mythical Thought*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1955, p. 5: ‘In the relation between myth and history myth proves to be the primary, myth the secondary and derived, factor. It is not by its history that the mythology of a nation is determined but, conversely, its history is determined by its mythology—or rather the mythology of a people does not *determine* but *is* its fate, its destiny as decreed from the very beginning.’

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