



Landscape, Nature, and the Body Politic: From Britain's Renaissance to America's New World

Kenneth Robert Olwig

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Landscape, Nature, and the Body Politic explores the origins and lasting influences of two contesting but intertwined discourses that persist today when we use the words landscape, country, scenery, nature, national. In the first sense, the land is a physical and bounded body of terrain upon which the nation state is constructed (e.g., the purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain, from sea to shining sea). In the second, the country is constituted through its people and established through time and precedence (e.g., land where our fathers died, land of the Pilgrims' pride). Kenneth Robert Olwig's extended exploration of these discourses is a masterful work of scholarship both broad and deep, which opens up new avenues of thinking in the areas of geography, literature, theater, history, political science, law, and environmental studies.

Olwig tracks these ideas through Anglo-American history, starting with seventeenth-century conflicts between the Stuart kings and the English Parliament, and the Stuart dream of uniting Scotland with England and Wales into one nation on the island of Britain. He uses a royal production of a Ben Jonson masque, with stage sets by architect Inigo Jones, as a touchstone for exploring how the notion of "landscape" expands from artful stage scenery to a geopolitical ideal. Olwig pursues these contested concepts of the body politic from Europe to America and to global politics, illuminating a host of topics, from national parks and environmental planning to theories of polity and virulent nationalistic movements.

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