



What Is Landscape? (MIT Press)

By John R. Stilgoe

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"Mr. Stilgoe does not ask that we take his book outdoors with us; he believes that reading and experiencing landscapes are activities that should be kept separate. But, as I learned in his book, the hollow storage area in a car driver's door was once a holster, the 'secure nesting place of a pistol.' I recommend you stow your copy there." -- *The Wall Street Journal*

Landscape, John Stilgoe tells us, is a noun. From the old Frisian language (once spoken in coastal parts of the Netherlands and Germany), it meant shoveled land: *landschap*. Sixteenth-century Englishmen misheard or mispronounced this as *landskep*, which became *landskip*, then *landscape*, designating the surface of the earth shaped for human habitation. In *What Is Landscape?* Stilgoe maps the discovery of landscape by putting words to things, zeroing in on landscape's essence but also leading sideways expeditions through such sources as children's picture books, folklore, deeds, antique terminology, out-of-print dictionaries, and conversations with locals. ("What is that?" "Well, it's not really a slough, not really, it's a bayou...") He offers a highly original, cogent, compact, gracefully written narrative lexicon of landscape as word, concept, and path to discoveries. *What Is Landscape?* is an invitation to walk, to notice, to ask: to see a sandcastle with a pinwheel at the beach and think of Dutch windmills -- icons of triumph, markers of territory won from the sea; to walk in the woods and be amused by the Elizabethans' misuse of the Latin *silvaticus* (people of the woods) to coin the word *savages*; to see in a suburban front lawn a representation of the meadow of a medieval freehold.

Discovering landscape is good exercise for body and for mind. This book is an essential guide and companion to that exercise -- to understanding, literally and figuratively, what landscape is.

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What Is Landscape? (MIT Press) By John R. Stilgoe Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #355880 in Books
- Brand: imusti
- Published on: 2015-10-09
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .69" w x 5.38" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 280 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

This slim but densely packed volume affords innumerable insights into the relationships between language, landscape, history, and human perception. Weaving together long-lost lore, etymological esoterica, and astute observations on ongoing developments, Stilgoe challenges common assumptions and imbues overlooked environments with unheralded significance.

(Timothy Davis, National Park Service landscape historian)

John Stilgoe approaches the question 'What is landscape?' with a deep appreciation for the ways the environment is naturally endowed and a keen understanding of how it is culturally shaped. By exposing the historical roots of words we use to describe our world, he reveals our place in it.

(Allan W. Shearer, Associate Professor and Co-Director of the Center for Sustainable Development, The University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture)

With the energy and wisdom of a lifelong landscape traveler, Stilgoe leads us toward the deepest recesses of language and the most primal human labors, through it all urging us to pay more attention and to take more walks of our own. A remarkable and entirely original book.

(Michael Van Valkenburgh, Charles Eliot Professor of Landscape Architecture, Harvard Graduate School of Design)

Stilgoe answers the question 'What is landscape?' with a remarkable work of art, one of his finest. Reading these pages is like taking a walk through time and place with an unparalleled guide. Wandering through the history of words, Stilgoe's unique itinerary exposes layers of meaning and significance in the most unexpected ways and places. This is another classic which picks up where *Shallow Water Dictionary* leaves off. Take this walk.

(Teri Rueb, Professor of Media Study, University at Buffalo)

...[Stilgoe's] love of language and the land sees him ploughing through outdated and specialist dictionaries for our benefit, in this illuminating and entertaining book.... Reading this will have you thinking anew about words, as it breaks down both the language and the land that it may originate from or be attached to.

(*Irish Times*)

About the Author

John R. Stilgoe is Orchard Professor in the History of Landscape at Harvard University, where he has taught for forty years. He is the author of many books, most recently *Old Fields: Photography, Glamour, and Fantasy Landscape*.

Users Review

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This What Is Landscape? (MIT Press) are generally reliable for you who want to become a successful person, why. The key reason why of this What Is Landscape? (MIT Press) can be on the list of great books you must have is actually giving you more than just simple looking at food but feed a person with information that perhaps will shock your prior knowledge. This book is definitely handy, you can bring it almost everywhere and whenever your conditions throughout the e-book and printed ones. Beside that this What Is Landscape? (MIT Press) giving you an enormous of experience such as rich vocabulary, giving you tryout of critical thinking that could it useful in your day task. So , let's have it and revel in reading.

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