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Pursuing David Lowenthal in my critique of the landscape heritage of blood and soil ethnonationalism—a personal account

David Lowenthal (1923–2018), a member of the Landscape, Law and Justice group (LL&J), died aged 95 in 2018. In the following I will pursue his spirit in my critique of the landscape heritage of blood and soil ethnonationalism. Prior to LL&J, Michael Jones and I, together with the late Stockholm University geography professor Ulf Sporrong (1936–2020), had produced the seminal edited volume *Nordic Landscapes: Region and Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe*,[1] based on a series of field trips and seminars with leading Nordic scholars. Lowenthal, as a leading landscape and heritage scholar with an interest in law,[2] was subsequently invited to be a member of the international LL&J group which followed the earlier project. In this chapter, I first concentrate on Lowenthal's geographical scholarship that introduced me to the blood and soil ethnonationalist landscape theme. Then I examine the preliminary experience of the Nordic book project, which helped set the scene for my LL&J work with Lowenthal. Finally, I focus on the spring 2003 LL&J seminar that Lowenthal and I organized and then published, first as a journal special issue and then as the book *The Nature of Cultural Heritage and the Culture of Natural Heritage: Northern Perspectives on a Contested Patrimony*.[3] This LL&J seminar and publication have subsequently, I argue, helped me better understand, against the background of Lowen-

1 Jones & Olwig 2008.
2 Olwig 2024.
3 Olwig & Lowenthal 2005; 2006.

thal's scholarship, the relationship between landscape and the heritage of blood and soil ethnonationalism.

LOWENTHAL, MARSH AND THE NATURE OF THE LANDSCAPE HERITAGE AND BLOOD AND SOIL ETHNONATIONALISM

To understand Lowenthal's approach to landscape and heritage, it is useful to know that throughout his career he was inspired by the work of George Perkins Marsh (1801–1882), a 19th-century American geographer, jurist, philologist and nature conservationist.[4] Lowenthal drew upon Marsh as a groundbreaking figure in developing the understanding of landscape as a concept expressing differing perceptions of the environment and the relationship between society and its environment. In late career, also drawing on Marsh, Lowenthal pioneered heritage studies as a critical scholarly field in which heritage was seen to reflect differing perceptions of history and landscape.[5]

Lowenthal's doctoral dissertation was published as a biography of Marsh.[6] The biography's core concerned the role of Marsh's book, *Man and Nature: Or, Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action*, in changing the reigning perception that the character of a people was teleologically determined by its natural landscape environment.[7] Marsh argued that the landscape was over time shaped by a polity's laws and governance, not vice versa, and that this was reflected in the health of the polity's environment. Marsh is now considered a progressive founder of the conservation movement as well as an ideational precursor of the Anthropocene.[8] In researching the Marsh biography, however, Lowenthal discovered a Marsh pamphlet, *The Goths in New-England*, written two decades before *Man and Nature*, that exposed a disturbing reactionary ethnonationalistic, blood and soil racist thinking that contradicted Marsh's later opposition to environmental determinism. Marsh wrote:

> The intellectual character of our Puritan forefathers is that derived by inheritance from our remote Gothic ancestry, restored by its own inherent elasticity to its primitive proportions, upon the removal of the shackles and burdens, which the spiritual and intellectual tyranny of Rome had for cen-

4 Olwig 2003a.
5 Lowenthal 1985; 1996; 2015.
6 Lowenthal 1958.
7 Marsh 2003.
8 Lowenthal 2000; Haraway *et al*. 2016.

> turies imposed upon it .... The Goths ... are the noblest branch of the Caucasian race. We are their children. It was the blood of the Goth, that flowed at Bunker's Hill [at the US Revolutionary War's beginning].[9]

Of this statement, Lowenthal wrote:

> Antiquarian pleasure in Icelandic and Old Norse was not enough, he felt a need to claim the inherent superiority of Nordic (or Gothic) languages and people. And in ascribing the same virtues to his fellow New Englanders, Marsh linked them, by descent, in a Nonconformist [Protestant], racialist harangue.[10]

Marsh not only described how the New Englanders were shaped as a "noble" race with, as Lowenthal adds, a bloodline determined by the northern nature of their physical landscape;[11] he also identified language with race much as the speaking of Hebrew, a semitic language, has branded the Jews as racially semitic.

Marsh saw New England's Protestant English settlers as bearers of the cultural and racial heritage of England's "Gothic" Anglo-Saxon and Nordic settler colonists. It was this race, he believed, that first colonized England and then conquered and settled the New England north-eastern frontier of America. Here they revitalized their ethnonational Gothic bloodlines through their revolutionary defeat of Britain, the contemporary expression of Roman imperialism.[12] The Gothicist myth thus provided a malleable heritage narrative that could link ethnicity, landscape, environment, governance, colonialism, race, language, law and justice. Such linking is characteristic of ethnonationalist heritage defined as "advocacy of or support for the political interests of a particular ethnic group, especially its national independence or self-determination", ethnicity defined here as "of or belonging to a population group or subgroup made up of people who share a common cultural background or descent."[13] The link to racism, however, is labile and fluid since the sharing of a common culture and language needs not signify race.

9 Marsh 1843, pp. 10, 14.
10 Lowenthal 2000, p. 57.
11 Lowenthal 1958, p. 60.
12 On the Gothicist myth's origins and nature concept, see: Lowenthal 1958, pp. 60–67; 2000, pp. 48–67; Olwig 2015; 2021, pp. 11–25.
13 NOAD 2005: *ethnonationalism, ethnic*.

Map IV. North Europe
The Nordic Racial Kernel Area

Figure 1. 'The Nordic Racial Kernel Area' (De Geer 1926, pp. 162–171). Note that much of the Norwegian coast and all of archipelagic Denmark do not have the highest Nordic racial density, and that the areas populated largely by the Sami are left out of the Nordic racial area. Race is correlated with language in the map and text. Note too that Iceland rates the highest Nordic racial density, though modern DNA studies indicate that it is c. half Celtic.[14] In De Geer's texts and other maps of racial distribution, the relationship between race and landscape topography is clearer than on this map.[15]

14 Olwig 2015.

15 On De Geer's use of landscape topography, see: De Geer 1926; 1928; Olwig 2019, pp. 172–197.

Marsh, a philologist fluent in the Nordic languages, derived his Gothicist narrative particularly from the Nordic nationalists, who cultivated the heritage of the mythicized Nordic chieftains of the Sagas. These slave-owning chieftains conquered and colonized Scandinavia's northern natural landscape, displacing its prior inhabitants.[16] An Old Norse term applied to such clan chieftains was *oðal* (*odal* or *udal*), a word related to the word *adel*, meaning noble.[17] Ernst Sars (1835–1917), a leading 19th-century Norwegian historian, thus claimed that contemporary prominent farm families with a long landed lineage were "bearers of an aristocratic spirit—a reminiscence of the pre-Christian aristocracy of regional clans."[18] For the nationalists, these families were foundational to the nation and deemed worthy of a privileged position in terms of land inheritance and voting rights vis-à-vis the landless and mobile coastal fishing and maritime populations.[19] Since clans involve a blood relation, this glorification could take a racial turn, as can be seen in *Figure 1*. In this map, the prominent early 20th-century Swedish geographer, ethnographer and nobleman, Sten De Geer (1886–1933), categorized inland farming areas as having the "highest density of Nordic race", whereas coastal Norway and the Sami regions of northern Scandinavia were categorized as relatively less Nordic or non-Nordic.

According to Lowenthal, Marsh refuted the Gothicist myths in his subsequent work.[20] Marsh's repudiation of environmental determinism in *Man and Nature* clearly undermined the Gothicist landscape thesis, but how this is connected to his eventual refutation of Gothicist heritage is not entirely clear. However, Marsh did move away from his early sympathy for Gothicist heritage at the same time as he moved from New England Vermont to a Congressional seat, and home, in Washington, D.C. Here he became a founder of Washington's Smithsonian Institution, thereby turning away from heritage as a populist myth to a broader, scholarly approach to heritage that was not bound to the identity politics of a particular region's ethnonationalism. But how does one explain the connection between Marsh's abandonment of ethnonationalism and his critique of environmental determinism? The LL&J seminar and book helped me understand this connection. However, the catalytic role of the seminar and book, edited with Lowenthal, must be understood against the background of the earlier production of *Nordic Landscapes*.

16 Olwig 2015.
17 Duden 2020: *Odal, Adel*.
18 Eilertsen 2011, p. 193.
19 Hálfdánarson 1995; Eilertsen 2011, p. 193.
20 Lowenthal 1958, pp. 66–67.

NORDIC LANDSCAPES, REGION AND BELONGING

Sporrong, Jones and I had a differing but complementary interest in unsettling and rethinking the established national understanding of landscape as a scene. *Nordic Landscapes* focuses on landscape as a region rather than a scene. Jones and I each got to know Sporrong, and each other, separately. I had come to know Sporrong in the early 1990s when I was a lecturer at the Nordic Institute for Urban and Regional Planning (Nordplan) in Stockholm. It was at this time that we first discussed the topic that became one of Sporrong's book chapters: 'The province of Dalecarlia (Dalarna)—heartland or anomaly?'[21] Dalarna was historically a semi-autonomous medieval landscape (*landskap*) polity. It bordered present-day Norway to the west and owed fealty to Swedish kings to the east. It was later incorporated into the centralizing Swedish renaissance state as a province *(län)* and eventually became perceived by national romantics as the Swedish nation's autochthonous indigenous agrarian "heartland". Dalarna was "anomalous", however, because it had a dispersed settlement structure with a land tenure system closer to that of the North Atlantic archipelago extending from Norway to Britain than to Sweden's characteristically more nucleated farm villages.

My interest in Sporrong's topic lay in the way it challenged, in Marsh's spirit, a nationalist environmental determinism that asserts that societies grow from a native national soil. Dalarna also challenged this idea because it was one of the regions where immigrant Walloons had helped revitalize the vital Swedish mining industry in the early 17th century. This challenge was particularly pertinent at a time when Anglo-American geographers were rejecting the landscape approach to geography because of its identification with the idea of landscape as a layered scene with nature as its foundation and culture as its superstructure, particularly as it had developed in German geography, and which in turn was identified with nationalistic, blood and soil environmental determinism. Inspired by my stay in Sweden, where the term *landskap* was still used to refer to regions like Dalarna, I sought to revitalize landscape geography by showing that the concept of landscape, before it was appropriated as a creature of the national territorial terrain, referred to a form of regional polity. This was a polity shaped by the substantive laws and justice of a representative political body, rather than by indigenous blood relations, such as those of clan, ethnicity and race. It was a polity whose customary laws were often concerned with the sustainable use of its natural topography, but it was determined by a polity, not by natural law and blood. The notion of justice born by history of such landscape regions, as Sporrong's

21 Sporrong 2008.

research showed, still had explanatory historical and contemporary relevance, and for me this substantive legal and social history, and the history of its usurpation, needed to be "recovered".[22]

A personal factor affecting my Stockholm work was the contemporaneous resurgence of extremist xenophobic nationalism in Sweden. This was viscerally manifested to me when I was trapped on the island of Skeppsholmen, where Nordplan was located, by a massive extremist demonstration held on Karl XII's Day (30 November) at Kungsträdgården Park where there is a statue of the king, a militaristic hero of the national romantics. Added to this was the so-called "Lasermannen", an ethnonationalist terrorist sniper who shot perceived foreigners, also near my home. Many Swedes then made an effort to counter this xenophobia by pointing out their own non-Swedish ethnic background as evidence that Sweden was a multi-ethnic society with cosmopolitan values. It was in this situation that Sporrong told me of his own Walloon background.

Whereas my concern with landscapes like Dalarna, and thereby Sporrong's research, was largely tied to notions of justice, national ideology and the historically evolving meanings of landscape, Jones' interest was more legal-geographical. Jones shared with Sporrong a common interest in the workings of law in relation to land tenure and its relevance to the cultural landscape, particularly in archipelagic landscapes such as those of Finland and the North Atlantic.[23] Jones, thus, was also interested in exploring the issues similar to those raised by Dalarna's anomalous landscape identity. I also had an ongoing concern with the archipelagic due to my early fieldwork in the Caribbean under the guidance of Lowenthal's studies of the West Indian archipelagic societies.[24] For me, a fascinating aspect of the Caribbean archipelago, along with the Greek archipelago, the Frisian, the Finnish and even the Danish archipelagos, is that they include not only islands and their polities, but also mainland polities bordering or connected to a sea.[25]

22 I review this critical literature and my alternative landscape regional approach in Olwig 2019 [1996], pp. 18–49; 2002. For an early iteration of this critique in relation to Gothicism, see Olwig 1992; 2021 [1984] and more recently Olwig 2002, pp. 148–177. Denis Cosgrove, a prominent critic of the traditional layered approach to landscape geography, eventually accepted my approach, see: Cosgrove 2004. My critique of the traditional approach of landscape was not popular with my more traditionally oriented Scandinavian geography colleagues.

23 Jones 1977; 2013.

24 On Lowenthal's and my evolving interest in the West Indies and the archipelagic, see: Olwig 2002, pp. 10–16; 2018; 2019, pp. 88–103; Sörlin 2024; Thomas-Hope 2024.

25 In ancient Greek the *πέλαγος* (pelago) in *ἀρχιπέλαγος* (archipelago) meant sea, and *ἀρχιπέλαγος* was the name of the primary Greek sea (the Aegean). In this original sense the *pelago* thus was the fluid medium uniting places surrounding and within the seas, not an assemblage of islands.

It was the mixing of Jones', Sporrong's and my own interests in the archipelagic and in landscapes understood as varied historical regional polities, which differed from, but were incorporated into, homogenizing national landscape scenes, that led us to work together on the *Nordic Landscapes* project. After initial fieldwork together, we organized a working group, with financing secured by Sporrong, to research and write the chapters of *Nordic Landscapes*. The book includes important chapters concerning historically constituted landscape regions, many of which have an "archipelagic" character, like that of Dalarna. The book thus encompasses relevant chapters on Dalarna,[26] Finnish inflected Värmland,[27] as well as Skåne, an "(un)Swedish" landscape region historically a part of archipelagic Denmark.[28] There is also a chapter on a similarly anomalous Finnish landscape, the culturally Swedish archipelago called "Landskapet Åland" (which preserves the original meaning of landscape as a polity in its title),[29] while reference is made in several chapters to Finland's Karelia, which is perceived as both a Finnish heartland and as an exotic peripheral inland sea.[30] Norway is represented by relevant chapters on northern Norway's multi-ethnic landscape;[31] Denmark by a chapter on the peripheral landscape region of Jutland, which some also perceived to be a heartland.[32] Several of these chapters were by scholars who later became part of the LL&J group, and/or contributors to the present book. The latter include Jones, Ari Lehtinen, Tomas Germundsson and me.

These chapters in *Nordic Landscapes* show that there is ample reason to believe there was a significant number of landscape regions in Norden, many with roots in historical landscape polities that defied the homogenetic, naturalizing ethnonationalist norms of the states within which they had been spatially incorporated. It was this evidence that provided the basis for asking what, then, is the relationship between "the nature of cultural heritage and the culture of natural heritage" in regard to the role of the differently understood definitions of landscape in fostering ethnonationalist heritage? This was a key question that Lowenthal's and my LL&J seminar publication helped address.

26 Sporrong 2008.
27 Bladh 2008.
28 Germundsson 2008.
29 Storå 2008.
30 Häyrynen 2008; Lehtinen 2008; Mead 2008; Paasi 2008.
31 Jones 2008; Olsen 2008.
32 Olwig 2008.

HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPES—THE SOCIETY/NATURE ISSUE AND BLOOD AND SOIL ETHNONATIONALISM

In his contribution to the LL&J seminar publication, Lowenthal argued that in heritage discourse nature and culture are effectively interchangeable sources of national identity. Yet the arguments for one or the other are often in conflict.[33] These observations were corroborated by Bosse Sundin, who in his contribution, 'Nature as heritage: The Swedish case', showed that ties to nature rather than culture were used as a source of a unified national identity in the building of the modern Swedish nation-state.[34] Tomas Germundsson discussed the consequences of this transition in his text, 'Regional cultural heritage versus national heritage in Scania's disputed national landscape'.[35] Until 1658 Scania (Skåne) was part of Denmark, to which it was linked by the waters of a narrow sound. In Sweden, the national core was perceived to be found in an evergreen wooded landscape with scattered red wooden farms relatively close to the capital. Scania's open treeless fields, beech forests and half-timbered Danish-style buildings fitted poorly into this national Swedish landscape. Tiina Peil's article, 'Estonian heritage connections—people, past and place: The Pakri peninsula'[36] described an even-more glaring example in her analysis of the difficulty of absorbing a Russian-settled area that has been incorporated both cartographically and as landscape scenery within the territory of an emerging ethnonational Estonian state. Indeed, the article should more properly be entitled 'Estonian disconnections' because Peil recounts an unsettling story of attempts to incorporate a peninsula with a people who were not Estonian and who lived in a landscape constructed by the tzars of a state that had sought to suppress the existence of a settled ethnonational Estonian identity.

Werner Krauss' contribution to the seminar, 'The natural and cultural landscape heritage of northern Friesland',[37] focused on the conflict between the Frisian historical *Landschaft* polities and the German nation-state's nature authorities' attempt to rewild the Frisians' socially and economically foundational sharing of the Wadden Sea and its encompassing reclaimed meadows. The Frisians were well aware that their forbearers had summer diked the Wadden Sea forelands when creating rich, regularly flooded meadowlands for grazing animals that were simultaneously vital to migrating birds. Protesting the German state's nature rewilders, the Frisians, who have a re-

33 Lowenthal 2006a.
34 Sundin 2006.
35 Germundsson 2006.
36 Peil 2006.
37 Krauss 2006.

gional autonomy movement, posted signs reading "God created the sea and the Frisian the coast." For centuries, the Frisians had treated the Wadden Sea as a watery commons with shared resources regulated according to laws founded on custom, and the idea of rewilding the area as a nature park received the response "Down with Eco-dictatorship."[38]

The situation Krauss describes regarding Frisian identification with its historical quasi-independent *Landschaften* and their notion of justice resonated with my own experience working with the Danish Conservation Board, *Fredningsstyrelsen*, which in 1975–1987 was responsible for administering natural and cultural heritage conservation and recreational landscape access.[39] Working with the agency's jurists, I learned that the public right of access to the sea coast and uncultivated forest and meadow lands in Denmark was still legally founded upon an ancient Danish "landscape law", the 1241 "Jutland Law", rooted in custom and legal precedent. I also learned that related Scandinavian public rights of access and subsistence use, called *allemannsrett* in Norwegian and *allemansrätt* in Swedish, were inspired by similar ancient customary laws. Today it is particularly the modern labor movement that fights to protect these alienated ancient legal rights in Scandinavia. This is because the enclosure of common lands as private property has taken access and subsistence use rights (usufruct) from propertyless laborers for whom these rights historically gave both sustenance and recreation. This movement has historical roots in what the English historian E.P. Thompson has called the working classes' moral economy, which in turn gave the labor movement the perceived moral right to organize mass protests on lands that had been enclosed by often aristocratic estate owners for sport hunting.[40]

The case of the Byneset golf course was taken up in Gunhild Setten's contribution, 'Farming the heritage: On the production and construction of a personal and practised landscape heritage'. Setten took her point of departure in the question of how differing landscape values were being considered in the planning process as exemplified by the conversion of a farm into a golf course at Byneset on the outskirts of Trondheim. This had been a theme of the 1999 program for the master's degree in "Landscape

38 Krauss 2006, p. 42. On Frisia's historical landscape polities, see: Olwig 2002, pp. 10–16. On Frisian concern for greater autonomy in the Netherlands, see: Renes 2022, p. 8. For an assessment of the environmental conflict's complexity, see: Ahlhorn & Kunz 2002. The Frisians' use of the term "Eco-dictatorship" might be to suggest comparison with the German World War II-era dictatorship's use of pseudo-landscape-ecological arguments to justify the ethnocide of peoples whose blood, as opposed to German blood, was thought to be bad for the soil, see: Gröning & Wolschke-Bulmahn 1987.

39 E.g., Olwig 1990.

40 Olwig 2005.

and Planning" at the Department of Geography, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, where I taught at the time. Given my previous experience, I was particularly interested in how this transformation of grazed and cultivated agricultural fields into seeded golf courses affected *allemannsretten*. The landscape of golf courses is architected, like the post-enclosure English landscape gardens surrounding manorial estates, to superficially resemble that of a commons—in this case the grazing commons where the sport originated in Scotland. However, modern golf courses are not multiple-use commons but properties enclosed for the sport of those who can afford to join a golf club. The commons and both grazed and cultivated farmlands on Trondheim's periphery are core to public recreation, not the least during the winter skiing season, under the protection of the Norwegian *allemannsretten*—but when farmland is converted into a private golf course these rights are abrogated.[41]

Setten's chapter begins by describing her consternation "watching in astonishment as a planner from the city administration, a group of students and two of my colleagues ambled on to a newly sown 'field'." Their walking on this newly seeded golf course gave rise to

> a strong feeling that walking on the field was wrong. As I paced uneasily backwards and forwards, I was getting more and more upset—and, in fact, angry: 'How come they just went on to the field?'; 'Don't they know that walking on a newly sown field is wrong?'; 'How come no one has told them that this is something you just don't do?'.[42]

Setten's anger was clearly provoked by the alienating contrast between her colleagues' alien reflections on landscape and nature as theoretical and legal concepts, and her own native lived, "personal" and "private" practiced landscape heritage as the scion of a farm owned by Setten's family since the 17th century.[43] This feeling, Setten writes "is something you know and to which you have a strong embodied relation—it is 'natural'," [44] and thus ontologically pre-existing the landscape as a political entity "in the theoretical sense."[45] Land, as Setten puts it, "becomes the product and producer of, in many ways, a private landscape heritage"[46] in the process losing its former identity

41 Cultivated farmlands are only accessible outside the growing season (when people ski), whereas grazed outfields are accessible under *allemannsretten* year around.
42 Setten 2006, p. 69.
43 Setten 2006, p. 61.
44 Setten 2006, p. 69.
45 Setten 2006, p. 71.
46 Setten 2006, p. 68.

as a key feature in "the symbolic relationship between national identity and the rural landscape."[47] It is this traditionalized agrarian nationalist heritage that arguably is at the core of Setten's alienation, born of the contrast between nationalist myth and a "natural" lived personal and private identity with the landscape scene of an ancient ancestral family farm—for example, lake "Settenvatnet".

It has been necessary to devote space to Setten's essay because it is so different from the other authors' more abstract approach to the culture of natural heritage and its notion of nature and because it is relevant to the issue of blood and soil ethnonationalism. With its emphasis on the essential authenticity of the immediate, innocent experience of, and identification with, landscape scenery, the essay requires a close reading, like a literary text where attention is paid to wording. Thus, though the scenic structure of the landscape concept used by Setten has parallels, for example, to the structure used by De Geer, Setten's essay does not use it to argue for blood and soil ethnonationalist racial theory. It rather exposes the multiple existential conflicts facing present-day farmers that are easy to overlook in discourses based on theories of social construction. As I wrote in the publication's introduction:

> Setten's essay is particularly interesting [...] because it is situated from the position of the Norwegian Udal [odal] farmer, who was long lionised, and privileged, as the independent natural native of the soil, upon whose labour the nation was seen to be built. More recently, however, the rising tide of globalism and economic liberalism has left the farmer exposed to the whims of global agricultural competition. The farmer, however, is still expected to preserve a national landscape heritage that is increasingly being defined in the alien terminology of ecology and biodiversity, thus leaving the farmer in a difficult practical, economic and ideological position.[48]

INSIGHTS FROM THE LL&J SEMINAR PUBLICATION

Sundin's Swedish example, Peil's Estonian example and Setten's Norwegian case all point to the existence of a national natural cultural heritage embodied in a nationalist heritage. Germundsson's chapter on Skåne and Krauss' on Frisia show the importance of the character of historical landscape polities whose use and shaping of the landscape run counter to national scenic landscape hegemony. This suggests that when forms of governance enable different landscape polities to maintain relative autonomy, as was

47 Setten 2006, p. 67.
48 Olwig 2006, p. 6.

historically the case with the Frisian landscape regions, the identity of the landscape tends to be defined in terms of the differing polities' evolving legal, social and environmental relations.[49] In centralized nation-states, this also suggests, there will be a tendency to cultivate a heritage that is as uniformly homogenous as the Euclidean space of the map within which polities and properties are plotted.[50]

The insights gained from this LL&J seminar and publication have provided a foundation for me to address the question raised above concerning the relationship between the society/nature issue and the heritage of blood and soil ethnonationalism. Of particular importance was the fact that the volume focused on the Nordic context of a core ethnonational myth which has Norden at its root. This thus provides a basis for returning to the Nordic sources of Marsh's thinking.

MARSH'S CONTINUING NORDIC CONNECTION

Even after Marsh abandoned environmental determinism, and thereby a Gothicist foundation, he continued to call upon Nordic sources when writing *Man and Nature*. He was drawn notably to the ideas of the internationally prominent contemporary Danish plant geographer, Joachim Frederik Schouw (1789–1852).[51] Schouw shared Marsh's position on the society/nature issue and his view that environmental deterioration had social and political causes. Schouw, whose plant geography had a focus in the Mediterranean, was opposed to the Gothicism and natural philosophy of the ethnonationalists who saw the nation-state as growing out of the natural, physical landscape of the North. Marsh and Schouw both had legal backgrounds and were politically active. Schouw thus led the Roskilde and Viborg regional legal assemblies that paved the way for the dissolution of absolute monarchy and the introduction of representative democracy in Denmark in 1849. The areas represented by these assemblies had their roots in historical Danish landscape regions similar to those of Frisia and elsewhere in Scandinavia.[52] As a leading pan-Scandinavianist, Schouw favored the establishment of a federative republic uniting Scandinavia along the regional lines he worked to establish in Denmark.[53]

Schouw's combining of an opposition to Gothicist environmental determinism with the need for a representative, federative governance reflecting differing

49 Renes 2022, p. 8.

50 Olwig 2019, pp. 198–222.

51 Olwig 1980; 2002.

52 Olwig 2002; 2019, pp. 18–49.

53 Olwig 1980; 2002; 2003b. Schouw's pan-Scandinavian project failed, but its spirit is preserved somewhat in the modern Nordic Council.

cultural and political heritages, was relevant to Marsh's situation because Marsh lived during an era when sectional differences increasingly threatened to rend the United States into separate nation-states: a South governed by an oppressive slave-based agrarian plantation regime and a North which proudly traced its New England democratic system of regional township and urban governance back to its original English settlement by a free, industrious, rural and urban citizenry. Gothicism with its slave-owning landed warrior chieftains fitted the Southern notion of its heritage better than that of New England and Marsh's Gothicism was not well accepted in New England at the time.[54] It is in this context significant that Marsh moved from his rural Vermont home, the focus of his New England Gothicist panegyric, to Washington, serving first in Congress and then eventually as a diplomat under Abraham Lincoln, who fought to both hold the Union together and emancipate the enslaved. Marsh transitioned from promoting the populist sectionalist heritage of the mythical Goths to becoming a founder of Washington's Smithsonian Institution as a repository of the heritage of the differing nationalities dwelling within the entire federation. When Marsh later was appointed as U.S. ambassador to Italy he experienced the formation of a national confederation of historically founded regional Italian political entities, while also engaging with the archipelagic politics of Greece's independence movement. In Italy this former Nordic populist Gothicist wrote *Man and Nature* and was eventually buried in 1882 at Vallombrosa Abbey in the country he effectively adopted. Lowenthal developed, like Marsh, a transatlantic, archipelagic interest in landscape conservation and heritage.[55] This led him to work with international bodies, such as UNESCO, created in part to counteract the blood and soil ethnonationalist landscape heritage that resulted in World War II. It also made him a critic of the populist heritage identity politics that opposes[56] the work of organizations like UNESCO and the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention (ELC).[57]

54 The continued appeal of Gothicism in the South is exemplified by a recent case in which an Alabama judge declared that the trial, a libel case against the *New York Times*, "would be ruled by 'white man's justice [...] brought over to this country by the Anglo-Saxon Race'" (quoted in Gersen 2023, p. 70).

55 Sörlin 2024.

56 Lowenthal 1996; 2006b. Lowenthal's opponents castigated him as a politically incorrect "libertarian"—see Olwig 2024, n. 3, p. 50.

57 Jones & Stenseke 2011.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have sought to demonstrate how bringing together the concepts of landscape, law and justice, through my participation together with Lowenthal in the LL&J group, continues to influence my present concern with blood and soil ethnonationalism. LL&J thereby continues to be relevant to my ongoing research into the present day challenge to law and justice presented by the populist resurgence of the heritage of blood and soil ethnonationalism.[58] On the one hand, I have focused on landscape as the physical, natural landscape foundation that determines the character of the hegemonic socio-cultural ethnonational landscape situated above it. Particularly, when the national natural landscape is seen to determine the cultural heritage and becomes linked to blood and soil ethnic and racial identity, it can generate a populism that breeds the injustices of racism and ethnic xenophobia. On the other hand, I have examined the historical meaning and existence of landscape as a polity, and the places it interlinks, and compared this landscape with what I have metaphorically described as being characterized by "archipelagic" and federative relations. These polities are not based upon blood ties of tribe, family or clan relations, but by bodies of law rooted in custom and legal precedence, which can be of environmental importance, but which are not determined by nature and its laws. Even though these historical landscape polities no longer exist as such, their history is found in legal practice and in regional, national and international federative organizations. I have thus argued in my subsequent work that such federative, "archipelagic" heterogeneity counteracts the formation of homogenous blood and soil ethnonational and racial norms rooted in a naturalized national cultural heritage.

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