

Kusserow, "Ordering the Land"

What is Kusserow's argument? In the space below, paste quotes where he defines his argument.

↻ "environmental perception is socially and culturally determined. There are different ways to construe landscape representation, including not at all" pg 96

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↻ "This was essential, as America was considered by Europeans with a mixture of both trepidation and allure. The royal patent Raleigh received from Queen Elizabeth was "to discover, search, find out, and view such remote heathen and barbarous lands."
(Pg 71)

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↻ "The overall effect is to render a potentially overwhelming and threatening new environment as not only comprehensible but also capable of-even inviting-colonial dominion" (p. 71)

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↻ "...a representation of American 'nature' that confidently portended the productive, even aestheticized, domestication of a landscape whose actual wild and uncultivated state was considered unappealing and downright threatening" (pg73)

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↻ "Although visitors to Niagara spared nothing in their verbal panegyrics, in representing it visually they, too, seemed compelled to present even this most exceptional of American environments as within the bounds of rule and order" pg 89

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↻ **"The picturesque presented a means of conventionalizing unimproved nature and bestowing a benign and familiar order. If its appeal in England was largely aesthetic, in America it offered the ability to render a vast and unsettled world as lucid and manageable [...]"**

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↵ "The realization of an ideal Kuhn could only imagine, and Smibert approached it just figuratively: the co-optation and commodification through human agency of the American wilderness. Enlightenment thought had affirmed knowledge and development..." (Pg 78)

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↵ The picturesque makes the untangible and overwhelming ideas of the unsettled world manageable and opens the possibility for colonization.

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↵ Kusserow argues that colonial American landscape was perhaps a coping method in displaying the wild and intimidating new landscapes as something manageable, controllable, and orderly.

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↵ American landscape creates an imagined utopia of order, stripping the natural land of its native truth and turning it into a European dream. Over time, American painters became more attached to their natural surroundings, but continued to misunderstand softness as the ideal.

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↵ Picturesque painting created an illusion of European settler power and order over nature and people.

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↵ American landscapes depict the land as tamable and resource rich. Colonization followed by emphasizing conquest for personal gain, laying the groundworks for American expansion.

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↵ In our own words, Kusserow's argument describes how pictureque landscape paintings during the colonization of North America transformed to follow European cultural and social changes. First, the land was seen as satanic and beastly; later, its wildness was romanticized in the hands of man, and then transformed into proof of righteous ownership and pride.

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What visual evidence does Kusserow deploy in support of his argument? List works of art with quotes of his claims.

- ⇒ "Esther's portrait makes a fascinating comparison with Earl's larger and grander one of her brother Daniel [...] The gendered implications of the comparison can be seen to reveal a persistent parallel between the historical domination of both women and nature by male interests of conquests and property" pg 79

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- ⇒ figure 54 (pg 91): "A view farther down the Potomac...a classically picturesque view might be subtly adjusted to further enhance its resonance for an audience vested in seeing the American environment as fundamentally accessible and inviting" (pg 89).

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- ⇒ Justus Engelhardt Kühn, *Eleanor Darnall* (ca. 1710)

"in conjuring baroque, parklike vistas as regimented as the checkered pavement on which Eleanor stands, Kühn... offered a representation of American 'nature' that confidently portended the productive, even aestheticized, domestication of a landscape whose actual wild and uncultivated state was considered unappealing and downright threatening" (Kusserow 74).

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- ⇒ On drawing of Savannah Georgia and de Bry's fishing scene: "Like de Bry's fishing scene of a century and a half before, the image's overwhelming rectilinearity imparts stability and coherence to the articulated natural forms, in keeping with their mutual aim of encouraging settlement through nature's rationalization" (73)

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↩ "Fully employing the compositional techniques of repoussoir, coulisse, and atmospheric perspective to provide graduated entrance into the scene via diminishing formal elements and gradational tonal modulation, the painting is an archetype of the picturesque landscape of access. In it the American environment is presented as logical and harmonious, appealing and available." (p93) (figure 57)

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↩ FIGURE 33: Theodor de Bry (Flemish, 1528-1598), after John White (English, ca. 1540-ca. 1593), Their 111a1111er ofjishynge in Vi1ginia. Engraving. Published in Thomas Hariot, A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia [. . .], (Frankfurt: 1590). The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC
"The impression is one of visual fixity and conceptual control despite the foreign subject. Even the peculiar marine life, situated parallel to the picture plane and for the most part horizontally, adheres to the pictorial order and is rendered as generalized, easily understood icon"

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How does the deployment of the picturesque in the context of colonial America and the early U.S. differ from...

↩ ... (cont'd) the New Zealand examples cited by Mitchell? What does the "soft power" of the picturesque landscape achieve in the United States?

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