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0521673496 - Poetry, Space, Landscape: Toward a New Theory

Chris Fitter

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Why was the art of landscape painting invented in the fifth century BC, abandoned with the collapse of Rome, and revived again in the High Middle Ages? Did the Greeks, or the ancient Christians, perceive the natural world differently from the way we do now? In *Poetry, space, landscape* Chris Fitter traces the history of nature-sensibility from the ancient world to the English Renaissance, setting poems and paintings in the widely differing cultural contexts that created them. He suggests a new social and historical theory of the conceptualization of space, explaining the rise and fall of the idea of 'landscape'. And he argues the dialectical case that enduring basic categories of perception create different readings of natural reality determined by our social and material relations with nature. A chapter on seventeenth-century English poetry concludes with fresh and substantial re-readings of Milton, Marvell, and many of their contemporaries in the light of this long tradition of landscape art.

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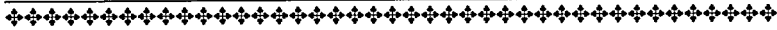
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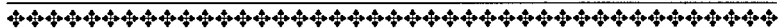
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The Cambridge *Literature, Culture, Theory* series is dedicated to theoretical studies in the human sciences that have literature and culture as their object of enquiry. Acknowledging the contemporary expansion of cultural studies and the redefinitions of literature that this has entailed, the series includes not only original works of literary theory but also monographs and essay collections on topics and seminal figures from the long history of theoretical speculation on the arts and human communication generally. The concept of theory embraced in the series is broad, including not only the classical disciplines of poetics and rhetoric, but also those of aesthetics, linguistics, psychoanalysis, semiotics, and other cognate sciences that have inflected the systematic study of literature during the past half century.

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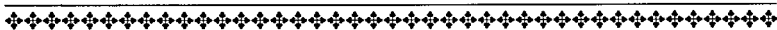
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For my Mother and my Father
With the dearest of my love

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'Reality can only be penetrated and understood as a totality ... The specialisation of skills leads to the destruction of every image of the whole. Despite this, the need to grasp the whole – at least cognitively – cannot die out.'

(Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*)

'Am I
To see in the Lake District, then,
Another bourgeois invention like the piano?'

(Auden, *Bucolics*)

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Abbreviations

- CHLGEMP *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge: 1967)
- Curtius E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (1953; rpt. London: 1979)
- Gilson Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (1955; rpt. London: 1980)
- Glacken Clarence J. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: 1967)
- PG *Patrologiae cursus completus ... series Graeca* (Paris: 1857–99), ed. Jacques Paul Migne
- PL *Patrologiae cursus completus ... series Latina* (Paris: 1844–1902), ed. Jacques Paul Migne
- P&S Derek Pearsall and Elizabeth Salter, *Landscapes and Seasons of the Medieval World* (London: 1973)