

# Shuttlings Between: Deploying *Borrowed Scenery* in a Contemporary Walking Practice.

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## ABSTRACT

My creative urban-walking practice entangles Eastern and Western notions of space and contemporary cultural theory in order to disrupt habituated understandings of place and power, and instil social, cultural, and environmental well-beings. This paper discusses the deployment within my practice, of techniques appropriated from *Yuanye*, a 17<sup>th</sup> century Chinese treatise on garden design. This deployment involves engagements with both the original *Yuanye* text as well as with current scholarly reconsiderations of its meanings.

*Yuanye* represents the first attempt to formalise the theories of garden design within China and is understood to have been written with the aim of elevating the cultural status of the practice to that of painting. In poetic and allusive language *Yuanye* addresses such elements as the use of water, the placement of rocks, and the orientation of trees and shrubs. The final chapter discusses *borrowed scenery* whereby features that lie outside the garden's perimeter, such as mountains, are framed by those within. During my group city-walks, performed readings and other interactions with the text transform this notion of borrowed scenery into a lens through which the city is read. Meanwhile, new research that challenges conventional understandings of *Yuanye* reinforces the theoretical framework I use to harness my practice to broader cultural concerns. In this way, *Yuanye* enriches both practical and theoretical aspects of my work.

This paper opens with a brief survey of creative walking practices, making reference to the Situationists and Phil Smith's persona-method, *Mythogeography*. I next discuss my own practice in general terms before discussing the language, propositions, and current discourses associated with the *Yuanye* text. The paper closes with discussion of the evolving ways Borrowed Scenery informs the group-walk I conduct every February in my home city, Osaka.

## KEYWORDS

Borrowed scenery; yuanye; shakkei; creative walking; relational aesthetics; psychogeography.

## INTRODUCTION

For geographer Doreen Massey, space is a site of rupture and contention with conflicts brought about by, among other things, globalisation, inequality, interpretations of ‘nature’, and the city.<sup>1</sup> Her interdisciplinary collaboration with filmmaker Patrick Keiller reveals how historical and ongoing conflicts within the landscape manifest themselves in society as imbalances of power and disturbances to cultural wellbeing.<sup>2</sup> In his poem *Hoping to trigger the end of neo-liberalism by going for a walk*,<sup>3</sup> Paul Rossiter addresses issues of landscape and history, enfolding the ideas of Massey and Keiller, and demonstrating how the practice of walking with subsequent critical insights can become the basis of a conscientious creative practice.

The number of creative practices that deploy walking among their methods has grown dramatically in recent years. These practices vary in their aims, methodologies, and outcomes but all can be said to take an approach that is *relational*. Bourriaud defines relational art as “taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interaction and its social contexts, rather than the assertion of an independent and *private* symbolic space”.<sup>4</sup> The interaction that has come to dominate my own praxis is that between self (subject) and place (object). I have recognised through time spent walking in cities that the relationship between the two is ambiguous, shifting, and porous. One of the instruments I use in order to explore this interaction is *borrowed scenery*, a manner or seeing (in the broadest sense of the word) that appears in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Chinese treatise on garden design.

At this point it is important to define a number of key terms. Although *borrowed scenery* can be safely understood in a common-sense way, it acts here as an overarching designation for the cluster of Chinese and Japanese terms that are influencing my practice and that require further explanation. The first of these terms is *Yuanye*, the title of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese treatise on garden design acknowledged in both China and Japan as the origin of borrowed scenery as the garden-design technique and on which this paper is centred. There is much debate on how best to translate the word *yuanye* but for the present purposes the term *the craft of gardens* will suffice. The final chapter of *Yuanye* is titled *jiejing*, and it is this term that translates as borrowed scenery. Much of the current discussion of *Yuanye* within disciplines associated with Chinese landscape architecture is focused on interpretations of this final chapter. Finally, the Japanese term *shakkei* can be seen as a translation of *jiejing*, but as this paper demonstrates, Chinese *jiejing* and Japanese *shakkei* have evolved independently over the centuries making it unsafe to substitute one for the other.

A study that crosses cultural boundaries cannot ignore the risks of inappropriate exchange whereby artefacts are exoticised, their meanings diminished, and their sources left unacknowledged in their migration from one culture to another. To allay concerns that such inappropriacies effect the present study I offer the following two points. First, Stanislaus Fung makes explicit the desire for his research to be of mutual benefit to the Eastern and Western bodies of knowledge upon which it draws.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, my own project, which builds on the ideas of Fung, does not adopt artefacts from one culture for use in another but oscillates between cultures, with the aim of contributing to each. Second, New Materialist theorists such as Jane Bennett advocate a revisiting of ‘discredited philosophies’ in the belief that they might provide

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<sup>1</sup> Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Keiller in Doreen Massey, “Landscape/space/politics: an essay”, *The Future of Landscape and the Moving Image* (2011), 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Rossiter, *Hoping to trigger the end of neo-liberalism by going for a walk*, in *World Without* (Tokyo: Isobar Press, 2015), 98- 115.

<sup>4</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 1998), 14.

<sup>5</sup> Stanislaus Fung, “Here and There in Yuan Ye”, *Design Philosophy Papers*, 1:6, (2003), 308.

pathways to fairer frameworks of ethics and justice.<sup>6</sup> Under Bennett's terms, cultural artefacts are not exoticized nor are their meanings diminished, but rather they are seen as possessing a vitality that transcends temporal, geographical, and cultural boundaries. This vitality enables them to play an active role in confronting current issues that are global and urgent. Bennett offers the atomism of Lucretius as an example of such a discredited philosophy and it is my belief that borrowed scenery also meets her definitions.<sup>7</sup>

My aim in this paper is to explore the reciprocal and recursive relationship between my walking practice and my ongoing research into *borrowed scenery*. I first provide an overview of contemporary walking practices in order to contextualize my own practice. Second, I examine the histories and contemporary discourses surrounding *yuanye*, *jiejing*, and *shakkei*. Finally, I consider the ways in which borrowed scenery is used and articulated within my annual group-walking project, *Widdershins Osaka*.

## DESIRE PATHS: CONTEMPORARY WALKING PRACTICES

While Solnit traces walking as a cultural practice to the philosopher Rousseau,<sup>8</sup> many of today's walking artists align themselves in relation to the Situationist International (hereafter the Situationists). Active in the 1950s and 1960s the Situationists can be seen as the heirs to a European avant-garde, filling the void left by the Dadaists and Surrealists after World War II. Led by the left-wing radical, Guy Debord, they were a fluid collective of artists, activists, and intellectuals for whom play, the absurd and the irrational were legitimate approaches to intellectual and artistic revolution.<sup>9</sup> Appalled by what they saw as the over-commodification and increasing banality of urban life, the Situationists developed *psychogeography* as a method by which to gauge 'the effects of the geographical environment, [...] on the emotions and behaviour of individuals'.<sup>10</sup> Psychogeography involved a quasi-scientific engagement with the city whereby movement through its streets and spaces would reveal some underlying truth. Games of chance, or absurd performances such as using the map of one city to navigate the streets of another were used to disrupt habituated encounters with space. Chief among their tactics was the *dérive*, or drift, an aimless walk that promoted 'transient passage through varied ambiances'.<sup>11</sup> Although the group dissolved around the time of the 1968 Paris uprisings, in recent years there has been renewed interest in the Situationists, psychogeography, and *dérive*. Debord, spoke of psychogeography's 'pleasing vagueness' and it is perhaps this vagueness that is responsible for so many practitioners identifying themselves with the movement.<sup>12</sup> Richardson recognises this growth in interest, and in her recent survey of British psychogeography suggests that, 'when using the term *psychogeography*, one should always be thinking of psychogeographies'.<sup>13</sup>

It would be a mistake to suggest that all walking artists identify with the tradition of the Situationists' psychogeography yet recognising the role played by these ideas can help in the understanding of relational practices, whose aims, methods, and outcomes can be difficult to comprehend in terms of conventional artistic practice where product is often foregrounded over process. For many of today's walking artists, the act of walking is an entanglement of both their everyday lived experience and their creative practice. Clare Qualmann's *Perambulator* residency (2014) explored the ways in which her interaction with the urban landscape changed once she

<sup>6</sup> Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 17-18.

<sup>7</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 17-18.

<sup>8</sup> Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (London: Verso, 2002), 14.

<sup>9</sup> Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography* (Harpندن: Pocket Essentials, 2010), 81-102.

<sup>10</sup> Coverley, *Psychogeography*, 89.

<sup>11</sup> Coverley, *Psychogeography*, 96.

<sup>12</sup> Coverley, *Psychogeography*, 89.

<sup>13</sup> Tina Richardson, "A Wander Through The Scene of British Urban Walking", in *Walking Inside Out: Contemporary British Psychogeography*, ed. Tina Richardson (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 3.

became a mother and needed to navigate the city with a baby-stroller.<sup>14</sup> For others, their engagement with walking is more tangential. Astra Taylor's film, *The Examined Life* (2014) is an enquiry into contemporary philosophy and takes the form of conversations with, or monologues by, current cultural thinkers.<sup>15</sup> The film is structured around a series of walks and journeys, and while walking rarely becomes the direct topic of conversation, its role in facilitating, structuring, and pacing the thoughts of the speakers affirms Rousseau's observation that our minds only work with our legs.<sup>16</sup> One section of the film that does discuss walking directly follows critical theorist Judith Butler as she walks with Sunaura Taylor through the streets of San Francisco. Their conversation explores how we identify ourselves as walkers, and the material and social obstacles that the city presents to someone such as Taylor whose chronic condition requires her to use a mobility chair.<sup>17</sup> Many walking artists are keen to situate their practice within a research context, deploying interdisciplinary methods, publishing papers and presenting at conferences. Multi-disciplinary artist Miranda Whall is currently engaged in a research project whereby she transforms herself into 'a cyborg sheep', attaches 13 Go-Pro cameras to her body and walks (on all fours) the ancient drovers' tracks in the Cambrian mountains near her home in Wales.<sup>18</sup> By collaborating with researchers and practitioners from the natural sciences and creative arts, Whall's project explores both the bio-diversity and cultural heritage of the region.<sup>19</sup> Within the pluralities of practice, neologisms have begun to emerge. Performance researcher and prolific walker, Phil Smith elides methods with persona in *mythogeography*. A term born of a mis-remembering of the word psychogeography<sup>20</sup>, mythogeography advocates a re-enchantment of the relationship between a place and the subject experiencing it. For Smith, such a re-enchantment comes about through the subject (the walker) allowing themselves to develop narratives out of their encounters with place: reverie, serendipity, memory, sensual associations, puns and more, for the mythogeographer, all have the potential to enrich our connection to, and understanding of place.<sup>21</sup> With another neologism, *schizocartography*, Tina Richardson brands her own methods of urban walking, synthesising the theories of Felix Guattari with the practices of the Situationists.<sup>22</sup> Although no neologisms have revealed themselves to me in the course of my own work it is among these psychogeographers, *dériveurs*, perambulators, mythogeographers, and schizocartographers that I situate myself and my own engagements with place and space.

## THE EVOLUTION OF A CREATIVE WALKING PRACTICE

Central to my creative walking practice is a questioning of subject-object relations, and the allocation of agency within the world of phenomena. Contemporary theories I have looked to in order to direct my thinking have centred on New Materialism. New Materialism stands in opposition to the dualistic structures on which transcendental and humanist traditions are

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<sup>14</sup> Clare Qualmann, *Perambulator: Final Report for Devon Arts* Last accessed: 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2017. [www.deveron-projects.com/site\\_media/uploads/clare\\_qualmann\\_perambulator\\_artist\\_report.pdf](http://www.deveron-projects.com/site_media/uploads/clare_qualmann_perambulator_artist_report.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Astra Taylor, *Examined Life* (New York: Zeitgeist Films, 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Solnit, *Wanderlust*, 14.

<sup>17</sup> Taylor, *Examined Life*.

<sup>18</sup> Miranda Whall, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017 First entry Crossed Paths blog Last accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2017. [www.mirandawhall.space/?p=2670](http://www.mirandawhall.space/?p=2670)

<sup>19</sup> Whall, Crossed Paths.

<sup>20</sup> Phil Smith, Crab Walking and Mythogeography, *Walking, Writing and Performance*, ed. Roberta Mock (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), 82

<sup>21</sup> Phil Smith, *Crab Walking*, 84.

<sup>22</sup> Tina Richardson, "Developing Schizocartography: Formulating a Theoretical Methodology for a Walking Practice", in *Walking Inside Out: Contemporary British Psychogeography*, ed. Tina Richardson (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 181-194.

constructed, questioning conventional notions of subjectivity, and accounting for the agency of matter and nonhuman forces within the world.<sup>23</sup> For New Materialist thinkers,

“materiality is always something more than “mere” matter: an excess force, vitality, relationality, that renders matter active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable. In sum, new materialists are rediscovering a materiality that materializes, evincing immanent modes of self-transformation that compel us to think of causation in far more complex term; to recognize that phenomena are caught in a multitude of interlocking systems and forces and to consider anew the location and nature of capacities for agency.”<sup>24</sup>

In setting out her own New Materialist agenda, Jane Bennett proposes a ‘methodological naiveté’ as a means of escaping the tendency towards humanistic theories of causality and agency.<sup>25</sup> To this end Bennett suggests revisiting of ‘discredited philosophies of nature’<sup>26</sup> as a possible tactic. Borrowed scenery might not meet Bennett’s definition of a discredited philosophy of nature, but it might meet Smith’s notion of a ‘radical nostalgia’ which suggests a similar return to ‘simpler times’.<sup>27</sup> In the context of the present paper which aims to address lost artistic gestures, both these notions offer useful grounds for reflection.

What drives my interest in these New Materialist ideas is that the reappraisals of subject, agency, and causality that they advocate lead to revised codes of ethics and justice.<sup>28</sup> Before discussing further how New Materialist ideas are impacting upon my practice, entangling with borrowed scenery, and offering an ethical framework to the whole, I will discuss the evolution of my approach from one that was primarily representational to one that embraces relational approaches.

My practice has evolved out of an interest in cultural and material aspects of place that first manifested itself in the drawing and print-making I did as an undergraduate many years ago. Although often abstract and with no explicit indication of location I still consider these works-on-paper as landscapes. Recently I found this representational approach with its emphasis on objects, outcomes, and products unsatisfactory, and I have gravitated to one more akin to Bourriaud’s *relational aesthetics* described above.<sup>29</sup> As a British artist, trained in the US and resident in Japan for much of the last 20 years, ‘the human interaction and social contexts’<sup>30</sup> advocated by Bourriaud have been foregrounded in my transit across and between cultures. In general terms this shift towards the relational has resulted in a focus on the process of doing rather than on the product, object or outcome. My work has become more performative; it is more inclusive and collaborative, and is reflexive to external and unanticipated phenomena such as terrain, weather and social interaction in ways my earlier work was not. These qualities manifest themselves most clearly in my on-going project *Widdershins Osaka*, an annual group-walk I lead through the streets of my current home city, Osaka, and that will be discussed in more detail below.

Elements of the cultures within which I live and move have been appropriated within my work since even those earlier works-on-paper described above. As a graduate student in East Tennessee in the early 1990s, motifs from Appalachian folk art and the state’s musical heritage

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<sup>23</sup>Introduction to an interview with Karen Barad, in *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies*, eds. Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, (Open Humanities Press, 2012), 48; Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency and Politics*, eds. Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 8.

<sup>24</sup> Coole and Frost, *New Materialisms*, 9.

<sup>25</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 17-18.

<sup>26</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 18.

<sup>27</sup> Smith, *Crab Walking*, 102- 103.

<sup>28</sup> Barad, *New Materialism*, 70.

<sup>29</sup> Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 14.

<sup>30</sup> Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 14.

found their way into my imagery. I first understood the inclusion of such cultural elements as simply quotations of something new, unknown, or other.<sup>31</sup> More recently I have come to recognise them not only as something *other*, but that this other is in some way part my *self*. It is here, with the recognition of the ambiguity, frailty, and porosity of the boundary around the subjective self that a relational practice began to emerge.



Fig. 1: Clustered works-on-paper can be seen as an early iteration of the discourse colony. Installation view, 1708 Gallery, Richmond, VA. 2007.

Now that I am based in Osaka, Japan, my practice has changed in a number of ways including a sensitivity to the dangers of cultural appropriation. It is not surprising that cultural elements such as the Americana have evolved to be more closely associated with my current situation. *Kekkai* boundary stones that signal the border between the material and non-material realms, and *fukeyiron* landscape theory of 1960s Japanese, avant-garde cinema. A more significant change is how these elements are being exploited within a practice that now prioritises relational over representational concerns. Whereas once such elements would be quoted as representations within completed artworks I am now more interested in how they inter-relate, and in their potential to impact on my everyday encounters in the world. To take my interest in *kekkaï* boundary stones as an example, whereas I might once have attempted to draw (represent) these mysterious objects, I now attempt to project the notion of *kekkaï* onto the world around me: might not a graffitied scrawl on a road sign, or a child's discarded toy be a *kekkaï* boundary between realms? If so, who invested it with such powers, and how should I proceed in relation to it? The cultural element, in this case *kekkaï*, becomes a catalyst, triggering the imagination and forcing a reconsideration of the world around me.

As these elements accumulate I have developed a bricolage/assemblage approach, collecting and storing them as an open-ended pool of resources from which I can draw at any time. Hand-drawn notes and diagrams; maps and photographs; photocopies and printed

<sup>31</sup> I would ask that well-intentioned, youthful naivety mitigate any accusations of cultural misappropriation.

ephemera; found items (text, images, objects); digital images and sound recordings. What interests me most about these items is their inter-relations and their potential to act as triggers within my real-world encounters. These elements have come out of practice but have the potential to feed back into it, to be re-used in whatever way seems appropriate: a poem may be constructed out of found text fragments (to be read on the streets); images from different sources may be juxtaposed to form a photo essay (offered as an alternative guide to the city); a map found at one visited site may be given a new legend formed from the transcript of a conversation overheard on a train (and then used to navigate familiar streets in unanticipated ways). In this way a circular, on-going process is emphasised rather than any closed or completed outcome or product. While the notions of collage and assemblage owe a lot to Dada artists such as Kurt Schwitters, my storage methods are structured around the *discourse colony* of linguist Michael Hoey (see fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Towards the Discourse Colony (extract), assembled works-on-paper, maps and other paper ephemera.

In his role as a written discourse analyst, Michael Hoey developed the concept of the *discourse colony* as a means to categorise a particular text-type for analysis. Hoey defines the discourse colony as a text (or texts) 'whose component parts do not derive their meaning from the sequence in which they are placed. If the parts are jumbled, the utility may be affected but the

meaning remains the same<sup>32</sup> and contrasts this with what he calls mainstream texts that are linear in structure and whose meaning would be lost if their parts were jumbled. Examples of such colony texts range from shopping lists to library index systems. A newspaper editorial is a mainstream text but the newspaper itself is a discourse colony. Hoey identified nine properties that a discourse colony may display (see fig. 3).<sup>33</sup>

The Nine Properties of a Discourse Colony
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. meaning not derived from sequence</li> <li>2. adjacent units do not form continuous prose</li> <li>3. there is a framing context</li> <li>4. no single author and/ or anon.</li> <li>5. one component may be used without referring to the others</li> <li>6. components can be reprinted or reused in subsequent works</li> <li>7. components may be added, removed or altered</li> <li>8. many of the components serve the same function</li> <li>9. alphabetic, numeral or temporal sequencing</li> </ol>

Fig. 3: The Nine Properties of a Discourse Colony

Hoey states that a text does not have to display all these properties in order to be a discourse colony: shopping lists for example display few while dictionaries and directories appear to display all nine.<sup>34</sup> My bricolage storage meets all nine of Hoey's properties and while the linguist took *text* to mean written discourse, my own use allows for a broader definition of the term whereby all cultural production can read as a text.<sup>35</sup> Henceforth, the pool into which items are deposited will be referred to as a discourse colony.

*Kekkai* was addressed above in order to clarify the notion of discourse colony, and although these boundary markers remain important within my practice, attention will now move to the element that is central to the present paper, that of *borrowed scenery*.

## SHUTTLINGS BETWEEN: BORROWED SCENERY, ITS HISTORIES AND DISCOURSES

Borrowed scenery ~ *shakkei* in Japanese and *jiejing* in Chinese~ is generally understood to be the technique of including within the design or perception of a garden, elements that lie outwith. In its simplest terms it can be understood as follows. At Isui-en gardens, Nara, from the veranda of the house, the visitor can see a grassy embankment rising from the far side of the pond. From this vantage point the ridge of the embankment forms a gentle symmetrical curve across the plane of vision. Almost directly behind this curving 'horizon' another similarly curved horizon can be seen- that formed against the sky by Mt. Wakakusa. Although several kilometres away, Wakakusa has been incorporated into the design allowing the garden to extend beyond its own perimeter, blurring the line between interior and exterior. This understanding of borrowed scenery that frames a scene from a given vantage point became relatively fixed following the 1960s when modernist architects in Japan adopted it as a method for addressing issues of

<sup>32</sup> Michael Hoey, *The Discourse Colony: A Preliminary Study of a Neglected Discourse Type*, in (ed.) *Talking about Text*, ed. Malcolm Coulthard (Birmingham: Birmingham University Press, 1986), 4.

<sup>33</sup> Hoey, *Discourse Colony*, 20.

<sup>34</sup> Hoey *Discourse Colony*, 21.

<sup>35</sup> Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), 263.



interior/exterior space within their own work. It did not take long for these ideas to spread to Western designers who at that time looked to Japan as a place of inspiration, and for borrowed scenery to become understood as a Japanese concept.<sup>36</sup>

Still today, this Japanese iteration, *shakkei*, persists in popular discourse, with its emphasis on the idea of borrowed scenery as a fixed vantage point from which to view a scene.<sup>37</sup> Borrowed scenery however is not Japanese. Ono, Shimomura, and Zhou agree that while borrowed scenery took on a new identity in Japan and evolved independently it has its roots in China.<sup>38</sup> Borrowed scenery is a far more nuanced and ambiguous cluster of concepts than the example described above suggests. It includes numerous *categories of borrowing* that respond not only to spatial considerations such as near and far but also temporal issues: times of day and the seasons for example. These categories also stimulate all five senses and not only the visual. The ambiguity inherent in borrowed scenery lies in its original Chinese iteration, the 400-year old *Yuanye* text and recent attempts to interpret it. These attempts move us yet further away from the fixed vantage point of the Isui-en Garden example given above to a borrowing that is far more elusive. Questions are raised about who or what is performing the borrowing, and who or what is being borrowed. As Fung describes there is within the text a ‘shuttling between scene, self, action, scene, self [...] here-and-now and there-and-then’.<sup>39</sup> It is this crossing and re-crossing of the boundary between self and other, and the ambiguity as to the agency at play in the borrowing and lending that has come to drive my interest in borrowed scenery, echoing as it does both the concerns within my practice as well as those of the New Materialists.

Written in the late Ming dynasty by experienced garden designer Ji Cheng (b. 1582) *Yuanye* is the first written treatise on garden design in China.<sup>40</sup> The text remained relatively obscure even in China until its rediscovery by Japanese scholars in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It wasn’t until 1949 that it was first brought to the attention of Western scholars by Oswald Sirén in his book *Gardens of China*.<sup>41</sup> Alison Hardie then provided the first full English translation of the text published as *The Craft of Gardens* in 1988.<sup>42</sup> While recognising the importance of Hardie’s work, both Fung and Kuitert imply that her translation is less than perfect,<sup>43</sup> and in her preface to the second edition, Hardie herself acknowledges that if she were to attempt such a translation again she would do it very differently.<sup>44</sup> For Kuitert, Che Bing Chiu’s French translation of 1997 is far superior, including as it does extensive commentary.<sup>45</sup> Kuitert also praises the work of Stanislaus Fung who addresses the problems that arise from reading *Yuanye* in the context of Western dualistic thought thereby neglecting the cultural context in which it was written.<sup>46</sup> And while much has been written on *Yuanye* within the disciplines associated with landscape architecture and design, it is Fung who recognises the potential value of the text to those working in other disciplines and whose specialist knowledge lies elsewhere.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Wybe Kuitert, Borrowing Scenery and The Landscape That Lends~ The Last Chapter of Yuanye, *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, 10:2, (2015), 32.

<sup>37</sup> David. H. Engel, Masanobu Kudo, Kiyoshi Seike, *A Japanese Touch for Your Garden* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1980), 66.

<sup>38</sup> Ryohei Ono and Akio Shimomura and Hongjun Zhou, The Character and Variety of the Term Borrowed Scenery in Japanese Gardening, in *Landscape Research Japan Online*, 5 (2012), 17.

<sup>39</sup> Kuitert, *Borrowing Scenery*, 33.

<sup>40</sup> Stanislaus Fung The Interdisciplinary Prospects of Reading Yuan ye, *Studies in The History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*, 18:3, (1998) 211.

<sup>41</sup> Fung, *Interdisciplinary Prospects*, 211.

<sup>42</sup> Fung, *Interdisciplinary Prospects*, 211; Kuitert, *Borrowing Scenery*, 33.

<sup>43</sup> Fung, *Interdisciplinary Prospects*, 211; Kuitert, *Borrowing Scenery*, 33.

<sup>44</sup> Alison Hardie, Translator’s Preface to The Second Edition, *The Craft of Gardens by Ji Cheng*, (New York: Better Link Press, 2012), 9.

<sup>45</sup> Kuitert, *Borrowing Scenery*, 33.

<sup>46</sup> Kuitert, *Borrowing Scenery*, 33.

<sup>47</sup> Fung, *Interdisciplinary Prospects*, 211.

In his essay *Here and There in Yuan Ye*, Fung asserts that attempts to understand the notion of borrowed scenery in Western dualistic terms (subject/ object; nature/ culture; body/ mind) have been responsible for a misrepresentation of borrowing that reduce it to design: the alignment of vantage points with scenic elements. Staying true to non-dualistic Chinese thinking, Fung refuses to assign agency to a designer or to any single entity instead seeking a ‘correlativity [...] of the elements of process’.<sup>48</sup> His approach to reading the text has evolved from a focus on the texts minutiae to a method he describes as a line-by-line ‘drift’.<sup>49</sup> Such an approach has revealed to him Yuanye’s performative nature:

“Yuan ye engages the reader in a peripatetic thinking informed by a larger order of texts that re-organise Chinese cultural memory. “Borrowing views” is not a set of design principles but refers to an embodied, meandering thinking. Yuan ye offers not a statement of principles but provokes a kind of readerly shuttling.”<sup>50</sup>

Fung makes explicit his desire to find ways in which Chinese and Western scholarly concerns can be mutually beneficial.<sup>51</sup> To this end, and in the hope that they may contribute to an alternative framework with which to study borrowed scenery, he enlists the ideas of Martin Heidegger. For Fung, Heidegger’s distinction between *ambient world*<sup>52</sup> and *space* offer an alternative to the Western geometrical space of lines and points.<sup>53</sup> It is my belief that the New Materialist can similarly contribute to understandings of Borrowed Scenery, and that when deployed within an urban walking encounter these ideas, harnessed to the concerns for ethics and justice advocated by Barad<sup>54</sup> might lead to more concerned dealings with the environment, and the forces and matter of which it is constituted.

## WIDDERSHINS OSAKA: AN ANNUAL GROUP-WALKING PROJECT

*Widdershins Osaka* is an evolving group-walking project that aims to examine our everyday lived experience of place and the city through the entanglement of the cultural and material histories of Leeds, England and Osaka, Japan. The unfolding of borrowed scenery’s potentials described above has been concurrent to my engagement with *Widdershins Osaka* and in the following section I aim to reveal how borrowed scenery is being deployed within the project.

Some years ago, while researching Japanese *kekka* boundary stones I learned of Terminus, the Roman God of boundaries and recognised that the annual Terminalia events that celebrate this deity every February might be a platform for a project of my own. In the city of Leeds, England, Terminalia is marked by a circular walk around the sites of the six boundary stones, or *bars* that marked the perimeter of the medieval town, most of which remain visible within the fabric of the contemporary city. Each year the starting point and the direction in which the circuit is walked is altered. In 2016 the direction was *widdershins*. This archaic British term is defined as *counter-clockwise* or *contrary to the direction of the sun* but has connotations of deviance and otherness.

Lamenting the fact that commitments in Osaka every February made it impossible for me to be in Leeds to participate I opened a dialogue with Tim Waters, the event’s organiser. Tim described how the walk not only celebrates Leeds’ history but also addresses issues confronting

<sup>48</sup> Fung, *Here and There*, 306.

<sup>49</sup> Fung, *Interdisciplinary Prospects*, 211; Fung, *Here and There*, 306.

<sup>50</sup> Fung, *Here and There*, 306.

<sup>51</sup> Fung, *Here and There*, 308.

<sup>52</sup> Fung translates *umwelt* as ‘ambient world’ although ‘environing world’ or ‘surrounding world’ are more common translations of Heidegger’s term. See Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger’s Topology: Being, Place, World*, (Cambridge: MIT, 2008), 32, 55; Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1998), 247.

<sup>53</sup> Fung, *Here and There*, 309-310.

<sup>54</sup> Barad, *New Materialism*, 70.

the contemporary city: the boundaries between the public and private ownership of land; the mechanisms of urban policy-making; and the right to the city. In 2016, reflecting on some of the absurd activities of the Situationists, I decided that if I could not go to Leeds I would bring Leeds to Osaka. I chose a centre around which a circuit could be plotted, marked the six boundary bars of Leeds onto a map of Osaka. I then invited interested friends and colleagues to join me in walking the circuit: *Widdershins Osaka*. I told them that our aim was to collectively find~ or invoke~ the Leeds bars in Osaka, and that we would do so through walking, discussion, games of chance, performed readings, and spontaneous responses to place as it unfolded before us. Our walk took us on a route that crossed commercial, residential, and administrative zones within the city.

Although framed as a treatise, *Yuanye* is a poetic and allusive text whose formal qualities and rich imagery allow it to be considered as a work of literature. To facilitate discussion and inter-action within the walking group I had with me 6 texts of cut up sections of *Jiejing*, the final chapter of *Yuanye* to be read aloud by one member of the group at each of the *bars*. My intention was for these allusive text-fragments to act as a lens through which to re-see the city and as a trigger for our discussions. I had constructed the texts by first photocopying Kuitert's translation of the *Jiejing* chapter, (which very fortunately is 36 lines in length), giving each of the lines a number from 1 to 36, cutting them up and placing them in a pot. I then drew at random 6 lines from the pot and placed them together in the order in which they were drawn to form a new stanza. I repeated this until I had 6 stanzas of 6 lines and all 36 lines had been drawn. I then allocated, again using chance, one stanza to each of the boundary bar stones that we would be visiting on our walk. One such stanza read as follows:

“Despite the clamour of the city be sure to select a living with quiet neighbours.  
Gaze from a highland into the boundless distance; far away peaks are aligned like a screen.  
The four seasons are essential but is there any relation to the eight directions?  
There are no fixed rules in garden creation; it all depends on what the landscape lends.  
From the shade of foliage, the first song of the oriole; from the folds of the hills, suddenly a  
farmer's ditty; a refreshing breeze from the forest shade; it brings distant antiquity to mind.  
Linger at the woods along a river, valuing the foliage of the bamboo and the appearance of  
dense trees and grass.”<sup>55</sup>



Fig. 4: Participants on Widdershins Osaka 2016 perform readings of *Yuanye* text extracts (left), and participants on Widdershins 2017 observe their surroundings at Nakanoshima Mitsui Building (right).

<sup>55</sup> Adapted from Kuitert, *Borrowing Scenery*, 35-39.

There were quivers of self-consciousness in their voices but the speakers could be seen to be enjoying the novelty of reading aloud in public space. As they read, the rest of the group listened, reflecting on the landscape around them. One of the bars mapped onto the atrium of the high-rise Nakanoshima Mitsui Building where Jenny Holzer’s text-sculpture, *Serpentine*, weaves endless blue-lit aphorisms between the tower’s pillars. Repeating the voiced reading process over the course of the six bars disrupted habituated engagement with place, inducing what Schechner terms a ‘second reality’ that for him is brought about through performance, ritual, and play.<sup>56</sup> Another bar mapped onto the corner of a residential street where a magnificent cherry blossom tree was in almost full bloom: a liminal zone where the ephemeral beauty of the blossoms stands as a metonym for the transience of all things. The walk led us on unfamiliar streets, drawing together places not usually considered related and precipitating a reconsideration of everyday encounters. Our discussions took new directions also, forging links not only between the texts and our environment, but connecting childhood memories, dreams from the previous night, and contemporary issues related to the socio-political climate.

**Yuan-ye, Borrowed Scenery Checklist**

Date of dérive: 15/06/17

Dérive starting point: TERADAKHO STATION (JR) Starting time: 9:04

Dérive finishing point: TENNOJI STATION (JR) Finishing time: 11:20 (?)

At a predetermined point on today's walk stop and consider your surroundings. Try to frame a scene or view. This framing does not need to be purely visual but should encourage contributions from the other senses. Use the categorised borrowings as a prompt, as a means of organising your observations. Record your findings in the column on the right.

Category of borrowing	Examples given in the literature	Examples seen on today's dérive
<b>yuanjie</b> 遠借 distant borrowing	mountains, lakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skyline of Tennoji (HARUKAS TOWER)</li> <li>• Blurred logos of trucks on elevated stretch of highway</li> </ul>
<b>Linjie</b> 隣借 adjacent borrowing	neighboring buildings & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the smell of curry from back door of restaurant, alarmingly quiet</li> <li>• "hiss" of Toyota prius hybrid engine</li> </ul>
<b>yangjie</b> 仰借 upward borrowing	clouds, stars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contrails,</li> <li>• a pair of running shoes hanging by the laces on an overhead cable.</li> </ul>
<b>fujie</b> 俯借 downward borrowing	rocks, ponds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas/costs construction company markings on temporary road surface.</li> <li>• <del>paper</del> discarded paper printed with "footprint" graphic</li> </ul>

Other notes:


 need to develop a theme: an end towards which I'm borrowing, a filter/editing process...

Fig.5: An example of a completed Borrowed Scenery worksheet

What I thought would be a one-off encounter in 2016 had a second iteration in 2017 and I now consider it an annual event. I am already planning for 2018’s walk which will be further enriched

<sup>56</sup> Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 52.

by my ongoing research into borrowed scenery. At the time of writing I have two ideas to this end. Firstly, I am developing a worksheet that uses the four categories of borrowing as a simple prompt to disrupt habits of seeing. These categories are in effect spatial divisions: *yuanjie* refers to distant borrowing; *linjie* describes adjacent borrowing, *yangjie* is defined as upward borrowing; and *fujie* as downward. Unsurprisingly, the features given in the literature to exemplify each of these categories are those associated with nature and with gardens. Mountains and lakes are offered as expressions of *yuanjie* while ponds and rocks are given as examples of *fujie*. What features might reveal themselves were these categories to be deployed not in a traditional garden but in a contemporary urban setting. Could the gutters in the street function as a proxy water feature? Might a chain-link fence be *locum tenens* for a bamboo screen? Unlike the voiced readings, the borrowed scenery worksheet asks the walker to enter a dialogue with the space in a more active way by recording their observations while walking (see fig. 5). The completed worksheet becomes data~ not only the information recorded in the right-hand column but the paper itself. With its creases, stains, and annotated margins, the paper acts as a material document of the encounter. The worksheet and the information recorded on it are added to the discourse colony.

Another way in which Borrowed Scenery will enrich future walks is through a shuttling between Leeds and Osaka in real time. I hope to synchronise the Osaka walk with Tim's event in Leeds and to open live communication channels allowing prearranged activities performed in one time-place to be experienced in the other, thus opening an exchange and further entangling the cities and their people. Time differences and technological requirements will need to be seen as challenges and not as problems.

## CONCLUSION

Borrowed scenery has unfolded within my practice in stages that remain clearly identifiable to me. In the hope that it might offer further insight into that practice I will briefly recount those stages here. The first stage was an immediate and relatively common-sense comprehension of the term borrowed scenery. On first encountering it I was quickly able to visualise the idea of a fixed vantage point from which to view a prescribed scene and to recognise that here was an interesting tactic to deploy within my practice. I next learned of the four categories of such borrowing (distant, near, upward, downward) and was again able to see how they could add a degree of nuance to that initial tactic. Further research revealed the contemporary discourses surrounding *Yuanye* and I was excited by the resonances between those readings and my own interest in subjectivity and agency. At this point borrowed scenery shifted from being one element among many within my practice to assuming a more central role. A period of reflection and reading enabled me to then recognise the literary qualities of the text, and how its poetry and imagery might also be brought to bear upon my practice. The tethering of borrowed scenery to New Materialist ethics represents the most recent of these unfoldings, and its hoped that an acknowledgement of the novelty will mitigate the fact that further research needs to be conducted in this area.

This paper has attempted to reveal how a conscientious creative practice with methods based in walking can be a vehicle for concerned, ethical, and just encounters with the urban environment, and the forces and matter, be they human or otherwise, of which that environment is constituted.

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## BIOGRAPHY

Gareth Jones is a British artist, researcher and educator, dividing his time between Japan where he teaches, and the UK where he is working towards his PhD with the University of Dundee, Scotland. His practice is an interdisciplinary enquiry into global and local space. Aimed at promoting personal, cultural and environmental wellbeing, this practice entangles psychogeographic walking methods with cultural and material elements specific to his own circumstances.