

# The Post-Industrial Regime of Production/Consumption and the Rural Gentrification of the New West Archipelago

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**Abstract:** The contemporary American West is undergoing a round of rapid restructuring, which has been characterized as the shift from landscapes of production to landscapes of consumption. Here I propose that a more effective description of current changes, which allows us to retain focus on the relevant inter- and intra-class-based dynamics of an ongoing capitalist-Modernity, is as a result of the transition from the prior dominance of a regime of production/consumption of commodities/natural resources to the increasing ascendancy of the production/consumption of “experiences”. The rising dominance of this regime is, in large part, the result of the locally dramatic in-migration by ex-urban members of the post-industrial middle class to the “amenity-rich” counties of the region. This process of *rural gentrification* exacerbates preexisting social, geographic, and environmental disparities within the region, creating an “archipelago” of changing communities commonly referred to as the “New” West. Drawing on almost two years of ethnographic research from one such “island” community in south-central Montana, I describe local-level change between the relative primacy of the two regimes of production/consumption.

**Keywords:** New West Archipelago, post-industrial middle class, regime(s) of production/consumption, rural gentrification

## The Rise of the “New” West Archipelago

The society and economy of the American West is undergoing rapid restructuring, as attested to by much recent analysis (eg Beyers and Nelson 2000; Duane 1999; Jarosz and Lawson 2002; Nelson 2001; Ohman 1999; Power and Barrett 1996, 2001; Shumway and Otterstrom 2001; Travis 2007).<sup>1</sup> Counter-urbanization—the in-migration of ex-urbanites—is widely recognized as a significant factor in this ongoing transformation (eg Ghose 2004; Hines 2007, 2010a, 2010b; Jobses 2000; Riebsame et al 1996; Rudzitis 1993; Shumway and Davis 1996; Theobald et al 1996; Walker 2003; Walker and Fortmann 2003; Wiltsie and Wyckoff 2003). These works provide descriptive analysis of the emerging “New” West (Riebsame and Robb 1997) as well as important visions of the dynamic circumstances that have fostered this development; a considerable portion of them characterize the change as the shift from a (social and physical) landscape of production to one of consumption. In this piece I propose, and endeavor to substantiate with reference to my ongoing research in south-central Montana, an alternate method to describe the current phase of

rural restructuring; one which highlights the transition from the prior dominance of a regime of production/consumption of natural resources and commodities to the increasing ascendancy of a regime centered on the production/consumption of what can best be described as “experiences” (Hines 2004, 2010a, 2010b; MacCannell 1976). In so doing, I seek simultaneously to elucidate the actions of persistence and change within a capitalist-Modernity, by specifically furthering the appreciation of gentrification as fundamentally an expression of the abiding cultural logic regardless of its rural or urban context.<sup>2</sup> Through this final point I hope to contribute to Raymond Williams’ (1973) thesis that the continued reification of urban–rural distinctions can and does obfuscate our recognition of the ubiquity and sources of Modern-capitalist inequality.

### ***Where is the New West?***

Try as we may to define it strictly as a region, it is difficult to escape Wallace Stegner’s insight that the American West is best thought of as a “process not a place”. The social, geographic, and environmental disparities within the physical space preclude its unity as a single social, economic (Nelson 2001), or cultural unit; these differences are exacerbated by the contemporary process of counter-urbanization, which is disproportionately affecting specific points within the region. These points are the so-called “amenity-rich” counties (Shumway and Otterstrom 2001) that dot the regional expanse and form—as Salamon (2003:9) has described the suburbanizing “postagrarian” communities of the Great Plains—an “archipelago”, or chain of rapidly changing “island” communities, in the midst of a relatively static, conservative, agricultural/industrial “sea”. It is this archipelago to which people refer when they use the term “New West”. While these islands encompass individual and neighboring counties they generally go by the title of their principal town and the names form a list of the most emblematic sites in the West: Aspen, Vail, Park City, Jackson (Hole), Sun Valley, Taos, Missoula, Bozeman, etc.

At root, the emergence of the New West represents a major break from the previous era not just because it is the product of locally dramatic in-migration but because the people who are moving in are raised to and practice life according to a different cultural logic than previously held sway in the region. In some small communities the balance is clearly tipping away from previous ways of thinking and acting toward the incoming modes. In this regard we are witnessing the very act of creative destruction that so characterizes contemporary Modern-capitalist societies; the evidence speaks of a transition from one “rationale landscape” (Harvey 1985) proper to an industrial form of capitalism to one that is emerging in conjunction with a post-industrial regime of production/consumption.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Gentrification and the New West Archipelago***

The term gentrification was initially coined by Glass (1963) to refer to the mid-twentieth-century displacement of working-class Londoners by a new urban “gentry”, or upper-middle class. Following the work of Hamnett (2003), Ley (1996), and Smith (1996) on urban gentrification and Little (1987), Parsons (1980), and

Phillips (1993, 2002, 2005) on rural gentrification in the UK, as well as Darling (2005) and Ghose (2004) in the US, my purpose for applying the term is to emphasize the class character of the process of counter-urbanization: thus, rural gentrification, as described here, is the colonization and transformation of the formerly industrial working- and middle-class social and physical space of the rural US by members of the ex-urban *post-industrial middle-class*, or PIMC (Hines 2010a).

Building off the recognition of analysts like Cloke and Thrift (1987), I propose that in the contemporary context of the New West, gentrification is best understood as an expression of both *inter-* and *intra-*class conflict. As we will see, the newcomers depicted here seek through their migration and the practices of their lives in a small-town/rural community to differentiate themselves from the members of other preexisting segments of the middle and working classes; in this respect, rural gentrification can be understood as part and parcel of the project of the creation/maintenance of class-based distinction (Bourdieu 1984) between members of different middle-class subsets as well as between them and the working classes (Robson and Butler 2001).<sup>4</sup> Thus, the sociocultural conflict that is exposed *vis-à-vis* this process is between Americans who principally subscribe to an industrial worldview and those who primarily practice a post-industrial perspective.

The stage-model of rural gentrification is perhaps the most effective to help describe the current circumstances in Park County, especially in light of the examples of other New West *islands* in Montana. It is entirely possible that, by dint of its relatively late entry into the process, Park County is still engaged in an initial phase of gentrification wherein individual "owner-occupiers" are generally recognized as the primary movers of the practice (see Zukin's (1982) discussion of the "artists'" roles in the advent of loft living in Manhattan in the 1970s). In this way the process of rehabilitation of in-town housing stock and the construction of new-builds on subdivided land in Paradise Valley (south of Livingston) or Shields River Valley (north of town) is accomplished largely through "sweat-equity" by the young owners themselves or at least by local labor using, by and large, local sources of credit. At this point in time there is very little in the way of large-scale and/or corporate development of the unincorporated lands of Park County. The railroad and mining interests that do yet control significant swathes of the county have not systematically pursued residential development strategies. By contrast, other parts of the New West Archipelago, like the Bitterroot, Flathead, and Gallatin Valleys of western Montana, where the rural gentrification process began earlier and which have seen much more rapid in-migration than Park County, have experienced an acceleration of the role of "developers" of residential property and of the size of rural developments to accommodate newcomers (see Ghose 2004).

My use of the term "colonization" in this piece is intended to highlight, firstly, the pronounced class-cultural difference between the in-migrating (younger, middle-class) ex-urbanites and the local natives in this case study; and secondly, the recognition that the project of gentrification, whether in the rural or the urban context, involves the marginalization (culturally, socially, economically, and politically), if not outright expulsion, of previous residents. Thus, gentrification in this context must be understood as a form of occupation that cannot be limited to the practice of residential rehabilitation. With that in mind, while no substantive

evidence is presented here of the physical displacement of natives by newcomers, the examples described, nevertheless, speak to the dislocation of the hegemony of an industrial regime of production/consumption in such post-industrializing areas.

## **The Post-Industrial Middle Class and the Priority of Experience**

Strictly speaking, there is nothing *new* about the subset of the middle class upon which this piece focuses (which is one reason why I prefer not to use the term “new middle class”, although there are significant similarities between my formulation and that of analysts who do, eg Ghose 2004; Ley 1996). Throughout the Modern-capitalist era there has existed a segment of Western society that matches the profile of the PIMC described here. Its initial incarnation was practiced by the scions of the early (English) bourgeoisie, those who knew the value of and could afford the “Grand Tour” of the art and architecture of the continental European capitals as a sign of their distinction from the *uncultured* masses (Thompson 1963). In this sense, this nascent form of tourism was the enactment of the traveler’s distinguishing levels of finance and education—economic and cultural capital in Bourdieu’s (1984) parlance—that empowered him/her to pursue and appreciate proper experiences. Over the course of time, as Western societies mutated under the pressure of a dynamic capitalist-Modernity, the PIMC—the social subset that relies upon experiences as a significant marker of social distinction—has slowly but steadily expanded both in number and relative prominence. This expansion accelerated with the marked increase in post-Second World War affluence and the swelling of the occupational ranks dedicated to professional and managerial services, as well as education and other “creative” pursuits (of knowledge, art, entertainment, etc) (for key discussions see Bell 1973; Betz 1992; Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 1979; Esping-Andersen 1993; Giddens 1973; Goldthorpe 1982; Gouldner 1979; Ley 1996; Renner 1978; Touraine 1971; cf. Bruce-Briggs 1979).

In the context of Park County, the newcomers that I have chronicled invariably come from sub/urban middle- or upper-middle-class backgrounds, are college-educated, and bring/create/encounter occupations in the professional or “service” industries (eg financial, managerial, educational, creative, etc) in their new homes; they are economists, lawyers, contractors, artists, baristas, commercial entrepreneurs, etc. As Featherstone (1989:164) notes, it is these people, who are engaged in the creation, manipulation, and development of images and symbols, who are especially predisposed to be the primary and most ardent consumers of the same products; ie experiences.

It is important when analyzing such middle-class formations, as Robson and Butler (2001:71) note in their analysis of the recent gentrification of south London, to “avoid simply reading different groups off from their ‘objective’ class/occupational positions”. While position within the middle-class is predicated, in one respect, on socioeconomic factors (like profession and income) this paper’s ultimate contribution is based on the recognition that the PIMC’s power/position is “always exercised and reproduced culturally” (Liechty 2003:14); its members must “act

right" in order to be accepted as members of the class or class faction. Thus, as with all social characteristics, class must be understood as a performance or set of practices. Increasingly *acting right* for the PIMC is judged by the proper production/consumption of experiences as well as the production/consumption of proper experiences, which differentiate its members from coexisting subsets of the middle class. These class-cultural practices are ultimately made tangible when they are written into the physical and social landscape, as I chronicle below.

A primary facet of the PIMC's cultural character is an internal dynamic through which it is constantly constituted and reconstituted in "*opposition* to its class others, above and below" (Liechty 2003:15; emphasis in original). Existing in an ambiguous situation as they do, members of the middle class are constantly called to promote and justify their self-worth and social position (Ehrenreich 1989; Frykman and Lofgren 1987; Liechty 2003:18–19).

### ***Industrial and Post-Industrial Regimes of Production/Consumption***

To explain the differing criteria of proper personhood employed by those enculturated to a post-industrial, as opposed to an industrial regime of production/consumption, I begin with the insight of Marx on the character of the early stages of capitalist society. It was Marx (1906) who initially deciphered the semiotics of social difference proper to an industrial regime of production/consumption. He initiated the analysis of the ways in which members of Western society deployed goods as signs in a complex system that allowed/compelled them to communicate to one another where (and with whom) they stood in a highly stratified society, in which other systems of communication (ie kinship networks, local residence, etc) had either partially or completely eroded in the face of the dynamic forces of a capitalist-Modernity. Marx recognized that the most important relationship in industrial society is "not between man and man (as in peasant society) but between man and his productions" (MacCannell 1976:21).

By the late twentieth century, MacCannell proposes that the dominant system (among a select section of contemporary society) had again changed and commodities were being eclipsed as the principal signs (for at least some) in a late-Modern system of social semiotics. MacCannell draws attention to the increasing importance of the *experience* for a growing segment of Western society.

From this we can appreciate that post-industrialization, in general, does not necessarily entail a greater emphasis on consumption over production. Instead, as I describe it here, it involves the shift from the production *and* consumption of commodities to the production *and* consumption of experiences. Thus, members of the PIMC are enculturated to a regime that prioritizes the production and consumption of experiences, ie knowledge, services, entertainment, etc, as marks of their distinction from the members of other subsets of US society.

To recognize the shift in dominance between experiences and commodities is not to ignore that the two, at some level, are intimately bound to one another; experiences have been part of the criteria of self-worth and social position throughout Modernity and, even among the most "post-industrial" of us,

commodities yet remain integral facets of contemporary socioeconomic criteria. Nor is it to overlook the extent to which part of the value of commodities is, in fact, bound up with the *experience* of them. What is more, commodities are integrated into the construction of *narratives of experience* as foils that serve as validation—ie “we knew where to go and what to do”—and/or verification—ie “we were there and did it, see what we got!”—of the successful production/consumption of proper experiences. Nevertheless, there is significant difference, I contend, between those people in contemporary Modern-capitalist society whose lives are more concerned with their role(s) in the production and consumption of commodities as markers of their self-worth and social station and those for whom the production and consumption of experiences predominantly fill that purpose.

### ***The “Old” West as an Industrial Landscape***

There is a tendency to overlook the dominant agricultural landscape of the American West as shaped by an industrial regime of production and consumption, ie dedicated, first and foremost, to the creation of primary commodities (generally agricultural and silvicultural in this context) and/or the exploitation of mineral deposits. In part, this is precipitated by the imagined incongruence between a landscape of crop and/or livestock (or even timber) production and an industrial regime. This misrecognition is inspired by the extent to which industrialism is commonly associated with centralized, large-batch, assembly-line manufacture; what has (along with its ancillary industries and modes of regulation) come to be described as Fordism. To gain a sufficiently nuanced appreciation of the character of the forces at work in the post-industrializing American West, the two distinct regimes—one labeled Regulation theory (see Aglietta 1979, in general, and Marsden 1999 as applied to the rural context) directing *how* things are produced and the other, described here as regimes of production/consumption, inspiring *what* is produced—can and must be disarticulated from one another. With this in mind we can appreciate that industrial production/consumption (across the spectrum of rural “industries”, eg agriculture, timber, minerals, and even manufacture) can (and has during different phases of US history) occur(red) according to pre-Fordist, Fordist, and post-Fordist regulatory regimes.

In this regard, the works of historians of the Midwest have greatly (and usefully) complicated long-standing popular/naïve perspectives on the relationship between agriculture and manufacturing in the US. These works contradict the idea that development of the agricultural sector necessarily precedes that of the manufacturing sector and that the two grow up according to, and comprise, separate logics. Page and Walker (1991) and Page (1996) have shown that in the American Midwest during the nineteenth century the two sectors actually grew up simultaneously and according to the same logic. From this perspective, the authors provide us with a vision of the rise of an “agro-industrial” heartland in which both sectors were concomitantly driven by the emergent Fordist regulation. In much the same fashion, I believe, we must see the northern Rocky Mountains—which were “settled” several generations later than most of the Midwest, when

the US was even further in the grip of proto-Fordist regulation—in the same light. Thus, despite refrains such as Montana is the “last best place”, which discursively create it as a contemporary version of the pastoral idyll, the lands that comprise the New West Archipelago must be appreciated as having been initially colonized and (until recently) predominated by an American Modern-capitalist regime of industrial production/consumption.

## **The Post-Industrialization of the New West?**

In this section I intend briefly to contextualize my research relative to two separate but related bodies of literature on the topics of the restructuring of, firstly, the New West, and secondly, the English countryside. In so doing, I hope to sharpen the reader’s appreciation of the contribution proposed in this piece.

I begin this overview with the work of Wiltsie and Wyckoff (2003), which resonates with my research on several levels, not the least of which is that theirs is set in an adjacent community. Understandably then, their chronicle of the transition of Red Lodge, Montana from a coal-mining town to a locus for recreational tourism and rural gentrification parallels the history of Livingston, Montana, where I work.

Red Lodge, in south-central Montana, was created by the Northern Pacific Railroad (NPR) in the 1870s to facilitate the mining of the coal deposits in the Rock Creek Valley. Rail-lines and the trappings of coal-mining (eg mills, pump-houses, slag-heaps, etc) marked the initial local landscape as a site of industrial production/consumption. Red Lodge’s integration in the world system was followed by multiple phases of restructuring. The first such bout occurred at the end of the nineteenth century as the result of the increasing affluence and urbanization of the US population, which encouraged the development of federal programs to reserve parts of the public domain from immediate private exploitation. These reservation systems—ie the National Park and National Forest Services—stimulated early domestic tourism, which, in turn, inspired new businesses catering to travelers both within and without these preserves. This circumstance further established the social and physical landscape of the turn-of-the-century US as the site of the production and consumption of both commodities and experiences.

The next phase of restructuring came with the closing of the mines in Red Lodge in 1932, as the result of competition from larger-scale coal production in eastern Montana and the industry-wide shift from coal-fired to diesel locomotives. As the physical landscape further shifted to accommodate the post-industrial production of recreational tourism, the authors note, the preexisting infrastructure of industrial production was slowly excised from the terrain.

After decades of slow population decline following the loss of the mines, Red Lodge began to grow again slowly in the 1980s due to the in-migration of ex-urbanites. Wiltsie and Wyckoff (2003:136) note that almost all of the new housing to accommodate these newcomers has been built in the countryside around Red Lodge and, thus, recent in-migration creates a novel “landscape of consumption”.

Implicit in other analyses of the New West (eg Nelson 2001; Shumway and Otterstrom 2001; Walker and Fortmann 2003) is the idea that rural newcomers relate differently to the land than do long-standing residents. Wiltsie and Wyckoff, whom I

take as emblematic of this perspective, characterize this difference as being between previous phases of American history in which people engaged with the landscape as a site of production and the contemporary one in which the newcomers see the land as a site of consumption (ie where the productive forces that shape capitalist society do not apply). It is my interpretation that this perspective does not get to the heart of the circumstance in the New West. It is my contention that we do well to recognize that a capitalist mode of production still reigns supreme in this domain and that this entails a persistent vision of the land, by those who own and/or use it, as productive. Some—those described here as adherents of an industrial regime of production/consumption—see it as productive, first and foremost (and most importantly), of commodities and material resources. Others—here referred to as practitioners of a post-industrial regime of production/ consumption—see it as productive of experiences.

At this point I would introduce another analyst of the New West, whose work offers us a bridge between the prevailing vein of thought discussed above and the formulation proposed in this piece. Although Walker (2003:17) characterizes the restructuring of a community in central California as a shift from “landscapes of natural resource production to landscapes of aesthetic consumption”, in his analysis of a gentrifying county in the Sierra Nevada foothills, he acknowledges that the rising conflicts between rural natives and newcomers are the result of “underlying tensions between competing capitalisms that commodify nature in incompatible ways” (2003:17). The development of these alternate “aesthetic environmental ideologies”, as Walker calls them, do not represent an exhaustion of the capitalist system (and its abiding emphasis on production) but are at the very root of an increasingly dominant, albeit not entirely novel, regime of production/consumption. Thus, despite his invocation of the “production v. consumption” conceptual framework, Walker nevertheless expresses a tacit appreciation of the central point of this piece, which is that both preceding and contemporary patterns of land-use in the New West—the industrial and the post-industrial—both engage in the production *and* consumption of specific types of landscapes.

The circumstances described here in the US have their analogs in earlier and ongoing processes at work in the UK as attested to by a great deal of analysis. These works offer several significant refinements to our understandings of the post-industrial regime of production/ consumption. Cloke and Goodwin (1992:334) were among the first to suggest that one of the significant changes facing rural Britain was its “commodification, both in terms of production and consumption” in conjunction with an increasing service sector economy. Such thoughts have led to much analysis of the “post-productivist” countryside; a concept that has been critiqued by Wilson (2001) for its imprecise usage in many instances, but which nevertheless provides some important points of articulation with my work.

Both Phillips (1993) and Murdoch and Marsden (1994) connect restructuring with the recent “colonization” of rural England by members of the urban middle class, thereby foregrounding the social and legal conflict over land-use policy and practice in what were previously much more (socially and physically) homogenous geographies. While appreciating the congruence between this point and my own research, we must also acknowledge Hoggart’s (1997:254) critique of the “emerging

'orthodoxy'... that rural England has become 'middle class territory'". Noting this compels me to emphasize two central (but implicit) facets of my analysis that enables me to make sense of rural differentiation (Marsden 1999). First, my focus upon the New West implies that this style of restructuring is specific to that domain and is not necessarily characteristic of the US countryside as a whole; in fact, it demands a recognition of the difference between the post-industrializing segments and the, as yet, industrial parts. Second, by highlighting the contested nature of this change we are forced to recognize that the post-industrialization of the New West is actually far from a *fait accompli*.

Emblematic of the middle-class colonization discussed by Murdoch and Marsden (1994) is the increasing appearance of golf courses in the English countryside. While this could be interpreted as an expression of a transition from productivity to consumption (golf = recreation = consumption), as indeed it is by the authors (see also Marsden's (1999) discussion of the "consumption countryside"), inline with the thesis of this piece I want to describe an alternate reading of this circumstance. To begin we must accept that previously when (this part of) the English countryside was predominantly used by farmers, some of the (agricultural) goods they produced were consumed by them and other local residents; thus, it was the site of the production and consumption of commodities. Today this same countryside remains a site of production/consumption, but now of the experience of recreation, specifically golf. Such experiences are both produced—by myriad acts of labor and the investment of capital and resources over the near and far terms—and consumed *in situ*. Therefore, what has changed is the relative emphasis placed on the production/consumption of experiences as opposed to commodities in such restructuring ruralities, whether in the UK or the US.

In another vein, Mather's work (2001) on the changes affecting the English timber industry integrates a recognition (which is central to my discussion) that ongoing restructuring is best appreciated as an integral aspect of contemporary capitalism and therefore does not merely affect agriculture but all sorts of commodity-producing activities. One of the weaknesses of the concepts of "productivism" and "post-productivism", as commonly construed in the UK literature, is that they tend exclusively to define the rural as a domain of agricultural production, eg Ilbery and Bowler (1998:249). Even attempts to recast them as "multifunctional agricultural regimes" (Wilson 2001) ignore other *rural* "industries". Thus, as Mather notes, the shift is, in conjunction with "changing societal values, away from timber production and towards services provided by and often consumed in the forest" (2001:262). In another piece, Mather et al (2006:443) propose that a "core characteristic" of contemporary rural restructuring is a:

change in relative emphasis from commodity to non-commodity outputs—from maximising production of material goods in the form of food and wood (used here as a shorthand term for food, industrial crops, various forms of fibre and forest products), to broader objectives, including the provision of 'environmental services' used as an umbrella term, encompassing recreation and amenity.

This point by Mather et al dovetails with the literature on the increasing "commodification" of the rural experience (eg Cloke 1992, 1993) in the UK. These

analyses allow us further to appreciate the extent to which the elaborations of commodifiable forms (material and experiential) that accompany the expansion of the PIMC projects of tourism and gentrification involve both production and consumption.

In his analysis of the emergence of the “countryside as commodity”, Cloke describes the new uses to which a formerly public power plant in Wales was recently put, which included recreational fishing, tours of the power plant, picnics in the grounds, etc. This description resonates with MacCannell’s idea that the most profound stage of post-industrialization has begun in a given social domain when formerly industrial sites—those previously dedicated exclusively to material production—are, completely or partially, repurposed to produce experiences for a consuming public. Thus now, in this example in rural Wales, the *experience(s)* of the power plant itself have been commodified.

While this point has any number of contemporary analogs in the New West (eg dude-ranches), I hope to demonstrate through my ethnographic examples that, while the commercial forces of neoliberalization are a powerful impetus to this development (as Cloke’s power plant example above demonstrates), it is also a program that is internalized and enacted by the gentrifiers themselves. Thus, the PIMC is engaged in the production of the *experience(s)* of the New West in ways that can and do escape the commodified form. Building upon this point in the remainder of the piece I provide evidence that these rural gentrifiers are the vanguard of the transition of significant segments of the American West to a new regime of production *and* consumption.

## **The New West as Site of the Production/Consumption of Experience**

Although of slightly lesser profile than other communities within the archipelago, Livingston, Park County, Montana nevertheless represents a superb example of the New West as a site of the production/consumption of experience. It is possessed of outstanding physical and social amenities that have steadily drawn ex-urbanite Americans for the last two decades. What is more, its industrial past provides an invaluable backdrop against which the profound disjuncture represented by the post-industrial restructuring of the physical and social landscape can be seen in greater relief.

Livingston—like Red Lodge, its neighbor 90 miles to the east—is pressed hard against the base of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Area. From almost everywhere in town there are dramatic views of the northern end of the stunning Absaroka Mountains. Along Livingston’s southern and eastern edge runs the Yellowstone River, the longest undammed watercourse and one of the most renowned trout fisheries in the US. Five miles south of town the river has carved a valley between the towering Absarokas on the east and the Gallatin Range to the west; this is the aptly-named Paradise Valley.

Like Red Lodge, Livingston came into existence in the last third of the nineteenth century as industrial America spread into the northern Rocky Mountains; as with

Red Lodge it was the westward push of the NPR that inspired the creation of Livingston. As the result, the local social and physical landscapes of these communities were created to the ends of industrial production/ consumption. Livingston was monopolized by one industry—the railroad—for the majority of its history. Although timber, mineral, and agricultural production have always also been locally important in Park County, until the mid-1980s Livingston's economy and society were dominated by the switchyard and repair shops that the railroad maintained in town. The investment of Eastern urban capital via the NPR produced the industrial infrastructure of the town, which housed the largest repair shops between Minnesota and Washington.

In this way, by the turn of the twentieth century Livingston had developed a social and physical landscape dominated by the industrial regime of production/consumption. We must note, however, that already at this time there existed a nascent post-industrial regime of production/consumption in Livingston; inspired by the trade in recreational tourism focused on Yellowstone National Park some 50 miles south of town, this regime affected the local society and economy to a lesser degree than the key industrial pursuits (eg the railroad, minerals, timber, and sheep/cattle).

Early recreational tourism in Park County (although earlier and more pervasive than in Red Lodge) did not dramatically restructure local society but it did nuance the local physical and social landscape. Several large hotels, like the Murray (which still stands and operates as a condominium-hotel in downtown Livingston), were built to cater to tourists. In 1902, the NPR built a grand Italianate-style depot to accommodate the increasing numbers of travelers who disembarked in Livingston or switched to local trains bound for the Park's northern entrance in southern Park County. Also in this era, nascent post-industrialism is evident in the several ranches in the county that converted to hostleries to cater to travelers who sought the "dude" experience. What is more, local society was steadily, if not dramatically, influenced by this regime as the aesthetics and recreational opportunities of the region drew affluent urban visitors to Park County; a small but noteworthy percentage of whom stayed or returned to purchase property.

The physical and social landscapes described above have inspired significant restructuring by in-migration over the last 20 years. It is estimated that, although the population of Park County grew only by a modest 2% per year in the 1990s (US Census Bureau 2001), steady in-migration coupled with the out-migration of the majority of local youth after high school (in pursuit of educational and occupational opportunities) resulted in roughly one-third of the current local population being recent in-migrants (Hines 2004). Of these newcomers the vast majority are of middle-class sub/urban extraction; these people represent the most locally active and socially integrated subset of in-migrants. Unlike the members of the international economic elite (ie owners and CEOs of Fortune 500 companies), the national cultural elite (ie motion-picture actors, artists, and writers), and retirees who also own property in Park County, the middle-class newcomers are, with few exceptions, year-round residents. As the result, as Walker (2003) found in similarly situated Nevada County, California, the full-time in-migrant residents of

Park County, as a "class" of people, are locally economically dominant and politically ascendant.

In addition to being a subset themselves of a broader counter-urban movement, gentrifiers in Park County can be further subdivided into several specific categories according to what inspired their primary interest in the place. This stands in contrast to other examples of rural gentrification, such as that documented by Darling (2005), in which the principal draw to newcomers was not the *rural* character of the area, *per se*, but the specific wilderness status of a preserve in upstate New York. In Park County, by contrast, I have documented the activities and perspectives of PIMC ex-urbanites for whom the local: (1) small-town (a) social; and (b) built environments; and (2) the "rural" (a) agricultural; and (b) *natural/wilderness* environments motivated their migration (Hines 2004, 2007). Although I have not the space (in what follows) to exhibit evidence from all four categories, I present ethnographic examples of gentrifiers for whom the latter three environments form their principal point of contact with Park County. The latter two examples (the Wileys for the agricultural environment and the Roberts for the natural environment) are representative of the largest subsets of the PIMC who have migrated to this community over the last 20 years. Deriving from their focus and their most common choice of residence (in the county as opposed to in town) these people, as a group, have exacted a profound effect upon the landscape of Park County (whereas the influence of the members of the former two groups has been most dramatically felt in Livingston).

One of the most obvious changes in conjunction with the advent of the New West is the dramatic proliferation of rural land sales, either as entire ranches or as subdivided parcels (generally less than 40 acres, which are often referred to as "ranchettes"). According to Gude et al (2006:132), the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (of which Park County is a part) experienced not only a 58% increase in population from 1970 to 1999 but also a 350% expansion in the area of rural lands supporting ex-urban housing densities. All together nearly one-quarter (23%) of 2547 large agricultural operations and 22% of all agricultural land in the ten Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem counties changed hands between 1990 and 2001 (Gosnell et al 2006:748). "Amenity buyers," according to Gosnell et al (2006:748), bought 38% of ranches and 43% of the acreages sold in these counties during that time. This shift in land control from natives to newcomers has been shown to have profound repercussions in terms of general land-use (Riebsame et al 1996; Theobald et al 1996) and ecological impacts (Gosnell et al 2006; Gude et al 2006).

In Park County, between 1989 and 1999, the number of applications for rural septic systems in Paradise Valley alone more than doubled to over 3000 (Park County Environmental Council 2001). Since such permits are necessary to develop new rural residences this number is a reliable indicator of the scale of growth in the Valley. Given the prevalence of impermanent in-migrants to the Valley during this time it is certainly unlikely that even a majority of these new residences are owned by year-round occupants; nevertheless, those hundreds of newcomers who have taken up permanent residence in Paradise Valley exert a profound influence on the local landscape and their practices draw sharp contrasts with those of native neighbors, as we will see in the ethnographic examples I present below.

### **Notes on Methods**

Before presenting my ethnographic evidence I would like to offer a few notes on the methods used to collect it. My fieldwork in Park County began in January 2002. I lived in Livingston and conducted participant-observation throughout the county for all of 2002; since then I have completed annual visits of one to three months to continue my research. In the process I have interviewed all of the members of the community who would consent to speak with me; over the course of the years the number has grown to around 400 locals: nearly 300 newcomers and over 100 natives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted for roughly one hour for each participant (or couple in some cases). To ensure that interviews were systematic and allowed for meaningful comparison, an interview guide was used to broach central issues and to focus each interview on comparable topics. In addition to formal interviews, the recording of people's day-to-day activities *vis-à-vis* land-use policy and practice was central to the project and involved countless hundreds of hours observing people interacting with their private lands as well as those within the public domain.

### **The Physical and Social Landscape of Experience**

In what remains of this piece I will offer three distinct but mutually supportive ethnographic accounts of the changes wrought in Park County as the result of the in-migration of ex-urban PIMC Americans in the last 20 years. In the first, I look at the shifting relationship of local residents to the built environment of Livingston by analyzing recent changes in the use of the railroad depot. In this regard, the depot stands as an emblem of the emerging post-industrial character of the New West in that it has been repurposed (from its prior industrial roles) in ways that expand its position in the production of experiences.

My second example depicts the relationship of a newcomer couple to their land in Park County. Manifest in this is not only evidence of the post-industrial priority of experience but equally importantly a vision of the ways in which such people are actively engaged in the role of being *producers* of landscapes of experience. I conclude with an example in which I examine the ways in which two Paradise Valley neighbors—one native and one newcomer—differ in their relationships to the land. Evident in this case are the critical distinctions between an industrial perspective that sees the land, first and foremost, as the site of commodity production, and a post-industrial perspective that envisions the land as the source of experiences.

### **The Livingston Railroad Depot**

As noted earlier, the current depot was completed by the NPR in 1902. Its ornate design and large size (three stories and over 10,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) belies the character of the relatively small, remote town in which it sits; but it also speaks to the position of Livingston in the turn-of-the-century regimes of industrial and (nascent) post-industrial production/consumption. The depot and other significant commercial structures, like the aforementioned Murray Hotel, were built in response to both the steady wages that the railroad afforded local residents (ie the fruits of industrial production/consumption) and the regular flow of travelers

brought by the railroad (ie the benefits of post-industrial production/consumption). Not only was the depot used as the way-station for freight as well as local and transcontinental travelers, it was also a transfer point for tourists bound for Yellowstone National Park; in this respect, it served a dual role as a part of the infrastructure of industrial production—via the translation of labor and natural resources/commodities—and post-industrial production—by bringing travelers to the site of dramatic “natural” and “old” West experience. In addition, until 1985 when the railroad divested itself of the building, it was the headquarters of the NP’s Central Division; the managers who worked there administered the industrial production of the repair shops in Livingston and tracks the length of Montana. In this way it was completely integrated in the predominate regime of industrial production/consumption.

Beginning with the cessation of passenger rail service to southern Montana by Amtrak in 1979, and proceeding wholesale after its donation to the City of Livingston by the Burlington Northern Railroad (NPR’s successor) in 1985, the depot has sloughed off the vestiges of its previous role in industrial production/consumption. From that point, the structure has been steadily assimilated into a post-industrial regime of production/consumption by the people who now administer it under the auspices of the Livingston Depot Foundation.

Today the depot is an important local site of the production/consumption of experience for residents and tourists alike. The experience produced in the Livingston depot falls into three principal categories: first, historical, playing on the major themes of local experience that natives and newcomers alike refer to as integral to the character of the town, county, and area; second, educational, focused on providing extracurricular activities for local youth; and third, local, community-focused programs.

Examples of the first category are exhibits that are open daily to public viewing in the depot’s main hall from May to October. In the summer of 2006, the exhibits touched on several of the principal themes of local experience. One—entitled “Rails Across the Rockies: A Century of People and Places”—attended to an important facet of the industrial underpinnings of the region. Another—called “Film in Montana”—detailed the development of the state into a regional center for film production (the quintessential experience, in many respects) in the 1990s. A third presented an overview of “The Livingston Depot in History and Architecture”. The fourth, a multimedia presentation, amalgamated the prominent elements of local experience of natural history (*vis-à-vis* Montana rivers) and American history (ie the passage of Clark’s portion of the Corps of Discovery down the Yellowstone River in 1806).

Additional local experiences produced/consumed at the depot include annual events like the “Blues at the Depot” concert series, which draws nationally prominent musicians, and the Depot Festival of the Arts. The festival accords with another aspect of the Livingston’s migration to a post-industrial state, which is the increasing preponderance of art galleries downtown. In 2007, there were 13 such establishments catering to a variety of aesthetic tastes from hand-thrown pottery to quilting. Many of these spaces are not only the site of display but also the artists’ studios, ie sites of the production and (commercial) consumption of aesthetic experiences.

The transition of the depot and of the larger downtown commercial space from their previously supporting but integral roles in industrial production and consumption to sites of experience is occasioned both by the expansion of tourism as a part of the national cultural project and by rural gentrification. Gentrifiers are enlisted in the consumption of local experience and thereby in the creation of a market for it; at the same time, they are also enrolled in the expansion of the post-industrial regime as the producers of the experience of Livingston, Park County, Montana. Whether creating art, building recreational retreats, staffing the Livingston Depot events, or providing services to the hundreds of thousands of annual visitors to the county, these newcomers are integral to the construction of the New West as a physical and social landscape of post-industrialization.

By way of conclusion to this section I would highlight an important connection between this example and a work previously discussed, in which Cloke (1992) described the novel (recreational) uses to which a Welsh power plant was put in the 1990s due to forces of neoliberal change. That example resonates with the case of the Livingston depot in that both were once parts of a built environment dedicated to the production of commodities, the purposes of which were then reworked and/or expanded to accommodate the postindustrial emphasis on experience.

### ***Producing the “Ranching” Experience: The Wileys***

Since purchasing their “ranch” in Park County in 1997, Doug and Sissy Wiley have actively engaged in its recreation as a postindustrial landscape. They have pursued an agenda of connection with what they perceive as the authentic character of the land and structures thereof through the “improvements” they have instigated. In this regard, they are exemplary of a significant vein of those currently involved in the production and consumption of the emerging New West.

In several important ways Doug and Sissy are similar to the majority of the nearly 300 newcomers I have interviewed in Park County to date. Both were raised middle class in a large Midwestern city. They received their undergraduate degrees from the same large Midwestern state school. Doug has a law degree from a prestigious private university in New England; he became an investment banker and ultimately the CEO of, as he calls it, a “large but not too profitable” retail company based in the Midwest, before he “retired” (in his late 40s) to Park County in 1998. They have two adult children who continue to live in the Midwest.

The Wileys’ property is located on the eastern periphery of Park County. Driving to it from Livingston on the county road a careful observer will note when he/she has crossed onto the Wileys’ land. While the pastures and fences of their neighbors’ property reflect the overgrazed and dilapidated character that is fairly typical of native Rocky Mountain ranches, the Wileys’ land by contrast is lush and the infrastructure well-capitalized and well-maintained. Doug’s fences are new and made of expensive pressure-treated wood. His creek-side acreage is exceptionally well-groomed—to a point that even the most meticulous native rancher would never attempt to emulate. The hay meadows are manicured, for the lack of a better word, and in fall (after the haying season) look like nothing so much as a golf course. The bordering willow thickets (on the creek side) and pine forests (on the hill side)

are picked clean of even the slightest twig of fallen timber, the hay is mown right to the edge of the field, and the overgrowth in the irrigation ditch is regularly cut and/or burnt.

The Wileys own 500 acres along Little Mission Creek and several thousand acres in the adjacent pine-forested hills. Arrayed on the creek are nine separate buildings: a tack room (made from a small preexisting cabin on the property), a barn (for their nine horses—the only animals that graze on their land), Doug's office, a garage, Sissy's (art) studio, a guest-house, the old caretaker's quarters (now a second guest-house), the new caretaker's home, and the main house. Most of these structures were painstakingly restored, in some cases from the point of sheer dilapidation. Several were purchased from neighboring ranches and brought to the Wileys' property. As a result each one has a story—of when, where, and by whom they were built, what purposes they had served, how they were first noticed by the Wileys, and how they were “rescued” by them. In this regard the presence of each building is as much a prompt to a discussion of the structure—as both a sign of the Wileys' economic capital, their ability to recognize craftsmanship and value, and their willingness to initiate restoration—as it is a structure intended for practical use. In essence, as much as they are commodities, they are also experiences that the Wileys have “produced” and that they deploy as markers of their cultural savvy and astuteness to quality, not to mention their economic capability.

Their main house is a case in point. The core of it, and the experience/possession of which they express the most pride, was originally a small (8×20') homesteader's cabin on a neighbor's property. Shortly after they moved to Montana, the Wileys noticed it sitting vacant and unused, rotting into the ground, and bought it (for, as Doug told me, “next to nothing”).

Doug arranged to have the building moved to his property by professionals; he then contracted with a firm from the neighboring town of Bozeman that specializes in barn restoration. To begin the process, the cabin was first disarticulated; all of its logs were separated, sanded if still sound, or discarded if found rotten. They were then reassembled (with new logs in place of the ruined ones) and weatherproofed. Upon completion the structure assumed its prior shape and style with more than half of the original logs replaced with new wood imported from Canada to match the diameter (logs of such size and quality were no longer locally available!). Doug describes the process this way, assuming the position of an active participant although he played no actual physical role in the reconstruction:

We took 'er all the way down; down to the ground with every last piece. It was an awful mess. But what are you going to do. It has to be done that way if you want to build something like this.

The second phase of the Wileys' project involved building a new 3000 ft<sup>2</sup> log house around the 160 ft<sup>2</sup> cabin. Within the new structure, the homesteader's cabin forms the interior walls of *part of* the kitchen. Only upon close inspection, or having been informed by the Wileys, would a normally astute person discern the antique cabin as distinct from the larger structure. However, a visitor *will* undoubtedly be told of the little cabin and how painstaking and expensive it was to transport and repair. The Wileys take pains to provide their guests with this information as well as

the history of the cabin early on in a visit. The telling of the tale takes on the sense of being by rote, likely evidence of how many times the Wileys have told it. Doug can and does explain why the post-and-beam style was used, by whom it was originally produced, when, how long it took to build, and on and on to an almost infinite degree of detail.

Sissy and I love the post-and-beam style; it really speaks to the authenticity of the cabin. It's a Norwegian style brought-over by the immigrants who homesteaded between Livingston and Big Timber, you know. Not only is it handsome, it takes an immense degree of craftsmanship—the way those logs are notched at the end and “hook” into one another—it's an amazing procedure especially if you consider the crudeness of the homesteaders' tools. This particular *piece* was done by a local guy who produced exquisite work; you see a lot of his stuff around the area. In this case he helped a friend-of-a-friend from the old-country build his first homestead. [As a carpenter] he really had a talent and was quite in demand. This was built in the fall of 1895; you can see over there [pointing], it's carved in the corner, along with his initials: JH. This room is the *soul* of this house. Integrating it into our home has strengthened our connection to this place; I look at it and think: we are connected to this place through it [emphasis added].

This quote represents but an excerpt of the longer transcript of Doug's recount of his and Sissy's relationship to their property/home/cabin that runs in my notes to nearly two pages (well over five minutes in real time). Evident are the discursive constructions through which the cabin is cast as a *piece* of art and as the *soul* of the house, ie something of value for the experience it offered/offers. We can also discern the positive reflection Doug's narrative communicates of the Wileys' ability to recognize quality and value. His monologue highlights, just as with the case of the depot, that, although we are talking of human relationships to inanimate objects, their quality and value are products of the “experiences” they inspire. It is not the principal intended “industrial” use of a commodity that is emphasized by rural gentrifiers like the Wileys; instead it is the experience of finding/creating/appreciating the object that inspires their interest and marks them as the producers and consumers of a contemporary post-industrial landscape.

### ***Industrial Natives v. Post-industrial Newcomers: The Prairie Dog War***

Fascinatingly enough no examples that I have chronicled in Park County can draw into clearer focus the abiding distinction between newcomer *post-industrial* naturalists and native *industrial* agriculturalists in the New West than their differing relationships to the humble prairie dog. A prairie dog (so [mis]named, by early European-American *explorers*, for the “bark” they make at the approach of predators) is actually a burrowing rodent. They are tan in color with a small black tail. They range up to 15 inches in length and are the bane of livestock owners throughout the American West because of the toll (in terms of broken legs) that their burrows can take on animals that step in them. As a result, they were hunted and poisoned nearly to extinction as recently as the mid-1990s. Since then they have made a dramatic comeback owing in part to the significant transfer of land from industrial to post-industrial uses throughout the New West in the last decade.

James Logan has 3000 acres on the eastern boundary of Paradise Valley, where he has lived his entire 45 years. He runs 800 cows on summer mountain pasture and winter hay meadows. His ranch, in many ways, is a model of order and efficiency. He keeps his fences up neatly. His house, barn, and corrals are regularly painted. First and foremost, however, James wants to see his land produce, which helps explain why prairie dogs cause him so much consternation. "We never had prairie dogs on this land as long as I can remember," he says. His father remembers poisoning a colony when he added a new hay field in the 1950s. That was the last the Logans saw of prairie dogs . . . until five years ago. Now the "little buggers", as James refers to them, have completely torn up his best hay meadow.

Prairie dogs construct serpentine webs of underground habitat for themselves. In a prairie dog colony, or "town", their holes irregularly dot the landscape and adjacent to the holes are large pads of the dirt they have extracted. The holes are hazards to livestock and the dirt pads disrupt James's haying and irrigating equipment by impairing the evenness of his hay meadows. This, as well as the competition for grass they present to livestock, makes prairie dogs particularly loathsome to western US ranchers (Lawrence 1984:256). In the contemporary cattlemen's battle to differentiate "the wild" from "the tame", according to Lawrence, the prairie dog assumes particular prominence, in part because its burrowing and eating habits are thought of by ranchers as not only destructive but also wasteful (1984:256). The removal of prairie dogs from agricultural land is an important factor in contemporary attempts by ranchers in the American West to control the wildness that they fear is continually encroaching upon them.

"It's enough to nearly make a grown man cry," James says of the invasion of his land. What is the cause of the varmint colonization of his land? "They came from over there," pointing across his field to a rural subdivision on his western fence-line. "We never had a problem until Old Man Jenson's place was [residentially] developed. He kept his place clean too. Now it's all gone to pot. All because those new people won't kill a 'gopher'," he says (repeating a common local misnomer) with obvious disgust. In addition to losing precious hay ground to the "prairie lice", as he calls them, James says he has had two cows and a horse "come up lame" in the last year because of "gopher holes".

James's attempts to eradicate the prairie dogs are hamstrung, he says, by the inconsiderateness of his new neighbors. Even if he kills all the prairie dogs on his land they continue to use the new residents' land as a base from which to re-colonize James's place. Although James devoutly subscribes to the dominant perspective of native landowners in the American West that private property rights are sacrosanct, he still believes that all rural residents should be compelled to work with ranchers to get rid of prairie dogs. He sees the newcomers' land management style as a "failure" to practice "good-neighbor"-liness. Most of them fail, he believes, because they are "too lazy" to work at it. "They come here to float and fish [the river], and drink martinis on their decks," he says with considerable venom. "They don't want to do anything that will get their hands dirty."

Which brings us to Jean Robert, one of James's neighbors, whose attitude toward animals (and the value of the rural environment of the New West) exemplifies the far end of the spectrum from the previous one. Jean's attitude toward "nature" is

manifest in her relationship to her land and her patterns of use thereof. The Roberts' land is festooned with prairie dog burrows. To a casual observer it is incredible how many prairie dogs there are; literally hundreds of them scurry around the open field behind the Roberts' house. Jean denies feeding them, insisting instead that they benefit merely from not being chased constantly by predators. However, her husband, L N, smirkingly confirms that Jean scatters dog kibble on her regular walks around the property.

It is quite easy to imagine the reaction that James Logan would have upon seeing the Roberts' property. Words like "awful" and "poorly-managed" would undoubtedly be used. For people schooled to an industrial worldview, the Roberts' land and the attitude toward the relationship between humans and nature that it betrays is nearly incomprehensible. As alluded to by Lawrence, ranchers like James share a concept that the land's wildness should be harnessed and maintained in control by humans as a means to make it produce agricultural commodities.

The Roberts, by contrast, see the land as a site to foster the experience of the "natural" environment and engagement with native Montana wildlife. In this regard the Roberts are emphatic about what drew them to Montana. "It was the mountains that got us here. *And* the rivers," L N—who is a successful fly-fishing guide—says with a smile that implies that the water was his primary motivation. The land they own, he says, is nice. There are some doves and grouse that nest in the junipers in the gully behind the house, he says. Deer come down from the forests at night to drink from the water-trough the Roberts built. Above all he makes it clear that he does not want to be a rancher. "Cows stink," he declares. Plus, he says, pointing west out over Paradise Valley, "look at the view. There ain't a rancher in the valley who has a view like this. Ain't that beautiful. Look at all the mountains we can see. And the [Yellowstone] river isn't that a nice piece of water," he says.

The Roberts—Jean, L N, and their teenage daughter, Leeza—moved to Park County in the early 1990s. Unlike other rural newcomers, such as the Wileys, who are drawn to the New West as a means to experience a degree of agricultural authenticity, the Roberts are largely indifferent to that aspect of life in Park County. Beyond their expressed attitude toward ranching, this is evident by the position and type of their property. They intentionally bought land on a ridge, well above the valley floor, where the bulk of the agriculture in Paradise Valley occurs. Half of their acreage is bare grass and sagebrush; the rest is a ravine, which carries water only during the spring runoff. All of their land is rocky, strewn with football- to automobile-sized boulders. It is land that is impossible to farm and even difficult to graze.

For her part, Jean—who works as a flight attendant—is even less interested than L N in connections between their property and the surrounding agricultural environment. Prompting Jean to speak about her place elicits a list of the "wild animals" she and Leeza have seen on their property. There have been black bear, bobcat, coyote, elk, moose, deer, antelope, raccoons, skunks, and porcupine. She points out the bird feeders they have installed, and, of course, the water-trough. She shows off, with obvious glee, the "deer poop" in the lawn; with more pride than consternation she notes the damage that a porcupine did to one of the young trees they planted a few years ago.

In conclusion, I would note that the circumstances described in this section echo an example cited by Walker and Fortmann (2003:479) from their work in Nevada County, California that they called the "border collie wars". In both cases animals operated as a cipher of the simmering conflict between natives and newcomers. In Nevada County, sheepdogs were described in differing fashions by the members of the two groups that exposed their underlying perspectives on proper ways that land (and animals) should be used. In a similar fashion the prairie dog occupies an important symbolic position in the discussions by natives and newcomers of one another in Park County. In this case the very existence of the rodent spoke of one's attitude toward proper land use; tolerance to their being highlighted one's perspective on the landscape as an important site of the production of experiences; a perspective valued by postindustrial newcomers and vilified by industrial natives.

## Conclusion

It is my hope that, based on the examples presented here, the descriptive potential of the concept of a *regime of production/consumption* has been made apparent. Apart from that point, however, there are also significant theoretical implications that I wish to explore by way of conclusion. Principal among these is the potential this analytic has to retain our focus upon the dynamic character of our capitalist-Modernity without reifying distinctions between the categories of productivism/post-productivism or urban/rural.

In the title of his prescient work *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams (1973) identifies two of the principal analytical domains that inform a capitalist structure of feeling. The practices of early capitalists, as Williams shows, expressly functioned to instantiate and codify the distinction between a rural ideal and an urban "reality"; setting the two in opposition to one another as a means of obscuring that they were (and still are) both within the purview of the logic of Modern-capitalism. By envisioning, and amplifying discursively the differences between an urbanizing, industrializing Modernity and a rural, static pre-Modernity, Williams proposes, the purposes of the capitalist elite were served through the masking of the profound social inequities characteristic of life in either domain and their true source (1973:35–36, 82–85). This, Williams writes:

leads to an evident crisis of values in our own world. For a retrospective radicalism against the crudeness and narrowness of a new moneyed order, is often made to do service as a critique of the capitalism of our own day: to carry humane feelings and yet ordinarily to attach them to a pre-capitalist and therefore irrecoverable world. A necessary social criticism is then directed to the safer world of the past: to a world of books and memories, in which the scholar can be professionally humane but in his own real world either insulated or indifferent.

Thus, written into Modern-capitalism is an urban/rural dialectic that accords with the underlying logic of the system (facilitating its continued existence and further expansion) by creating an alternate discourse of value of rural/pre-Modern authenticity through which criticism (of urban/Modern progress) could be deflected. This perspective is predicated upon too strict a dichotomy between now and then (as well as between production and consumption) and ignores the point

that Modern subjects, both then and now, have constituted their social position by reference to their roles and place within interwoven systems of production and consumption throughout the era.

Through this piece, I have sought to substitute the idea of a transition from production to consumption with the recognition, founded on theoretical insight and based in empirical evidence, that what differentiates many recent newcomers to the New West Archipelago from prior inhabitants is the relative emphasis they place on commodities and experiences. This shift refocuses our attention in a constructive fashion on the distinctive characteristics of an emerging segment of society—the PIMC—and its current impact on the American West.

In this regard, I presented three examples indicating the influence of rural gentrification on Livingston and Park County, Montana. As I demonstrated in the first example, the programs of the local PIMC have reconstituted the Livingston railroad depot—which had formerly been central to the prior industrial project of the railroad—as a site of the production/consumption of experience. In the second example I described the ways in which a specific PIMC couple reworked the agricultural environment, ie the landscape and buildings of their “ranch”—which previously produced animals for consumption according to an industrial model—to enhance its potential as a site of the production/consumption of experiences. Through the third example above, I elaborated on this difference by exhibiting the divergent perspectives on proper land-use (*vis-à-vis* their relationship to prairie dogs) of two Paradise Valley neighbors, one an industrial native and the others post-industrial newcomers.

The lack of acknowledgement that the new regime of production/consumption in the New West Archipelago is the force behind the restructuring of the physical and social landscape of the region betrays an underlying prioritization of production over consumption as informative of human existence. Such a perspective relegates the activities of rural gentrifiers, and similarly positioned members of the PIMC, to the realms of identity politics, lifestyle enactment, and mere activities of (allegedly) spurious consumption, the seemingly superficial projects of a privileged class and/or of romantic escapists.

The repercussions of this misrepresentation are real and significant; when places like the contemporary American West are cast solely or principally as landscapes of consumption, and thereby somehow beyond the pale of capitalism, it perpetuates the ambiguity that Williams recognized as informing the early modern discourse of the rural idyll by “prioritizing geographical over social phenomena” (Hoggart 1997:268). Then as now, this style of representation obscures from view the important recognition that the physical and social landscapes of both the rural and urban domains are yet the products of the same capitalist logic.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> While acknowledging the critiques leveled against the inexact uses of the term “rural restructuring” (eg Hoggart and Paniagua 2001), I accept and employ Fløysand and Jakobsen’s (2007:206–207) definition of it as the “shift from an economy centered on agriculture and manufacturing to a more service-centered economy embodying major qualitative and quantitative changes in social structures and cultural practices.”

<sup>2</sup> I employ the terms *Modern-capitalism* and *capitalist-Modernity*, to highlight the powerful mutual formation of these dual aspects of contemporary existence and to emphasize that the contemporary era of Western/World history is most effectively appreciated as a culturally-specific project inspired by the European Enlightenment intelligentsia, which spread dramatically, incompletely, and irregularly around the globe at the behest of colonialism. My particular capitalization of these terms is intended to differentiate them from more common uses, which imply judgment relative to a Eurocentric normative state of “development”.

<sup>3</sup> In order to communicate a full appreciation of its import, “consumption”, in this context, must be understood as more than just the purchase of commodities and/or services; the act of purchase is only one point on an entire trajectory—which also includes the anticipatory promotion and aestheticization of the goods as well as their social use after purchase—that is the cultural process of consumption, or what Appadurai (1988) has called “the social life of things”. Nor does “consumption” necessarily mean to “consume” in the sense of “to use up”; the consumption of many aspects of tangible and intangible production does not result in its disappearance or dissolution, but merely in their use in a culturally-specific manner.

<sup>4</sup> Bourdieu’s work is the most prominent attempt to theorize the middle classes’ efforts to draw cultural distinctions between themselves and other classes. In *Distinction* (1984), he described the upper-middle class as operating with limited “economic capital” (relative to the upper classes) and with varying, but quite high, degrees of “cultural capital”—ie understanding of manners, taste, art, literature, etc—that they deploy to distinguish themselves from other segments of social body and seek to parlay into elevated social status *vis-à-vis* others. Despite what I consider to be the limitations of this perspective, in that it imposes a formalist/rational-actor model of human behavior, Bourdieu nevertheless provides an appreciation of the dynamics of cultural competition in which the interim classes engage to establish and maintain their social positions.

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