

Selling the Suburbs: Nature, Landscape, Adverts, Community

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Abstract: This essay discusses how the real-and-imagined spaces of 'nature' are used to promote the burgeoning master planned communities or enclave estates. On one hand it focuses on the actual sites of the estates and discusses how nature, as a construct, plays a prominent role in presenting the estate as a place of 'wholesome community values'. It then goes on to discuss how 'nature' as a concept is used in various advertisements to promote these community values as a sales tool.

Key terms: Community, enclave estates, firstspace and secondspace, imagineering, nature.

Perth, Western Australia has overwhelmingly taken to the concept of the master planned community or as they are commonly called enclave estates. Walled, and sometimes gated, communities are spreading throughout the suburbs eating into and digesting virgin scrub, consuming wetlands by in-filling, and butchering forests by felling. The irony here is that this destruction of the 'natural' goes against one of the major factors which the builders utilise to sell their 'estates': that of the close connection of the estate with 'nature'. Of course this is not a new marketing ploy. Gottdeiner (1995) has discussed the semiotics of the real estate sign and what he calls the 'English gentrification code' of the suburban estate. In this discussion he notes how the roadside signage, and specifically the names for the new suburbs displayed thereon, draw upon images of class and status with these being associated with upper class English estates or bourgeois suburbs. He also points out that the naming of the suburb is more often than not linked to 'nature' with terms such as 'grove', 'forest', 'lakes' or 'springs' being an addition which is seen to enhance the notion of status and class that the appellation suggests.

It should be pointed out at this stage that the term 'nature' used throughout this discussion refers to the notion of a constructed or 'worked' nature not that of the wilderness or the natural. What I would like to propose in this essay is that the application of the notion of 'nature' as a connotation of class and status is not the only expression in operation here. 'Nature' is also being used to insinuate that the 'community' residing in the enclave is upright, well-disposed and, more importantly, wholesome. Representations of this notion can be found in the advertisements for the master planned estates in any real estate section of the weekend newspapers. Between the pages of these extended advertorials Gottdeiner's observations are displayed in the texts with the accompanying images suggesting the close link between 'nature' and wholesome community and the written copy explicitly acknowledging the connection. In the latter attention is drawn to the physical

properties of the estate with a special emphasis given to the *nature* of the environment within which the estate is located. This is restated in the images of residents enjoying not, as one might expect the private sphere of their homes, but the public spaces of groves, parks and lakes. It is suggested that the wholesomeness of 'community' as witnessed in the advertisements is concentrated not in the bricks and mortar but in 'nature'. This notion of the wholesomeness of community is, it will be seen, both *landscaped* – the environment of the estate – and *mediascaped* – the images and the written copy.

Edward Soja (1996) in his discussion of Thirdspace points out that there are two spatialities at play in conjunction with community. The firstspace is the *perceived* space of the actual or 'real' environment of the estate. The other spatiality is the secondspace of the *conceptual*, the images found in the newspapers and more increasingly on TV. These are what Soja calls the real-and-imagined spaces which when brought together form a third space that helps to imagine a 'community' into being. In the real-and-imagined spaces of the enclave estates a similar conjunction is at play. But whereas it might be thought that the built environment might be the primary location of the perceived space – the home being the site of the family – it is in fact evident that it is the spaces allocated for nature which work with the secondspace of the imagined to promote 'community'. Thus what is offered is a simulacra of community built upon notions of nostalgia and nature as nurture. This conjoining is what I call, borrowing from the master builder of the simulacra Walt Disney, an act of *imagineering*.

The concepts noted above have as their central premises the Euclidean notion of structured space as ordered place and the Heideggerian notion of *Dasein*, (Heidegger, 1971) which can be read as a way of life focussed on and in harmony with the land. The notion of 'dwelling' is cogently attached to both ideas with the term *Dasein* suggesting, not only 'home' but territory and membership where 'people, space and material environment are perceived as contributing to one another's identity in a process of mutual 'ownership' and where there is imagineered an 'attachment to the things and people of the past, where the present does not represent a dislocation' (see Shurmer-Smith & Hannam, 1994). In contemporary times the 'things and people' of the past are often imagined – an invocation via the media of a 'Golden Age'. In this imagineering of a 'pre- modern' time nature invariably acts as an anchor holding fast the contemporary community to notions of the village green and the small, intimately experienced rural town. Here is witnessed the relationship between spatial expressions and spatial exchanges – the perceived and conceived spatialities – the spatial play which is encoded in the textual representations of the 'place' of the master planned communities and the virtual places of the advertorial communities. This play of place is drawn from the expectations of the physical space coupled with the conceptual factors derived from the entrenched qualities inherent in the expression of this space – the embodiment of spatial form and practice – to describe, if not a Utopian ideal, then at least an urge for a Utopia.

In essence the engagement and tension of the conjoining of the perceived and conceived spaces – the first- and secondspatialities – within the walls of the estate seeks to remove the paradoxical spaces outside (the spaces of difference) and install the interior as a 'paragonical' place of sameness – the illusionary third-space of community. Thus the advertisements, using the strategy of the two spatialities, attempt to eradicate the spaces for, and of, the 'stranger' (as outsider, otherness or difference) in a self regulating (but builder/entrepreneur initiated) philosophy of order, goodness and reason which is rehearsed in the landscaped physical properties

of the site and reflected in the mediascaped images of spaces for family, neighbourhood and community. Thus the reader of the advertisements as prospective purchaser 'buys', literally and figuratively, into the notion of re-ordered social space (of a constructed homogeneity) which has sought to remove the anxieties of a heterogeneous social order. In this way the reader sees nothing of the clique – but more of the cliché – they are buying into which is no more than some selected elements displayed in the text. These selected elements witnessed in the advertisements, are nothing more than simple stories which, to paraphrase John Berger (1972), show people how something is to be seen. Hence one of the prime sites available to trace the conceptual community emerges in the advertisements for the enclave estates found in the real estate sections of the newspapers.

Thus, whilst it is important to look at certain aspects of the manipulation of the built environment itself and how this might inflect notions of neighbourhood and community it is equally important to discuss the *expression* of community found in its representations in the various media. In this expression is found the 'sleight of space' which posits the spatialities of the timelessness, or more correctly, *timefulness* of the nostalgic impulse with that of the 'spaces of security' of the small-town imperative.

In what follows a sample of the advertising/marketing material for the master planned communities will be discussed. In this discussion it should be noted that the majority of sites, no matter which section of the market they are appealing to, have many factors in common, with life-stage and life-style being the most prevalent. However, the major trope shared by the advertorials for the enclaves estates is the emphasis on landscape whether natural, *natural-ised* or 'man-made' and/or the proximity to 'natural' features such as the ocean or river, bushland or parks, flora or fauna. In the cases cited these elements, it is suggested, make for 'community' in the Utopian discourse of the advertisement. In brief the conjoining of 'nature' with community equals a natural(ly) (good) community. What is being offered then is 'community' as Utopia which is 'represented' by a similar series of images and word pictures. What must be accented here is that although the advertisements stress the notional Utopian ideal they refrain from stating that these sites/sights are in the act of creating one, in and of, themselves. What in fact they set out to achieve is to *imagine* for the consumer (as reader or buyer) ideas about the realisation and fulfilment of the 'good community' (with its salutary emanation in self, family, neighbourhood) via the *imagineering* through 'nature' displayed in the first- and second spaces of this community in the construction of a sympathetic and sound social space. But first attention must be paid to the 'real' or perceived spaces to see how 'nature' operates within this space.

Landscaping

It should be noted that the topography of the contemporary master planned community whether in Australia, America, the United Kingdom or Europe is invariably surrounded by a wall leaving only one entrance (sometimes gated) for the residents to negotiate. This entrance is usually the space where the acknowledgement of nature and (good) community is to be found. Long before the enclave has any residents this entry statement is painstakingly constructed using trees, shrubs and water displays to enhance the stylised signage which carries the name of the community. Passing through this entry statement the enclave opens to a long, narrow, (usually) straight dual-carriaged roadway defined by little more than low lying shrubs located in two thin ribbons of slightly sloping grass borders. (In the formative stage of the master planned community with the land having been

denuded of the natural flora the naked sand is sprayed with a green dye which works to hold it in place but also to help the prospective purchaser imagine the green areas of parks and lawns. Even in this example there is witnessed a conjoining of the real-and-imagined!). Houses are notably absented from this singular stretch of street, as are footpaths, park-benches and shady knolls – examples of the types of ‘furniture’ found in the enclave proper. Even bus stops are banished from this ‘no man’s land’ and they are invariably located at various points around the peripheral streets of the enclave itself. This is the territory of the car and the enclavite is discouraged from loitering here or traversing this space on foot. In fact any ‘pedestrian’ within this area would be looked upon with suspicion as being an ‘outsider’. It can be argued that the topography of this strip is nature as sentinel or gatekeeper, its linearity and open-ness, is to aid surveillance and to detect otherness and difference in the shape of the community outsider.

In the formative period when the estate is little more than a few show homes, the odd occupied dwelling and a handful of houses in varying states of completion the entry statement may be of little consequence and in fact is little more than a prime selling factor with its inherent notions of security and surveillance. However, as the estate ‘matures’ and more and more homes become built and occupied this device comes into its own, operating as a visible and effective barrier, a kind of gate-keeper, in which the outsiders self-regulate their actions. The entry statement (like the walls around the estate themselves) seek by display to distinguish the type of inhabitant (in terms of financial and life-cycle) of the enclave. Other factors such as proximity to shops, schools, the city etc. as well as the leisured activities’ within the vicinity of the estate, will also come into play but it is whether the prospective purchaser feels as if they (because the buyers are invariably married couples) might ‘fit in’ with the life-style perceived in the landscaping of its setting which is a major factor. The firstspatiality of the enclave walls and entry statement offer a type of judgmental declaration for the prospective resident to negotiate. If the response is favourable, if there is a ‘pleasurable perception’ the drive from entrance to estate – the traversing of the liminal zone – could be the ‘point of no return’.

If the walls and entry statement are the primary display of the ‘community’ aspects of the enclave there is another manifestation, possibly more powerful, which operates upon the prospective purchaser before their visit to the site/sight. In the *in situ* situation the community is ‘engineered’ for the visitor via the stylised ‘furniture’ (including the styles of display homes) and the ‘engineered environment’ found on site. In the master planned communities the community is ‘imagined’ by the conjoining of certain myths generated by the owners/planners of the site and offered to the prospective purchasers. These myths resurrect notions of what may be deemed as unreal, but true, in a transcendental, or intuitive, sense – notions of the prelapsarian, preindustrial ‘village community’. The myths imagined into being ‘speak-for’ the community – a certain type of community – which is predicated upon notions of the ideal(ised) family grouping, the nexus of the rural and the urban, and leisured consumerism usually of ‘natural’ aspects of the environment.

The style of the imagin(eer)ed enclave estates leaves very little room for the speaking-as position of the heterogeneity, otherness and difference. In their stead are sanctioned spaces where a type of ‘visual community’ practice of display may be undertaken. These spaces are the parks, lakes, bush-walks and other ‘nature’ environments that the enclave owners/planners build into the topography of the space. They are Disneyesque in performance and are mapped onto the environment where they act as the ‘sets’ for a type of artless communal ‘flanerie’. These spaces are highly regulated and are invariably spaces of, and for, surveillance. This panoptic

notion instills in the enclavite a self-policing mechanism that leaves little room for acts, or moments, of, what I have called elsewhere, 'vagrancy' (Wood, PhD thesis, 2001). Here is witnessed a type of (self) surveillance which seeks to regulate given notions of community. But moments and spaces of, and for, vagrancy do arise, usually at the instigation of the most marginalised group within the enclave – the teenagers.

This group is, in the main, ignored and neglected by the planners/owners in the planning stages of the enclave estate. Although young family groups (with pre- or primary school children) are the preferred models for the new enclave, the planners/owners seem to forget that young children have a tendency to grow into young adults. The slides and swings and other 'play' areas become the heterotopic sites of random, vagrant acts of petty vandalism such as graffiti tagging or the mis-use and destructive abuse of the furniture of these 'sets'. Quite often the parks and playgrounds are ignored with the younger children preferring to play in the streets or in the watercourses which become polluted with their debris or suffer de-vegetation.

The parks and 'nature rambles' are also the sites of heterotopic mis-use. In many instances at night the older children gather or roam around these areas and, hidden from the view of the adults via the secluded and secluding spaces of the conjured environment, may gather for illicit sex, drinking and drug taking. Thus, the landscaping which seeks to eradicate a sense of otherness via a 'controlled' and worked homogeneous space may actually become a place for a 'dangerous' difference.

The adult enclavite has even fewer options to inhabit the vagrant spaces of the landscaped environment. Because of the rules and regulations implemented by the owners/planners even the home owner's backyard is heavily surveilled and policed to ensure no untoward instances or examples of difference can occur. These instances may include the mis-use of the backyard as, for example, a 'storage' area for old furniture, a boat or even an old car that is being renovated. The owners/planners of the master planned communities retain control of the estate through the various and numerous clauses in the purchases agreement (which few enclavites bother to read in entirety). Thus the owners can, among the myriad conditions and stipulations even qualify what types of plants may be incorporated into the residential property with 'exotic' flora being outlawed. Thus the homeowner has a limited capacity to add difference to the sameness desired by the owners/planners. The space becomes a dead space; a bland space of similarity that seeks to deny difference by control of the landscaped space. Only within the privatised space of the home itself, behind the walls and away from the eyes of fellow enclavites, may the enactment of difference be entertained – but as may be assumed even these are restricted in their performance. The architectural spaces of the enclave estates work to police, through the first- and secondspatialities the third space of community. The space of difference is absented within the enclave walls and in its stead are the spaces of a comm(on)unity of similarity. This notion is found in the advertisements for the estates that incorporate and demonstrably display the thirdspatiality of the aspects of the 'conjured conceptual community'.

Mediascaping

At this point it is profitable to take a cursory glance at a random sample of the real estate section of the newspapers the *Sunday Times* (March 24, 2002) and *The West Australian* (January 26, 2002; March 16, 2002). The former does not carry as many advertisements for the enclave estates as the latter preferring, it seems, to focus on descriptions of individual, established properties. Thus, as might be expected, there

are fewer advertisements with images, whether black and white or colour. On the other hand *The West Australian* seems to concentrate on the enclave estates and the first homebuyer section of the market and usually has a reasonable selection of advertisements for a number of estates. (The link between the first homebuyer and the enclave estates is prominently displayed in the advertorial copy with the representations of the enclave 'family' being a young couple with at least one pre-school or early-primary school child).

The front page of the real estate section of the *Sunday Times* displays a full colour advertisement for 'Kennedy Springs', a master planned community south of Perth and located on the coast. The main heading reads: 'It's time for a sea change' which is a reference to an extremely popular ABC television programme about an eclectic, but in the main wholesome and well-disposed coastal community. (Although in this text 'difference' is acknowledged in the form of ethnicity and lifestyle choices what is celebrated is the notion of the comm(on)unity of community. The logo for 'Kennedy Springs' displays a stylised drawing of a body of water beneath a group of mature trees. These two images are divided by the name of the estate. Whilst the written copy emphasises 'affordable ocean side living' with the estate being 'only minutes from the beach' it also stresses the 'beautiful landscaped parks and lakes'. Thus although the major attraction would initially seem to be the ocean (the photographic copy reiterates this) the estate is situated a distance from the beach not *adjoining* it. In fact the draw card for the estate proper seems to be constructed 'nature' of the parks and lakes not the wild and uncontrollable nature of the ocean.

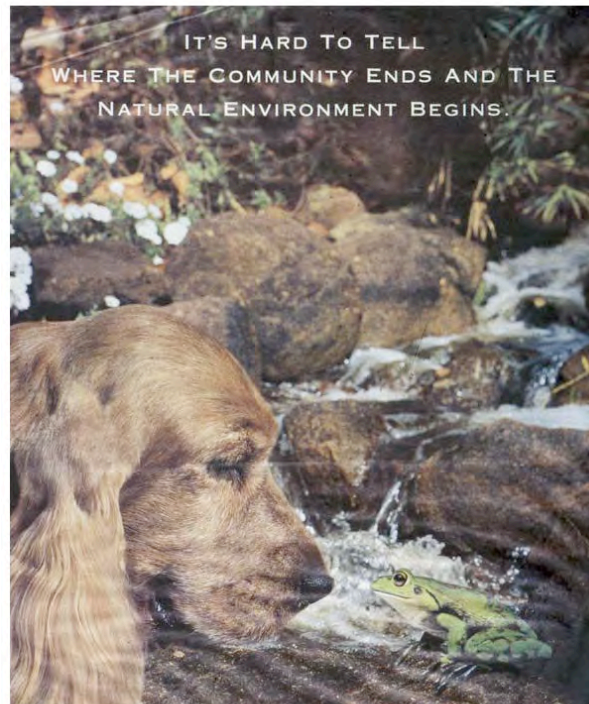
A similar advertisement is to be found for the estate called 'Harbour Rise'. This is 'one house from the beach' but instead of being built within 'nature' is 'opposite parkland' with 'a sculpted limestone wall as a backdrop'. Inside the lift-out there are a few more advertisements for the estates which emphasise 'nature' in its various guises. Examples of this are the ones for the estates 'Henley Rise' and 'Killarney Gardens'. The residences in these estates are said to be 'set in well appointed, secure landscaped gardens' and both of these advertisements are accompanied by a photographic image of the 'family' of an adult male and female and two young, pre-teen children. These family 'snapshots' are set against a backdrop of lush green, rolling lawns and shade-offering trees. An advertisement that echoes the sentiment of 'Henley Rise' and 'Killarney Gardens' is for 'Mariners Cove' which claims as one of its major assets being located close to a large town - '3 minutes from Mandurah's centre' - and having 'Boat pens available'. However, the major drawcard seems to be that it is 'adjacent to [a] 230 acre wildlife reserve'.

Although these are relatively small advertisements what is pertinent is the almost complete absence of references to the house/home or nearby facilities. The focus is demonstrably on the landscaping' of the 'good' community. John Dixon Hunt in his essay 'The Garden as Cultural Object' (in Wrede & Adams, 1991) alludes to the correlation between the landscaped garden and an 'ideal' community. He states: '...the garden came (so to speak) ready-made with the implied imprimatur of Eden - for to establish a new garden is to recreate Paradise...' (p. 21). This notion has obviously not eluded the planners and entrepreneurs of the enclave estates as often landscaping 'packages' are given as marketing ploys - it might be suggested that the ready-made house and landscaping packages describe an assured Edenic lifestyle for the new-home buyer.

As has been noted above *The West Australian* has a more comprehensive spread of advertisements for the master planned communities. The front cover of the lift-out of the real estate section for January 26, 2002 has an advertisement for 'Settlers Hills'.

The written copy for this estate begins: 'With 200 year-old Tuart trees and rural vistas Settlers Hills Estate provides a secluded and peaceful environment...'. It then goes on to mention the 'large tranquil parks' and the 'sports oval'. Similarly 'Bennett Springs' whose slogan is 'On the Park' is located close to Whiteman Park and also has 'Established parklands, lake and water features, children's playgrounds'. 'Meadow Springs', one of the most established master planned communities located on the margins of the metropolis makes a more direct assertion between the wholesome effect of nature upon the community and nature as nurture when it states: 'The extensive parklands of Meadow Springs create a relaxed, family-oriented lifestyle'. Similarly the written copy for the estate known as 'Roselea' offers: 'It's an urban oasis with a lake... walkways and lots of green open space', whilst 'Sherwood Estate' has 'Acres only crowded with trees'. Meanwhile 'Secret Harbour' boasts: 'Large family sized blocks...nestled between the golf course and parklands...' with 'On your doorstep...bike paths, and landscaped parks and gardens'. The accompanying colour photographic image displays, in the foreground, a golf course putting green and part of a large lake and in the background a glimpse of roofs hidden by a large number of very lush, mature trees. The latter can be seen to confirm the notion of nature as sentinel.

The advertisements noted above are all less than half page in size with some being a good deal smaller. However, an estate which has regularly over many years used full-page colour advertisements, is the highly successful and multi award-winning enclave called 'Ellenbrook.' The advertising copy for this estate often deviates from the formula noted above by ignoring the oft repeated photographs of families and parklands and concentrating on more abstract depictions and descriptions of nature. One of the best examples of this is garnered from *The West Australian* newspaper's real estate section May 9, 1998.



This advertisement is primarily a montage photograph consisting of a backdrop of a 'babbling' brook with the foreground taken up with the images of a dog and a frog. These two animals appear to be looking at each other at close quarters, with neither of them, seemingly, in the least perturbed by the other's presence. At the top of the image a headline reads: It's Hard To Tell Where The Community Ends And The Natural Environment Begins. At the foot of the page the planner's slogan is (re)stated: Ellenbrook. It's What You're Missing. The written piece, sandwiched between the image and the slogan, proposes how the image is to be read and how 'nature' is conflated with harmonious community and, it is alluded to, success. The written part of the advertisement seeks to set up the dichotomy between 'nature' and the city; between the rustic *region* and the business *district*, the periphery and the core. The first paragraph reads:

Flanked by the rustic beauty of the Swan Valley and Gnangara and Whiteman Parks, Ellenbrook sits in peaceful harmony with nature, just thirty minutes from Perth's bustling Central Business District.

The *harmonious* 'nature' here is that of the inscribed and (*re*)worked nature of second nature: the constructed parks and productive vineyards are seen as being complementary. They are both in harmony with each other and offer a agreeable ambience via this unity. It is also the *peacefulness* that is in direct opposition to the bustling urbanity of the city. This peacefulness belies the constructedness of these 'natural' sites/sights, whereas the city, represented by its Business District (note use of capitalisation), speaks of its highly constructed 'nature'. One major aspect of emphasis employed in the advertisements for this estate is that the city and its historical 'image' as alienating and 'dangerous' is situated as Central, whereas 'Ellenbrook', and its inherent natural environment is distanced from this core. It is 'just thirty minutes' away: just far enough to be divorced from the hustle and bustle but not too far as to be completely marginalised. This notion of distance as beneficially isolating or segregating works to make the 'community feeling' stronger via insinuating a comm(on)unity and is an oft-used axiom of the estates.

This notion of a common unity between the residents, the residents and their environment, and this environment and 'nature' is heavily implicated in the rest of the written text. It is therefore particularly helpful to quote at length from the written text before addressing the visual representation in the advertisement. It states:

The multi award-winning residential development has successfully married a large, *sensitively enhanced natural environment* with the features and facilities necessary to provide a richly varied suburban lifestyle. Wherever you look within the first two very different, *superbly landscaped villages*, you'll find impressive evidence of the *seamless mix of natural and man-made features and attractions*. Already over *250,000 plants and rapidly maturing trees* flank the *many green active recreation areas*. Come and take a stroll along one of the many *bush walking trails or parkland paths* and feel why Ellenbrook is already by far the state's biggest...and successful new community. (italics added)

There is a strange attitude at work here with the 'natural' *nature* being thought of as somehow lacking in its essence. In a Foucauldian sense nature needs to be seen to be, not just 'there' it must also be 'sensitively enhanced' in a 'seamless mix' of features (nature) and attractions (man-made) to imbue it with beneficial qualities that enable it to have merit. Therefore it must be seen to be *productive*, whether as a bush walking trail or parkland or scopically and aesthetically *profitable as a*

'feature' or 'attraction'. Here is demonstrated the Disney- or 'touristic consciousness' of the enclave environment: nature can only be valued if it is part of a 'set': a *site* for seeing nature (walking trails and pathways) or the *sight* of 'nature' (250,000 plants and rapidly maturing trees). The value judgment of the aesthetics of nature as being beneficial to the community, as a whole, and the individual in particular has been culturally assigned and comes with a long history (see Barrell, 1972; Williams, 1973; McKibben, 1990; Hall, 1992; Gibson, 1995). But, as with the gentleman's park ethos, nature is to be valued only if it is enhanced (sensitively) with the *natural* space giving way to the space of 'second nature'. This is doubly the case for 'Ellenbrook'.

The location of Ellenbrook was once a pine plantation, man-made and managed, with a small part of the plantation still flanking the enclave. In a strange twist the sensitively enhanced 'nature' in the enclave works to *magnify* the regimentation and constructedness of the plantation which is then singularly removed from any form of 'nature status'. In the way that Disneyland *is* America and that the 'real' America does not exist outside of Disney's Main Street so too is the notion that 'nature' can only be found within the walls of the enclaves. But this nature is the second nature of the simulated – a conjured nature for the conjured community. Thus, just as the enclave estate owners/entrepreneurs seek to remove the heterogeneous, 'vagrant' (see Wood, 2001) aspects of difference and otherness from the community and offer in its stead a homogeneity linked to shared interests and affiliations (lifestyle and lifestage) they also seek to remove the 'nightmare' of the uncontrollable otherness, rawness and wildness of nature. As Umberto Eco says of Disney's worlds: 'Disney land tells us that faked nature corresponds much more to our daydream demands' (in Soja, 1996, p. 251). In the enclaves the first- and secondspaces of the perceived and conceived spatialities come together in an imagineered third fixed(up) (animated-ly)dead space of the walled (and well-watered) community – which for many is more nightmare than daydream.

This notion of the fixed(up) and (animated-ly)dead space is rehearsed in the photographic images of the advertisements and is pointedly in operation in the focus advertisement for 'Ellenbrook'. This advertisement is a montage of three images each one representing a concept of nature. That the elements in this representation would be difficult to find in combination in 'reality' suggests the imagin(eer)ed aspect of nature in the conjured community of the enclave. A closer reading of this text will enable a deconstruction of these imagineered concepts.

The backdrop for this photographic image is a small waterfall/babbling brook surrounded by examples of flora to be found at the site itself. This type of aesthetically engineered idiosyncrasy is an important part of the environment of 'Ellenbrook'. As the enclave's name propounds watercourses and lakes are major features throughout the enclave, with one 'village' 'The Bridges' utilising this trait to great effect. What is of concern within the photographic reproduction of the 'brook' is the way the two concepts of nature are shown and how the dichotomy between these elements are naturalised into a unity in display. In the right hand side of the image is to be seen what seem to be an indigenous fern. Also on the right hand side but in the bottom corner there is the image of a frog. This flora and fauna are 'natural' nature carrying the cultural baggage of the connotations of 'wild' and the wilderness. On the left hand side of the image and removed from the right by the 'brook' are witnessed, at the top, some flowers growing between the rocks, and beneath these the superimposed image of a domestic dog. The flowers and the animal here represent tamed nature; an aestheticised and useful nature of display. This is a commodified (and codified) nature which inevitably suggests a certain type of lifestyle. They therefore are representative of the secondspace, the conceived

space, of community. This space is also a 'dead' space witnessed in that even though the 'wild' and domestic animals are 'facing' each other there is no curiosity or animation at, or in, either of them. That they merely stare blankly at each other without any outward appearance of interaction suggests a poverty of participation that is a reproach to the ethos of the way the enclave community is supposed to be.

The final point to be made is that the watercourse is the unifying (but dividing) aspect of this image. It divides the differences of the 'nature' of the flora and fauna, the wild and tamed, but brings them together under the umbrella term as 'nature'. The division, and how each part of the dichotomy is to be read is alluded to in how the natural and the domestic within the image are represented. The wild flora and fauna are located within the 'shadows' with the frog's hind legs merging with the rocks. However, the cultivated, flowering plants and the dog are in prominent and clearly defined spaces with the light bringing them to the fore. Thus, although difference is highlighted (literally) this difference is clothed in a sameness with the disparate types brought together as a comm(on)unity.

It can be seen from the brief discussion above that nature – whether worked or naturalised – is offered to purchasers as being a component of the estates which makes for 'wholesome' community. Nature is utilised to invoke both the nostalgic impulse of a pre-industrial (and pre-lapsarian), rural village complete with the inference of an idealistic family ambience and genial neighbourhood relations in a safe and secure space where community cohesion is commonplace. The display of nature constructed in the contemporary master planned community via the landscaping and mediascaping seeks to absent both the fears about, and the actuality of, the dangerousness of difference and otherness found in the un-natural spaces outside of the enclave walls.

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