SITES UNSEEN

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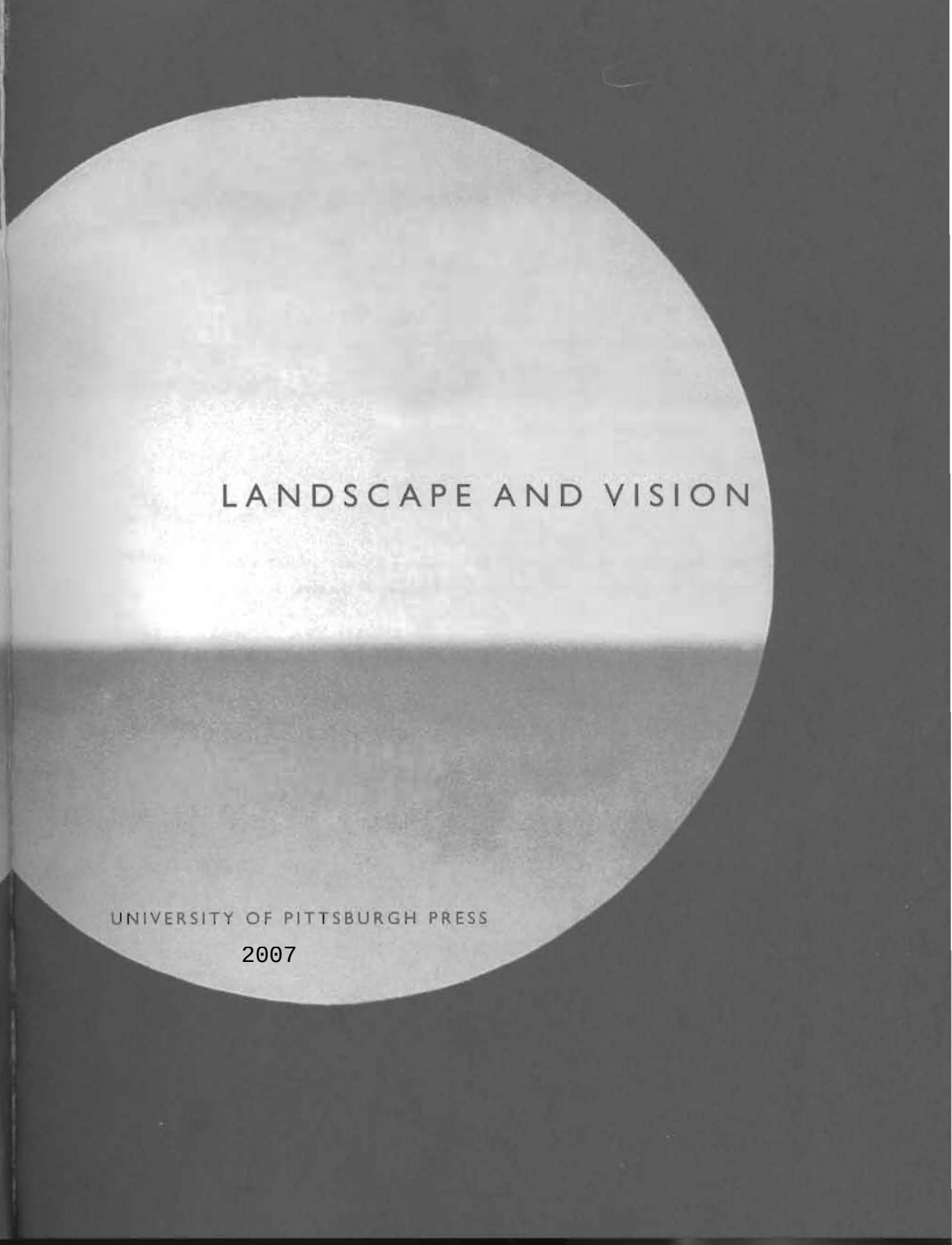
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SITES OF POWER AND THE POWER OF SIGHT

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Vision in the California Mission Landscapes

> From the first day I laid eyes on these beautiful arches and tiled roofs, it has been my consuming desire to restore what was lacking in the buildings. I visioned [*sic*] a venerable structure, grown mellow indeed with years, but still reasonably intact; and the sight of the vanishing walls and the weed grown sanctuary pained me exceedingly.
>
> Father St. John O'Sullivan, Pastor, Mission San Juan Capistrano, 1929

FATHER O'SULLIVAN'S DESCRIPTION OF HIS FIRST VIEW OF THE MISSION HE WAS TO serve is redolent with visual imagery.[1] Through "laying eyes" on the ruins, O'Sullivan's imagination was sparked to envision what might be. The priest had come in 1910 to the sleepy town of San Juan Capistrano south of Los Angeles in ill health and, the records imply, likely intended to spend whatever little time remained of his active

Figure 9.1. Father O'Sullivan's garden, Mission San Juan Capistrano, c. 1923. Photo courtesy: The Huntington Library. Father O'Sullivan's newly planted garden bears all the classic elements of a mission garden: edged paths, planted beds, draping vines, and blooming flowers.

ministry there. Whether it was the dry air, the sunny climate, or the passion to restore the mission, O'Sullivan revived and went on to lead a twenty-three-year campaign that not only restored the historic mission, but developed an entire complex with a new school, parish house, and a guide program to host the increasing number of tourists to the site. He also was instrumental in the installation of a garden in the formerly dusty courtyard (fig. 9.1). O'Sullivan's descriptive passage is also telling because, like any subjective text, it bespeaks his own perspective. The view of the mission as a ruin and a relic of a bygone era provided the starting point for O'Sullivan's restoration. The voices of those who might have borne witness to a different heritage or told of a different memory were not heard during the good pastor's campaign. In the void left by their silence, the past was rendered as a fountain-filled, rose-planted, and vine-draped Eden. This vision of the past, in turn, framed the views of the site for those who would follow.

Jasper Johns's *The Critic Sees* (fig. 9.2) offers a compelling image for the methodological challenges of understanding how vision has been constructed by diverse cultures throughout history. Johns's sculpmetal brick, with its protruding spectacles set with mouths in lieu of eyes, not only challenges us to question the perspective of critics (and perhaps architecture historians), but it is also an image that bespeaks the intertwining of language and vision through which we make meaning of our world. We understand what we see as we name it. This linguistic foundation of human thought is particularly cogent when attempting to understand the cultural perception of past landscapes.

For historical times we know the human experience of vision in the landscape through written words—a diary entry capturing private thoughts about a moment in a garden; travel literature written to evoke the experience of exotic landscapes to those who may never make the journey; a legal document recording the boundaries of disputed property; a letter describing the routine improvements to the farmyard so an absent son can picture the family homestead. It is accepted that each of these documents not only records a landscape, but also reflects the tropes, conventions, and discourses of their day and the cultural construction of vision that informs them. Similarly, visual records of landscapes in forms such as murals, sketches, textiles, carvings, prints, and paintings offer another line of evidence for understanding how landscapes

Figure 9.2. Jasper Johns, *The Critic Sees*, 1979, sculpmetal over plastic with glass. Courtesy: The Philadelphia Museum of Art © Jasper Johns/ Licensed by VAGA, New York, N.Y.

are represented, codified, and read in a particular cultural context. These textual and visual records are not only the historian's primary evidence for the three-dimensional physical landscapes themselves, but are also our sources for understanding the cultural construction and *reception* of landscapes.

For the archaeologist or landscape historian investigating "prehistory"—a time before written words—the challenge of understanding the cultural construction of vision becomes particularly acute. With vast timescales for which there are few images and no written records, how does one begin to decipher the visual vocabulary of perception? Assuming the vagaries of preservation allow one to recover at least some remnants of past physical landscapes, how does one learn to see them as they

were perceived in the past? Even accepting the mutability of landscape experience—the notion that "neither place nor context nor self stays put, things are always in movement, always becoming"[2]—what sort of theory allows us the interpretive traction to map even plausible ways of knowing the landscape in the absence of textual and visual evidence?

One response to this theoretical and methodological challenge is the assumption of some universal operations of landscape.[3] While the visual dialect is framed by the situatedness of the viewer's culture, gender, life history, even the context of the moment, we may still draw broader connections among humans and our visual experience of space that seem to operate across time and place. It is a premise of anthropological studies of landscape that humans both learn and express their place in the world through the landscape. Humans also negotiate their relationships with each other through landscape—in short, the ways we live in and on the land are inherently linked to our social lives. Furthermore, like language, when practiced in social settings, vision is a means by which we not only negotiate our place in the world, but our relationships with others. In this respect vision is an active and essential part of the exercise of power.

Not only does this understanding of the recursive relationship of humans and landscape build on the linguistic model referenced by Johns's sculpture, but it also equips us to interpret the vast diversity of modes of landscape reception and meaning. The same model that lays the foundation for understanding fundamental operations of landscape and human society across time also accounts for the uniqueness of culturally specific articulations of that relationship. Namely, the particular language we learn to speak molds our consciousness. It frames both the grammar of our thinking and the conceptualization of our thoughts. Our understanding of time, motion, the structure of the universe, our relationships to others are all fundamentally shaped by the words and linguistic structures of the language we speak.[4] The prominent peak that is a sacred locale, the chief's residence perched on an earthen temple mound, the cave entrance that is a passage between worlds—all these landscape meanings frame and are framed by the human experience of the world. Vision, like language, is constructed—a unique cultural vocabulary as fundamental to our experience of the world as the language we speak. It is a means of making meaning in and of the world.

The notion of vision and landscape as both culturally specific meaning making and as a timeless exercise of power is useful for a study of landscapes that span multiple times and cultures, and it is therefore a particularly apt approach to the deeply layered landscapes we know today as California. The California landscape not only has a history that spans pre-recorded and recorded history, but also includes indigenous peoples, Spanish colonizers, Mexicans, "Anglos," and the diverse citizenry of California with its emerging local, state, and national cultures. Within the broader landscape, the missions were a primary site of Spanish colonization and, as such, their landscapes were an instrument through which the Spanish and the indigenous peoples attempted to control and resist the imposition of power. The landscape was also the locus of colliding ideologies of landscape—radically different understandings of what it meant to be in and of the world.

The relationships of sight and power in mission history reside in the sites' eighteenth-century origins as a locus of colonial encounters between Spanish Franciscans and the indigenous peoples of California, the missions' development beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century as public sites including the invention of "California mission gardens," and their present incarnation as tourist destinations. While seemingly disparate settings, the imposition of Western power on native peoples and the creation of romanticized oases in tourist destinations are parallel in a number of respects, particularly in the control of vision. In the intersection of reconstructed sites and gazes lies some glimpse of their meaning and significance to those who inhabit these landscapes in the past and today.

There are twenty-one California missions located in a chain originally about a day's ride apart, or what is now an hour's drive, along the California coast and inland valley. The first site, Mission San Diego, was established in 1769. The last, Mission Solano, was founded in 1823, just ten years before secularization was decreed by Mexico's newly independent government. The missions were founded during the waning years of the Spanish empire in the New World by Franciscan missionaries under the leadership of Fr. Junípero Serra. Their purpose was simultaneously to claim what was then known as Alta California for Spain and to convert the indigenous peoples. These native peoples included many of the tribes of California, the most linguistically and culturally diverse area in North America. The area contained at least sixty-four and

perhaps as many as eighty mutually unintelligible languages at the time of European contact.[5] The groups' social organization and subsistence practices ranged from the nomadic, loosely organized tribes of the Mojave Desert to the complex chiefdoms of the Chumash Indians, indigenous peoples of the central coast who thrived on the rich variety of marine and forest resources, particularly harvests of acorns that were a staple of their nonagricultural diet. The archaeological record of these native peoples of California extends back at least twelve thousand years and perhaps far earlier.[6]

Today all of the missions are open to the public in varying degrees of restoration or reconstruction. The majority are owned by the Catholic Church in one form or another—parishes, a seminary, and a university. Out of the twenty-one missions, only two, which are state parks, regularly receive governmental funds; most are supported primarily by charitable contributions and earned income from admissions and shop sales. The missions today are in a variety of settings. Some are in the midst of dense urban areas such as Mission San Gabriel near Los Angeles and Mission Dolores in San Francisco. Others are more remote, such as Mission Soledad in the Salinas River Valley. Some have been catalysts for local tourism. San Juan Bautista's historic plaza is a favorite locale for picturesque picnics and filming movies, despite being directly over the San Andreas Fault. Santa Inés is part of the visitor's package tour of the small and unlikely "Danish" town of Solvang, and Mission San Juan Capistrano has become a vital engine of the tourist economy in its town an hour south of Los Angeles. The missions have a prominent place in California history as expressed in and inculcated by secular structures such as mandated fourth-grade state education standards and Catholic-sponsored publication series and symposia. The passage of the 2003 California Missions Preservation Act, along with a steady stream of visitors and growth of groups such as the California Mission Studies Association attest to the strong public interest in the sites and their histories. In addition, the missions' governing entities, whether parish churches or California State Parks, are dependent on entrance fees for the sites' continued financial support. Both the public interest and the opportunity for earned income continue to inform the presentation and the management of the sites with an emphasis on privileging visitor access and amenities.

One of the most popular features of these contemporary mission sites is the mission garden (fig. 9.3). Printed on postcards, featured in garden magazines and

Figure 9.3. Courtyard, Mission Santa Inés, 1993. In the courtyard, the garden is centered on a two-tiered fountain from which walkways extend among the four edged beds. Photo: E. Kryder-Reid.

coffee-table books, and marketed in tourism brochures, these vibrant garden images are emblems of the romanticized histories presented at these sites.[7] The archetypal mission garden lies in the heart of a quadrangle formed by the mission buildings—a pan-Mediterranean amalgam of tiled fountains and pools, cascading vines of bougainvillea, intricate edged flower beds and lawns intersected by paths and punctuated with columnar elements of palm or cypress. In addition to the small museums associated with most of the missions, many of the gardens display artifacts—either surviving remnants or more recent donations to the mission collections, in the landscape. Mission San Luis Rey's courtyard has examples of the traditional *maños* and *metates*, or grind-

ing tools (fig. 9.4). At many missions bells are hung from arches or wooden supports or even molded into landscape lighting. Most of the gardens are articulated to the mission cemeteries, either physically or through interpretive signage, and many also incorporate surviving architectural elements or ruins in the gardens (tannery vats, a furnace, a granary, or portions of ruined walls and foundations). Mission gardens also include unique local features such as scale models of the missions (as at San Gabriel and San Juan Capistrano), folk art, and elements related to contemporary parish activities. These include picnic tables for a parish festival filling San Juan Bautista's forecourt, religious statuary at San Antonio de Pala,[8] and a memorial at San Rafael devoted both to the five thousand Native Americans who died at the mission "in memory of the 4000 humans executed daily without trial waiting birthdays . . . ."

In contrast to the relative uniformity of today's mission gardens, however, the history of these landscapes has borne witness to a wide variety of change over time—from millennia-old Native American architecture and subsistence practices, to Spanish colonial adobe construction, to crumbling ruins captured by nineteenth-century impressionist painters, to mission revival architecture, to tourist destinations. For each generation, the shaping of the land has been a way not only to inscribe their position in the world, but also to give it reference to a broader context, whether that be a mythical cosmology, an imperial mandate, or a constructed past. In each of these instances, it is the nexus of landscape and vision that naturalizes and reifies that position.

The essential challenge of understanding landscapes as a site of meaning making and the negotiation of power lies in interpreting the cultural context of the landscape—how it was perceived by those who lived in and acted upon it. Two brief accounts of the landscape along the central coast offer an entry point into two seemingly disparate ideologies of landscape. A little less than a hundred years ago, a Chumash woman named María Solares told a story to an anthropologist, John Harrington, who was collecting oral traditions from the last of the Chumash speakers. María Solares had been born at Mission Santa Inés and she told this story as an old woman: "There is this world in which we live, but there is also one above us and one below us. . . . Here where we live is the center of our world—it is the biggest island. And there are two giant serpents . . . that hold our world up from below. When they are tired they move, and that causes earthquakes. The world above is sustained by the great Slo'w,

Figure 9.4. Interior courtyard, Mission San Luis Rey, 1993. Display of the traditional *mañas* and *metates* grinding tools. Photo: E. Kryder-Reid.

who by stretching his wings causes the phases of the moon."[9] The second account was written in 1769 by a Spanish Franciscan, Father Juan Crespi, who landed on the Santa Barbara coast, not far from Santa Inés. In his journal he recorded the landscape he found: "We went over land that was all of it level, dark and friable, well covered with fine grasses." Nearing Point Conception Father Crespi went on to describe: "in sight of the shore, over some low rolling tablelands . . . [was] very good dark friable soil and fine dry grasses. . . . It was all flat land, excepting only some short descents into a few dry creeks. If it can be dry-farmed, all the soil could be cultivated."[10]

The view represented in the story recounted by María Solares reveals a cosmology or ideology of the universe and the landscape on which the Chumash resided that is quite different from a Western paradigm. Chumash stories map a concept of a closed universe composed of three flat circular worlds suspended in a great abyss and supported by powerful supernatural beings. The Chumash lived at the geographic center of the middle world, and moving from that center meant being met with increasing danger. The Chumash tales speak of a personalized universe where "plants, animals and birds, celestial bodies, and various natural forces are all part of the social universe," where kinship was extended to creatures, plants, and supernatural beings.[11] It was a world in which objects and beings were mutable, where forms could change, and beings could be transformed. The negotiation or avoidance of those transformations was one of the challenges of existing in a dangerous universe. Navigating places of transformation such as passages, caves, bodies of water, and darkness required prudence, personal power, and fluency in the relationships that bound the world together. It was a worldview in which Cartesian dichotomies of mind/body and nature/culture seem to have had little place.

In contrast, in Crespi's Catholic belief system the landscape was part of a natural world created by God for the purposes of mankind.[12] Crespi's eighteenth-century education imbued him with the belief that observation and knowledge of the natural world were hallmarks of human civilization—the culture that set humans apart from nature. Crespi also articulated the premise of his capitalist worldview that considered land "property" to be owned, presumably by the Spanish crown, and a resource to be improved. That it was arable implied it could be farmed, potentially producing not only life-sustaining food but also surplus that could be sold at local markets or ex-

ported. Land, in this economic system, required labor to make it productive—to improve it—and one labor source was clearly the indigenous population of California.

The stories of the founding of missions are illustrative of this Spanish ideology of landscape. The accounts, idealized and filtered through predominantly Catholic-produced histories, may more properly be called origin myths.[13] They present a codified narrative of possessing the land—name the place (always after a saint), dedicate it for God and for Spain, raise a cross, ring a bell, erect a shelter, and the mission is founded. The first missions were vernacular one-story adobe buildings with thatched roofs. The early buildings were expanded to create substantial churches and surrounding complexes generally in quadrangular or linear form. These mission institutions were far more than the church structures that now stand as the centerpieces of historic sites; they were extensive agricultural plantations and ranches claiming hundreds of acres. Even the core of the mission complex contained many components: the church, the residential areas for the priests and for the neophytes (as the baptized Indians were called)[14] including separate quarters for the unmarried girls; dedicated work areas such as tanneries, mills, and *lavandarias* (laundries) water systems with cisterns, reservoirs, and channels, surrounding agricultural areas such as orchards and fields; and of course the cemetery. The missions served many functions: school, workshop, hospital, plantation, prison, and church. In each aspect the landscape was a means by which the Spanish padres attempted to convert and control the native peoples and a means for resisting that imposition of power—in particular, the partitioning of space and the control of vision.

The mission landscape may be read, in one version, as a stage of colonialism on which the native peoples were removed from their villages, denied access to traditional hunting and fishing areas, and displaced from their sacred locales. The claim of the land by Serra and the Franciscans in the name of the Spanish crown inaugurated processes that within eighty years ended the millennia-old ways of life of the indigenous peoples in the region. In more particular ways, the Spanish shaping of the landscape was an instrument in their act of conquest. The Spanish organization of space and the ways in which vision was controlled were regulatory practices that helped to impose the will of the few Spanish over the many native peoples.

The Spanish ordered the landscape into zones of specialized functions, particu-

larly areas of field, orchards, vineyards, groves, and walled courtyards, thereby implementing traditional boundedness.[15] For the Chumash who had supported complex chiefdoms and semi-sedentary settlement patterns by harvesting the abundant and stable resources of the coastal waters and woodlands, subsistence meant mapping oneself to the land—literally following the resources as they came into their seasonal harvesting times, whether migrating sea mammals or ripening acorns.[16] The collision of these ways of living off the land meant that the Spanish ordering of a productive pastoral and agricultural landscape created a landscape of exclusion that not only dislocated the native populations from their villages, but also from access to traditional resources. Furthermore, for those who came to live at the missions it also introduced a foreign structure on their habitus—their way of being in and of the land.

The impact of the Native Americans' transformed relationship with the land was not lost on the Spanish. In fact, teaching agricultural practices was one of the hallmarks of "civilizing" the Indians, along with teaching them to read, sing choral music, and recite the catechism.[17] A striking personification of this metaphor is revealed in an 1855 lithograph (fig. 9.5) depicting the California Indian as classified into three stages: wild on the right, partly civilized in the center and "civilized and employed" at left. Particularly telling is the treatment of the ground in which the domestication of plants parallels the civilization of the Indian. Native plants grow at the feet of the uncivilized Indian while the civilized chief is separated by a ridge of soil suggesting a garden furrow.

On a daily basis this process of civilizing, at least in its ideal form, may be seen as a series of disciplining exercises—classic examples of the methods historian Michel Foucault has identified as timetables, collective training, exercises, total and detailed surveillance.[18] An example of how these routines structured the day, much as they did monastic life itself, is recorded in a 1786 account by the Comte de La Pérouse, a member of the first French expedition to California, who described the daily regime of Mission San Carlos in Carmel (fig. 9.6):

> the Indians . . . rise with the sun, and immediately go to prayers and mass, which lasts for an hour. During this time three large boilers are set on the fire for cooking a kind of soup, made of barley meal. . . . Each hut sends for the allowance of all its inhabitants. . . .

Figure 9.5. *Three Stages of Civilization*, from *The Annals of San Francisco* by Frank Soulé, John H. Gihon, M.D., and James Nisbet, 1855. The equation of "savagery" with wild "nature" is illustrated in this engraving. Courtesy: Herman B. Wells Library, Indiana University, Bloomington.

> There is neither confusion nor disorder in the distribution; and when the boilers are nearly emptied, the thicker portion at the bottom is distributed to those children who have said their catechism the best . . . after the meal] . . . they all go to work, some to till the ground with oxen, some to dig the garden, while others are employed in domestic occupations, and all under the eye of one or two missionaries. . . . At noon the bells give notice of the time of dinner. . . . They resume work from two until four or five o'clock, when they repair to the evening prayer, which continues for nearly an hour, and is followed by a distribution of the atole, the same as at breakfast.[19]

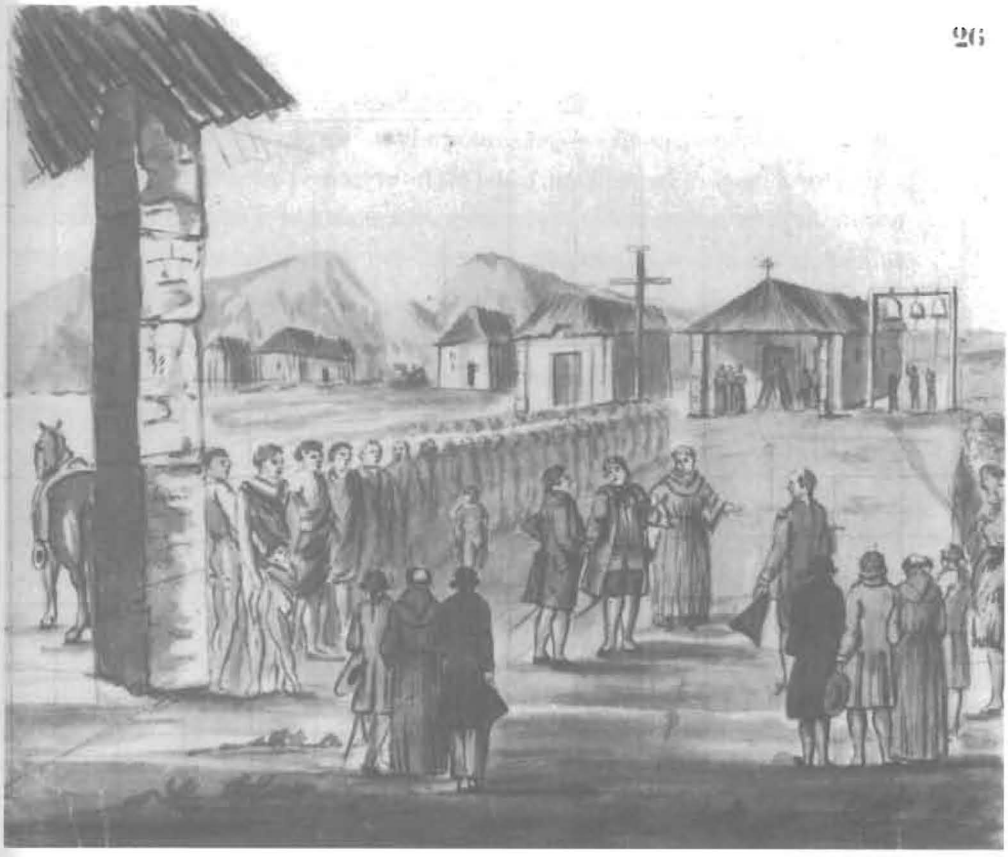

Figure 9.6. Fr. Jose Cardero, *1786 Reception of Jean-François de La Pérouse at Mission Carmel*, 1791–1792. Disciplined formation is represented in this depiction. Courtesy: The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

La Pérouse's account clearly describes multiple exercises of control from timetables to collective training, but for our discussion of vision and power in the landscape the most important are the creation of focal points in the landscape, the infrastructure and regulation of surveillance, and the iconography of vision.

John Stilgoe, historian of the American landscape, has written about the creation of *landschafts*: prominent features in the landscape such as steeples, light-

houses, and columns that not only create focal points visible at a distance, but also features that mark a central place, and signifiers of a civilized locus in the midst of wilderness.[21] Rather than architectural *landschafts*, Native American cosmologies appear to privilege prominent peaks as symbolically charged locations, points in which the spheres of the world met, and places of sacred power.[21] The scale of architecture in these native traditions, however, was no larger than the domed nuclear and extended family Chumash dwellings. In contrast, the construction of missions, with their imposing facades, *campanarios* (walls with niches or piercings for bells), *espadañas* (ornamental false fronts), and bell towers, represented a scale of architecture unlike any in Alta California before that time. Accounts of approaches to the missions, such as Alfred Robinson's description of Santa Clara, note the impact of their profile visible for miles rising out of the distant plains.[22] San Juan Capistrano's church, begun in 1796, was built of stone with a 180-foot long nave, vaulted ceiling, seven domes, and a bell tower that was reportedly visible for ten miles. The facade of Mission Santa Barbara was visible from the harbor and must have been, for the Chumash, unlike any frame of reference outside of the natural landforms. The degree of transference of notions of the power of prominence between natural and architectural elements is not articulated in any written records, but the reception of these mission *landschafts* suggest an intersection not merely of displays of wealth (the "rule by ostentation" model),[23] but also the alignment of human and natural forces.

These mission facades also offered platforms for surveying the surrounding landscape and looking into the central plazas of the missions. The design of the mission quadrangles also offered opportunities for detailed surveillance. As noted in La Pérouse's description, much of the communal activity took place in a central plaza that was surrounded by four buildings, generally of adobe, with interior *corredors*. The quadrangle plan has a long tradition within monastic, Mediterrancan, and Roman architecture, and a number of its design principles have made it an effective architecture of surveillance in each case. The padres' private and communal rooms, the girls' sleeping quarters, and many of the activity areas were located in the quadrangle. In the dormitories and some of the other activity areas the only passage between rooms was outside through the arched colonnade. The buildings' many windows and doors opened onto the interior mainly, with restricted access to the outside only

through the *convento*, the church, and one or two cart passages in the walls.[24] These openings and their quadrangle arrangement lent themselves to at least the potential for internal surveillance of the plaza and the colonnade. In the principle of surveillance it is less important that someone be constantly watching than that there is the constant possibility of someone watching.

There is another vivid image of the missions in which resides a powerful convergence of both *landschaft* and surveillance. In two known executed examples, at Santa Clara and San Miguel, are found a symbol known as the "All-Seeing-Eye-of-God." An unsigned, undated drawing in the Santa Barbara archives provides a third example. Within doctrinal iconography this eye in a triangle represented the Trinity, and in each case was placed in a prominent, elevated position within the decorative program. At Santa Clara, the Eye of God was painted on the facade at the peak of the roofline. Descriptions of visitors approaching Santa Clara across a flat plain, report this facade was visible for miles (fig. 9.7). At San Miguel the "All-Seeing-Eye-of-God" has been restored as it was realized in three-dimensional form, jutting out above the altar. While this symbol is not unique to the California missions, within the mission context it appears linked to the surveillance principles of the mission architecture and the authority of the mission priests. Placed in its central, elevated position, this eye was a symbol of the omnipotence and omniscience of the All-Seeing God. Its location implies that the authority of the image was translated in some way to the priests who commissioned the paintings, led the liturgy beneath them, and presented themselves as God's representatives on earth.

The dynamics of the imposition of colonial power in Alta California clearly go beyond the control of sight in the landscape. Military forces at the regional presidios, the prolonged drought that stressed traditional subsistence resources, the diseases and plants introduced by Europeans, the introduction of new goods and their radical impact on native trade and distribution networks—all these factors had a profound influence on the Spanish colonial incursion into California. And yet, on a daily basis the missions functioned with apparent stability and relatively minimal explicit violence—either in the service of Spanish domination or Native American resistance. The control of vision appears to be one of the technologies employed in that daily imposition of power.

Figure 9.7. James P. Ford, interior courtyard, Mission Santa Clara, daguerreotype, c. 1854. This is the earliest known photograph of Mission Santa Clara and, although faint, depicts the "Eye of God" image at the top of the facade. Courtesy: Santa Clara University Archives.

Another perspective on the landscape is how the land might have been perceived by the Chumash and what role vision and landscape might have played in the Chumash experience of and resistance to the imposition of Spanish rule. From this subaltern perspective, vision in the landscape may have served as the inverse of surveillance—a means to cloak, mask, and shield from view. It is the physical corollary of what James Scott has called the "hidden transcript," that expression of resistance to the discourse of dominant ideology.[25]

One regulatory technique or discipline at the missions was the organization of movement through the landscape. Foucault wrote, "A discipline fixes; it arrests or regulates movements; it clears up confusion; it dissipates compact groupings of individuals wandering about the country in unpredictable ways; it establishes calculated distributions."[26] Certainly the introduction of the permanent, year-round mission complexes to groups who had semi-nomadic settlement patterns was this sort of discipline writ large. Traditional environmental management techniques were also thwarted by Spanish authorities; intentional, controlled burning, which had been a vital tool for managing wildfires and for prompting growth of favored plants and basket-making materials, was banned.[27] Other forms of control at a smaller scale—the formations for visitors and forced marching, the assembly of Indians at the ringing of the bell, the synchronized movements of standing and kneeling at the Mass, and the presence of locked doors and barred windows—were all forms of discipline designed to mold the neophytes into docile subjects. But resistance to this regulation and restriction of movement is also widely documented. The most dramatic evidence is of isolated but quite violent revolts, but there is also evidence of runaways and even relatively permeable boundaries of the mission where neophytes continued to participate in kinship networks, practice traditional subsistence practices, and return periodically to native villages. There are also numerous references to the persistence of activities such as gambling and dancing which were not condoned by the missionaries.[28]

The missions went far beyond the confines of the present sites, and this broader view of the landscape suggests that the operations of surveillance and the control of movement were negotiable to those who knew the land well. Beyond the immediate vicinity of the missions were outlying pastures, fields, orchards and even more distant ranches that operated almost as satellite missions with their own supervisors, labor

force, and sometimes chapels. In the highly varied geography of California, with its valleys and ranges, the distance of even a few miles can make a large difference in temperature, rainfall, and the seasonal availability of resources. A *diseño*, or pictorial map, of a ranchero of Mission San Antonio de Padua reveals the diverse catchment areas that were exploited at these outposts. The key to a map of the ranchero identifies, among other features, land under cultivation, irrigable land, deer hills, sheep folds, springs, as well as roads to other missions and settlements.[29] Native peoples working and living at the rancheros inhabited traditional lands, even if employing new techniques of agriculture and pastoralism. This exploitation of the traditional resources is further documented by excavations of neophyte barracks indicating that Indians at the missions continued to supplement mission diets with traditional foods and maintain traditional trade networks.[30]

Recent studies by archaeologists and geographers including John Johnson, Julia Costello, and David Hornbeck have combined climatic reconstructions with statistics from mission censuses, and the patterns suggest that the mission population changed seasonally as Indians took advantage of the stable rations and clothing supplies during certain times of the year while returning to their own settlements at other times. These authors have concluded that given the deterioration of traditional resource bases due to drought and sea temperature changes, and given the profound impact of Spanish settlement on indigenous social, economic, and political structures, the decision to join the mission system was one of "risk management." In other words, joining a mission was one of the best options presented to a people in the midst of extreme demographic and environmental stress.[31]

The more permeable boundaries presented by such reconstructions suggest that far from being a walled compound equated visually with classic panoptic plans of a cloistered monastic community or a prison with a central exercise yard, the missions were, at least in some places and times, residential communities with relatively porous boundaries. The decision to join a mission was irrevocable from a Franciscan perspective, but the strictures imposed clearly could be negotiated and resisted. The visual landscapes that the mission Indians inhabited, therefore, were far from bounded by the walls, cactus hedges, and quadrangles of the Spanish, but instead included their traditional lands with the spiritual significance that resonated in them.

On a smaller scale, the architecture of the missions reveals an element of resistance to control through surveillance—forms of symbolic violence, to use Pierre Bourdieu's phrase— literally inscribed on the walls. Many of the mission churches had elaborately painted walls and ceilings. Norman Neuerburg has been one of the few architectural historians who has studied mission church interiors and worked on several of their restorations. He has identified a number of the designers of the decorative programs and has also identified portions of the wall paintings likely executed by mission Indians.[32] More interesting for this discussion, Neuerburg identified several examples of "graffiti" by Native Americans. These images, one obviously a human form and the other as yet unidentified, were found on the bottom portion of a column in the nave of San Miguel. The circumstances of these anonymous, presumably clandestine images is not known, but their direct contradiction to the European-derived, Christian imagery that they literally overwrite suggests the active practice of traditional iconography and, perhaps, traditional belief systems. The execution of that belief in visible form on the very walls of the church nave points to a subtle yet enduring sign of resistance.[33]

One aspect of control exerted at the missions was to impose hierarchy and to attempt to eliminate or dilute the ties that bound people within their traditional communities. It is a classic principle of regulation or disciplines familiar to military bases, correctional prisons, schools, and, in this case, missions.[34] The hierarchy of Spanish society, particularly within the military and church institutions that were spearheading the colonization, was inculcated in the Indian population. Indian "leaders" called *alcaldes* or *caciques* were chosen and, according to one observer, their function was to "maintain there an air of good order and contemplation."[35] The neophytes were also trained to specialize in various occupations. Where before the social organization had been based on kinship, gender roles, and the political leadership of a chief and shaman, in the mission system, the Indians were partitioned into weavers, masons, carpenters, soap makers, blacksmiths, and tanners.[36] These roles were also aligned with Spanish notions of gender-appropriate labor mediated by the pragmatics of agricultural seasonal demands that required the combined efforts of the labor force to bring in the harvest or process the crops. At the missions, the partitioning of space and the creation of visually segmented landscapes reinforced these divisions. Girls were

separated from their nuclear families, work areas were isolated, and housing was regimented into long blocks of rooms.

Despite these techniques, there are suggestions in the documentary record and in the landscape that horizontal solidarity persisted among the mission Indians. A significant aspect of this resistance is the continued agency of native women. Although only beginning to be explored by scholars, indigenous systems of gender and sexuality were "antithetical to a patriarchal ideology in which gender hierarchy, male domination, and heterosexuality were the exclusive organizing principles of desire, sexuality, marriage, and family."[37] While critical facets of the Spanish efforts to "civilize" were the control of sexuality and the imposition of Western ideologies of gender roles, the records of punishments and repeated exhortations suggest that defiance of the rules persisted.[38] Furthermore, the spatial segregation that was to protect the chastity of native women actually facilitated the solidarity of women's networks. For instance, segregation of women in separate dormitories, while devastating for formations of nuclear family bonds, also reinforced women's agency and community. Similarly, the *lavandería* at Mission San Luis Rey, which was located in what was called the sunken garden, a relatively secluded and visually shielded area, provided a venue for unguarded interactions.

Mission landscapes have played the role of tourist sites in California since the late nineteenth century. Each of the missions has a unique expression of its particular history and each has a unique set of constituencies, whether seminarians, local parishioners, students, those living on an Indian reservation, park rangers, or docents from the town, but the missions are also conceived as a corpus, sharing a common heritage and linked physically in a "chain" stretching from San Diego to north of San Francisco. This notion of each site as a link in the chain of missions has been present since their founding along the El Camino Real when they were sited to be approximately a day's ride apart, now approximately the equivalent of an hour's drive.

This conceptualization as a series of destinations has been a major factor in their history following the mission period. Since their secularization in 1834 and particularly following statehood in 1850, the missions have captured the popular imagination of travelers and artists who saw their crumbling walls and decaying roofs as

picturesque ruins and artifacts of a romanticized past. The missions were some of the first sites in the West actively marketed as rustic retreats appealing both to tourists and to Californians seeking to escape from the increasing crowds of burgeoning cities like Los Angeles. The notion of the missions as a series of destinations fell squarely into the interests of the emerging car industry in California as well. The Inyo Roads Club sponsored tours of the missions and simultaneously argued for improved roads and transportation infrastructure. Popular magazines such as *Land of Sunshine* and *Sunset* published numerous articles on the missions with titles such as "A Southwest Sleepy Hollow" that embedded them in a mythic past and "Motoring Among the Missions: A Real Joy Ride Through the Cathedral Towns of California" that emphasized the tourist experience of consuming the site.[39] The articles, however, also consistently minimized the sites' active use by the Catholic priests who served the local parishes, the tenant farmers who leased buildings for agricultural purposes, or the native peoples in the communities who were descendants of those buried within the mission lands. Photos accompanying the article rarely included these residents of the sites, but instead depicted the tourists or photographers posed in front of the "empty" and "ruined" buildings as a record and commemoration of their visit.

The paradox of the presentation of these sites is obvious even in the early preservation efforts spearheaded by civic leaders and businessmen. Mission advocates such as Charles Lummis and others who sponsored restorations through The Landmarks Club balanced the tension in their preservation decisions between needing to stabilize the adobe buildings and wanting to preserve the picturesque charm and ancient patina of the sites. Recounting a visit to Mission San Diego for the *Pacific Mutual News*, a monthly publication by the life insurance company of the same name, the travel writer noted, "Would it not be a fine thing were there some way to preserve these ruins just as they are, so much more romantic and suggestive of past greatness are they than any effort at restoration can ever make them? But adobe bricks disintegrate rapidly when exposed to the weather, and unless the buildings are restored, what little remains of many of the Missions will soon have vanished."[40] Another visitor put it even more baldly. At San Luis Rey she noted, "The church building has been fairly well restored, and it would be hard to say just why the exterior is not more pleas-

ing, but certainly robbed of that something wherein lies the charm of these lovely old missions at their best. For one thing, her make-up is unquestionably on the vivid side for one her age."[41]

The resonance of the mission sites with a romanticized past continued through the twentieth century, and the notion of traveling to see and experience the site in person, a pilgrimage to these historic shrines, became an iconic element of the California experience. Following the mission trail became a codified journey in the consumption of historic memory. Marked by uniform road signs along the El Camino Real and by the ubiquitous mission bell, tourists could travel to the destinations "in the footsteps of the padres." In her account *With a Sketch Book Along the Old Mission Trail*, Maude Robson Gunthorp exalted the experience of "seeing" instead of just touring.

> If one still has left to him the exciting adventure of visiting California for the first time, how fortunate is he if he comes with a mind conditioned to bear him beyond the signboards of a marvelous, modern commonwealth to the fast-fading background of California's romantic past . . . . It is indeed one thing to tour California and another to *see* her and to know her in her most fascinating aspects. It is to know her thus that we cherish what remains of the chain of old missions, the last crumbling relics of the most picturesque and romantic era in the history of the West—simple reminders of "the tender grace of the day that is dead."[42]

Such constructions of the past were reinforced by visual media that propagated the missions as both romantic oases and tourist destinations. As early as the 1870s, photographs of the missions were sold as local souvenirs.[43] Artists such as Alexander Harmer and photographers such as members of the amateur Pasadena Camera Club traveled to the sites to capture them as artistic subjects. Their work has left a rich visual record from this period, and it is telling that their composition of views consistently privileges the landscapes as empty, ruined spaces. Their framing of the abandoned buildings and eroding adobe not only bespeaks the nineteenth-century preference for the picturesque, but also the reception of these sites as "relics of a by-gone era." William Henry Hudson, who published a series of sketches of the missions, eulogized the experience of visiting these refuges of the modern world.

> The missions of California passed away leaving behind them nothing but a memory. . . . A tender sentiment clings about them—in their enclosures we breathe a drowsy old-world atmosphere of peace. To linger within their walls or to muse in their graveyards is to step out of the noisy present into the silence of departed years where everything is of yesterday and whose marvelous natural beauty is but rarely touched by the associations of history or the charms of romance. These things have a subtle and peculiar power—a magic not to be resisted by any one who turns from the highways of the modern world to dream among the scenes where the old padres toiled and died.[14]

Among the most famous of these photographers is Carleton Watkins.[15] One of the pioneers of photography in the West, he included the missions as one of his few subjects from the built environment, and his photographs are classic examples of framing vision as a means of constructing the past. The composition of Watkins's mission images, such as San Juan Capistrano and San Carlos, are similar to his photographs of the natural landscapes of the West; the texture of the buildings and the undulating mounds of eroded and collapsed adobe recall the textures, patterns, and forms of his geological subjects. Existing in splendid isolation, the missions Watkins presents are generally devoid of any evidence of humans. This convention of missions as abandoned ruins was further disseminated in publications such as William Henry Jackson's *Ancient Missions and Churches of America* (1894). In the photographs, such as "Mission San Juan Capistrano" (fig. 9.8), both the original occupants and the contemporaneous settlers are erased from the scenes and only the muted tones, eroding surfaces, and repeating patterns of arches of the buildings' shells remain. Their timelessness and their faded glory signify the nostalgic romanticism surrounding these remnants of another era while at the same time conveniently dispossessing, or at least bypassing, those who continued to lay claim to the properties.

This representation of the missions was not merely a marketing ploy to lure travelers to the sites. The romanticization of the past and nostalgic impulse for simpler times were expressions of the place of the missions in the historical memory of the emerging California state identity. Grade school curricula, popular press, and widely available images disseminated the same presentation of the sites to the public as "picturesque ruins" that privileged the Franciscans, minimized the darker sides of

Figure 9.8. Mission San Juan Capistrano, from William Henry Jackson, *Ancient Missions and Churches of America*, 1894. Courtesy: The Huntington Library.

colonialism, and largely erased the diverse peoples who had lived at the missions in the previous 120 years. A 1949 California history textbook opens the chapter on missions with "The mission fathers were happy. Father Serra was the happiest of all. To build missions in California and teach the Indians were what he had dreamed of doing for many years. The mission fathers made friends with the Indians."[46] The guidebooks and articles similarly discounted not only the realities of the Native American past at the site, but also the various settlers, many of them Mexican Americans, who had lived at the sites and continued to use them. These selective historical narratives celebrated the "padres" above all else, particularly the founding leader Serra. They generally skipped the inconvenient Mexican interlude in the history and simul-

taneously either removed the Native Americans altogether or reduced them to the status of docile pupil and eager neophyte.

It is in this crucible that the mission garden itself was born and the stage set for a different rendition of the visual consumption of the mission landscape. The garden was a key mediator in this tension between architectural restoration and the preservation of the patina of age by introducing "timeless" plantings, fountains, and other garden elements that evoked an "old world" origin and a pan-Mediterranean aesthetic.

At their most basic level, the mission gardens represent the patios and courtyards as ornamental spaces. They are dedicated to the pleasure of sight, smell, and sound. They are designed to attract visitors with their beauty, color, and artistry. They are intended, above all, to enhance the visitor's experience of the missions. Yet, these beautiful oases are not merely the product of neutral aesthetic choices; they contradict in fundamental and naturalizing ways the historical functions of the plazas and patios as work spaces devoted to producing life-sustaining and profit-making products and food. The gardens remove a people from the mission past and mask the life that they knew. They deny the traditional relationships with the land. And they erase the fundamental exercises of power inherent in the utilization of the Native Americans as a labor force to produce food and profit. Furthermore, they perform that erasure using many of the same visual instruments of control used by the padres to subjugate the mission Indians. They control movement, they direct the gaze to emphasize some elements of the sites and screen others, and they present a narrative of the past that is profoundly difficult to penetrate because it is inscribed in nature itself.

One of the prominent ways the sites are framed as tourist space is through the control of movement through the creation of prescribed paths. These structured experiences are less strictly choreographed than at more densely visited sites such as Mount Vernon or the Taj Mahal,[47] but they are sequenced to various degrees. All the missions have some sort of orientation experience, generally including a formal ticketing process and passage into a gathering space that often includes a display or interpretive area. This display space may utilize traditional museum cases and panels or it may be a shop with an array of religious objects and mission-related souvenirs. The museum displays have varying degrees of professionalism in their presentations, but most have artifacts associated with the mission history and religious devotion. Most of the narratives in these museum exhibits outline the history of the missions and

celebrate particular achievements of illustrious persons associated with the missions. Some of the missions take a decidedly architectural track in their interpretations, while others present of a social history of the missions. As might be expected, these narratives are constructed from the perspective of the current proprietor, which is the Catholic Church in all but two instances. Deconstructing the narratives of these interpretations is a larger subject than can be addressed here, but the key themes are the courage and sanctity of the founding padres, the success and productivity of the missions at their height, and the valiant efforts of the church over the years to maintain and restore the sites. It is also interesting to note that, in contrast to the guidebooks and popular published literature, the interpretive narratives at the missions often highlight the local parish histories and current activities.

Rather than formal tours, the visitor's experience at the California missions is almost entirely self-guided, with the exception of school tours. There is relatively little signage and almost no guided or human-mediated interactions at most sites, although most missions have some sort of guidebook or brochure available. The routes and sequence of the tour experience are shaped almost entirely by the built environment itself, and visitors generally follow a prescribed pattern. Following the orientation experience, the visitor usually exits into an inner courtyard of the site where generally three choices are presented: to walk the corridors and visit whatever rooms are open for viewing, to explore the ornamental gardens in the center of the courtyard (or exterior forecourts, depending on the mission), or to visit the church. A few sites, such as Santa Barbara, restrict access into the garden itself although visitors can look into the garden (fig. 9.9). The proscribed route culminating in the sacred space conveys a sense of gaining access to an inner sanctum at the missions. The impression of privileged entry into a sacred space is reinforced by signs indicating the bounds of the public areas and by the generally subdued comportment of other visitors exhibiting the appropriate contemplative postures of the mission tourist. The atmosphere of these spaces is charged with a combined reverence for the historic and the religious.

While there is essentially free choice on the route and sequence of the experience at most of the missions, clear highlights of the visit are designed by their positions of prominence. Iconic artifacts include the mission bells and wooden crosses reminiscent of the original crosses. In the guidebooks, each mission has an epithet, such as "Queen of the Missions" or "Pride of the Missions," which personifies its per-

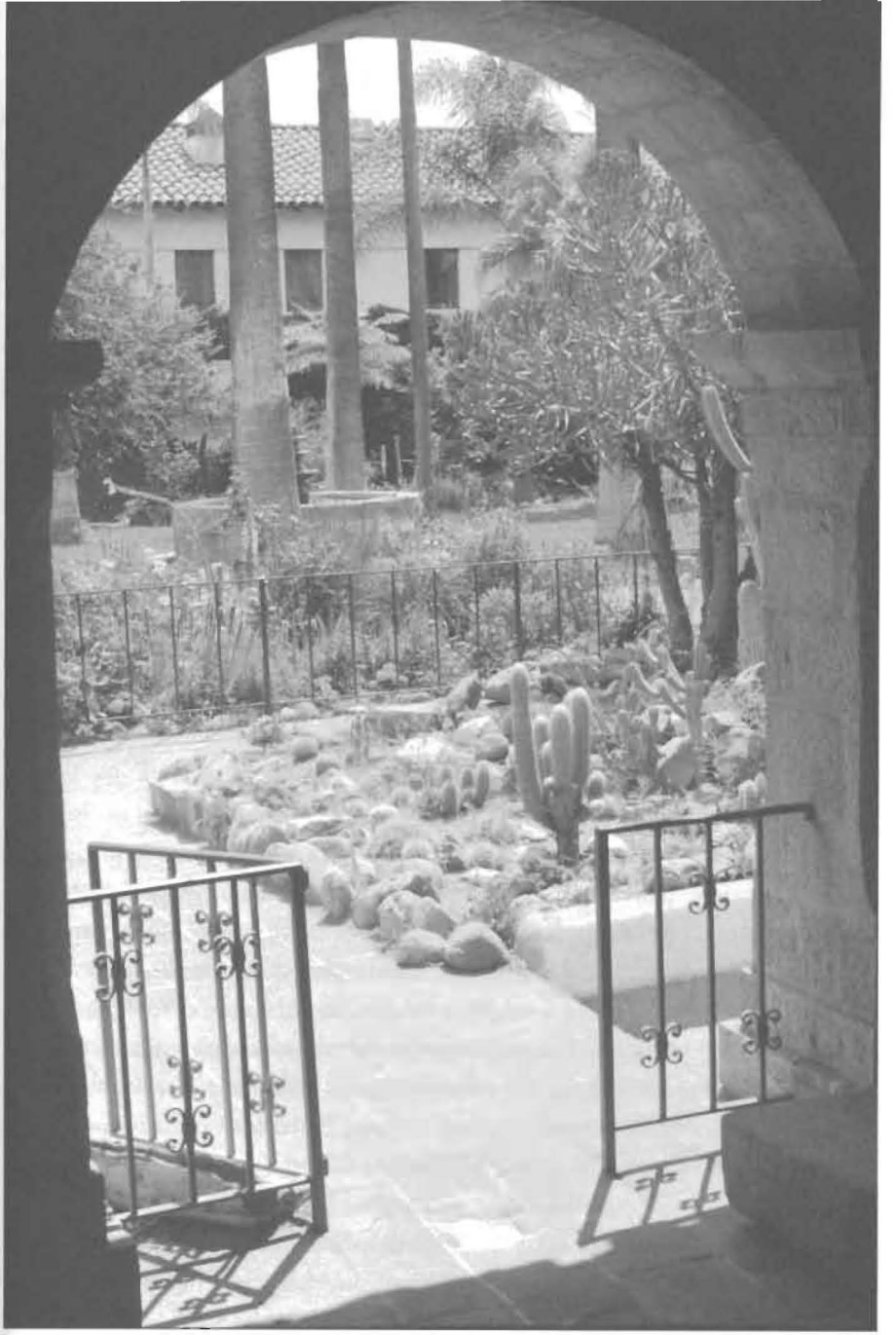

Figure 9.9. Courtyard garden, Mission Santa Barbara, 1992. Photo: E. Kryder-Reid.

sonality along the mission chain. Each is also known for one or more iconic features—particularly striking architectural elements such at the *campanarios* at San Antonio de Pala or unique botanical specimens such as a pepper tree at San Luis Rey. At some missions with more extensive grounds, there are also opportunities to stroll the areas around the mission buildings. Here one may encounter the local variations on the mission garden theme—an intriguing range of folk art, spaces for parish functions, evidence of the parish's political concerns and outreach, scout projects, demonstration gardens, native plant and botanical specimen gardens, and whatever excavated remains of the mission complex have survived.

What is less visible, either because of its complete absence, misinterpretation, or peripheral placement, is the presence of Native Americans on the landscape. With the exception of the cemeteries, some of which contain thousands of Indian burials, the representation of these Indian residents and workers at the mission is minimized. The neophyte barracks-style housing has rarely survived and has not been deemed a priority for reconstruction. Where direct remnants of the Indians' role as laborers survive, the interpretations generally range from absent to euphemistic. A smelting furnace at San Juan Capistrano is labeled not as a place where Native peoples worked, but as the "first industrial site in Orange County." Even when the labor of the Indians is acknowledged, such as their role in building the missions, they are generally posited as "helpers." Artifacts associated with the Native American ways of life are sometimes presented as part of the "before" portion of the story explaining the traditional lives prior to the coming of the Spanish. In other cases, representations of native ways of life appear decontextualized, such as the *maños* and *metates* noted earlier at San Fernando.[48]

One of the more telling examples of the contested nature of representing the native past at the missions is the reconstruction of traditional dwellings. At San Juan Capistrano a domed house sits in the forecourt of the mission in the midst of a rose garden, with minimal interpretive signage. At Santa Barbara, a similar reconstruction is even more marginally placed in a side parking lot behind a chain-link fence (fig. 9.10).[49] On the fence hangs a hand-lettered sign that reads, "This Chumash traditional house was built May, 1997 by Chumash Indian descendants Joaqum Robles Whiteoak and Nashun Hoate. It depicts the type of house originally built by local Indians. By the early 1800s a village of larger adobe houses was built (over 200 homes) where the parking lot is currently located."

Figure 9.10. Joaqun Robles Whiteoak and Nashun Hoate, Chumash dwelling, reconstruction, Mission Santa Barbara parking lot, 1997. Photo: E. Kryder-Reid.

Along with the control of movement, one of the other fundamental aspects structuring the tourist experience is the control of sight. The approach to the missions varies depending on their location, but many of those more oriented to the tourist visitor have carefully crafted the approach to the site for the maximal visual impact. Foundation plantings soften the massive fronts, while verdant lawns and dark green junipers and cedars contrast with the white facades. In an arid climate lawns are maintained with great effort, and the extent to which they are legitimizing contemporary water politics by embedding the greensward in California's early history is a point for debate. In many of the missions, this approach is complemented by staged photo opportunities where the quintessential shot can be taken through the arch or in front of the cascading vines, or reflected in the quiet surface of the pools. Some of

these images are deeply ingrained in the received history of the missions through their appearances in popular media and as advertising illustrations on fruit crates and canned goods. Other images can be traced more specifically to the texts that helped inform the design of the mission gardens in the early twentieth century. Popularizers of Mediterranean landscapes such as Byne and Byne's 1924 *Spanish Gardens and Patios* influenced the residential landscape nationally, but within California the style was seized upon as a perfect fit for the climate and the resort culture it aspired to.[50] California adopters of the Mediterranean revival gardens could also look to the missions as local landmarks echoing the aesthetic while gardeners at the missions were simultaneously echoing popular trends of the day.[51] Within the mission landscapes, the play of shadow and light along the corridors similarly alludes to the Mediterranean aesthetic praised by the earlier travel books. All of these sights are, of course, available for tourists to capture and possess with their own cameras, or available for purchase when they exit through the gift shop—tokens of their own authentic and historic experience.

If the exercises of power through the control of vision and movement in the landscape are similar in missions' colonizing landscapes and their tourist destination landscapes, what then might be the forms of resistance in the tourist experience? Missions have been picketed over the canonization of Junípero Serra, who represents to some the founder of Catholicism in California and to others the author of their people's genocide, but to date no one has protested the planting of marigolds or the building of an intentionally antiqued fountain.[52] The heated pitch of academic and political debates over the role of the missions in the conquest of California has largely bypassed the decision-making processes shaping the contemporary landscapes of these missions. Complicating potential reinterpretations at the sites is the fact that the church stands as both the historically accused and the current occupant. Furthermore, as at Williamsburg and other colonial revival sites, the gardens have become historic landscapes in their own right. In the midst of the controversial canonization process of Junípero Serra and accusations of genocide, debates over whether to replace a bed of roses with a dusty courtyard seem small stakes indeed. But the same power of landscape to naturalize relationships of power, reify romanticized images of the past, and erase a legacy of oppression is also the potential to create a landscape of reconciliation—one that makes conscious the subtexts of vision, landscape, and the interests they serve.