



Being on a mountain is different to being in the mountains. A single mountain is almost like an island, separate from its surroundings. A small mountain, flat on the top like Mount Randa, situated on a plain is like a wild spot in the midst of cultivated land. From here one can see far in all directions, unlike in the mountains, where one can only see more hills. From here you cannot get any higher, everything around you is far below, or at least further down. From a mountain top like this Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms and riches of the world.

A mountain like this does not direct your thoughts upwards like the 'real' mountains, but down towards the plain, to everything that surrounds this island-mountain. You come here to get an overview of the world rather than to encounter the touch of spirit. Maybe the tourist coaches, that perseveringly climb up the serpentine road to the courtyard of the sanctuary and the huge satellite masts that rise towards the sky only a few meters away, have destroyed my sensibility. One reason might be that the top of Mount Randa is quite flat, almost like an altar, as somebody said. Or perhaps more like a plateau, a heath of a kind; there are no trees to mention. This mountain resembles an island since the wind is the strongest natural element. It is always blowing from one direction or the other. The sky is strong, of course, since there are no obstacles to sight, but in the same way the sky is also huge in the desert or in the lowlands as well. You certainly do not feel like being in the embrace of mother earth, rather you sit on some sort of outcrop, like a bird on a rock in the middle of the sea. The wind, the breath of life, is almost too much when there is nowhere to seek shelter from it.





Here on Mount Randa Ramon the Fool, Ramon Llull, had a revelation about the main principles of his Ars Magna. Nowadays there are three monasteries. La Cura, or Santuario Nostra Senora de Cura, is on the top. In Llull's own time, in the 13th century, there were only caves for shepherds. Nobody could foresee all the families with paella pots spreading out on the slopes during the weekends. Today this mountain, 548 metres high, situated only 30 kilometres from Palma, is one of the major sights on Mallorca. Nature is rough and unsuitable for cultivation: 'it seems like God created it for himself alone, it has been a holy mountain, like another Mount Sinai.'

Even if we are taught that nature and human perception are of two different worlds they are nevertheless inseparable. Before you can enjoy the landscape with your senses it must have been formed in your mind. The mountains are layers of mind and memories as well as of minerals. Of course nature exists independently of humans too, but mankind has already influenced all the ecosystems of the planet in a decisive way, not only in the modern period, but since ancient times. There is no untouched nature, neither in the rainforests on the equator, nor on the polar ice fields. And in this irrevocably transformed world we have to live.

The dream of 'healing wilderness' as salvation is just as culturally produced as any dream garden. And even those areas we think are free and untouched by culture are on closer examination actually being created, supported or protected by it. The wilderness does not name or locate itself. The sanctity of nature is of man.





Being on an island is different to being on an archipelago.

From an island you can see far out to sea; from an archipelago you see only more islands. Being on an island is a little like being on a mountain. People come there for a purpose; nobody ends up there by chance or drops in accidentally. Though an island does not direct your thoughts upwards as a mountain does, but outwards to the sea, towards that which leads away from the mainland.



A small rocky island outside the city is like a wild hill in the middle of fields. You come here as if coming to a park, for a break from the noise of the city rather than to encounter the silence of nature. Maybe the tourist boats and waterbuses that rattle around the island, or the huge shopping malls that glide by, and the dockyard constructions, which stretch out to sea a few hundred meters away, have numbed my senses. Or the giggling of sun lovers on the near-by island of Uunisaari, not to mention the balloons, the helicopters and the bungee jumpers. The silence on the island is relative, but for breathing the place is good. The island also resembles a mountain because the strongest natural element is the wind. The wind is blowing from some direction all the time, in summertime mostly from the southwest. Sometimes however, like this year, the wind is resting.



The *genius loci*, the spirit of this place, has been evoked in different performances. The landscape you see is elsewhere, however. You have an image of it in front of you. An image of a landscape is not a landscape; a landscape is not an image.



Before you can enjoy a landscape with your senses it has to be formed in your mind. The dream of a 'healing wilderness' that could be a salvation is as much a cultural product as any dream garden. The wilderness does not name itself. Sanctity in nature is man-made. Fortunately this park-island does not even attempt to be a sanctuary. Rather an information centre, a piece of archived nature on display. It is as if created to suite the size of groups of schoolchildren and for the presentation of wonders of the sea in aquariums. The 'mustard gas' of the Chemical Research Laboratory of the Armed Forces has long since evaporated into the wind or dissolved into the water. Pine soap, motor oil, blue algae or not - the surrounding sea is nevertheless water.



When nature around us shrinks we lose large areas of ourselves too. Something within us dies when the gap between man and nature is widening. The ecological imbalance of the environment is reflected in the soul, impoverishing it. Our soul longs for the power of nature and life's holiness. It would like to feel the sky, the mountains and trees as its own, as parts of itself. It is still searching for that connection. It listens and probes. Though it seems as if we had lost the connection, it is still there. The umbilical cord is so thin, however, that it risks breaking completely. It has to be strengthened. The better our habitation is adapted to the rhythm of nature the better we feel. These claims were made by an American woman who advises how to furnish your home to accommodate your soul.

Maybe. I cannot think of the relationship to nature as an umbilical cord, but I do know that one's mind rests when one's eyes can rest. And one's soul (or perhaps rather one's spirit) needs space to breathe.

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