Place and Phenomenology

Edited by
Janet Donohoe
Contents

Introduction vii

PART I: PLACE AND THE EXISTENTIAL 1
1 The Openness of Places
   Edward Relph 3

2 The Double Gift—Place and Identity
   Robert Mugerauer 17

3 The Idea of an Existential Ecology
   Bob Sandmeyer 39

PART II: SACRED PLACES 57
4 Nature, Place, and the Sacred
   Anne Buttimer 59

5 From the Land Itself: The Himalayas as Sacred Landscape
   John Cameron 75

6 The Ambiguity of “Sacred Space”: Superabundance, Contestation, and Unpredictability at the Earthworks of Newark, Ohio
   Lindsay Jones 97

PART III: PLACE, EMBODIMENT, AND HOME 125
7 The Living Arena of Existential Health: Space, Autonomy, and Embodiment
   Kirsten Jacobson 127
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Environed Embodiment and Geometric Space</td>
<td>Adam Konopka</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nature as Home: A Gendered Phenomenology of Place</td>
<td>Trish Glazebrook</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PART IV: PLACES REDISCOVERED</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Intraterrestrials: Landing Sites</td>
<td>David Wood</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Indeterminacy in Place: Rivers as Bridge and Meandering as Metaphor</td>
<td>Irene J. Klaver</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lifeworld Transit Difference</td>
<td>Jonathan Maskit</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PART V: PLACE AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL LIMITS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Architecture, Place, and Phenomenology: Buildings as Lifeworlds, Atmospheres, and Environmental Wholes</td>
<td>David Seamon</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Genetic Phenomenology and the Erasure of Place</td>
<td>Janet Donohoe</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Unprecedented Experience and Levinas’s Heideggerian Idolatry of Place</td>
<td>Bruce B. Janz</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bibliography | 297  
Index | 319  
List of Contributors | 325  

Chapter Six

The Ambiguity of "Sacred Space"

Superabundance, Contestation, and Unpredictability at the Earthworks of Newark, Ohio

Lindsay Jones

Few places demonstrate more vividly than the Earthworks of Newark, Ohio, that claims to the “sacredness” of a place are made with far greater frequency than rigor, precision, or consistency. Acclaimed by historians and archaeologists as one of the Wonders of the Ancient World,¹ “a North American Kaaba, Sistine Chapel, and *Principia* all rolled into one,”² the Newark Earthworks, a huge complex that stretches across some four-and-a-half square miles, attract ever more frequent busloads of Eastern Shawnees from Oklahoma and Mormons from Utah, along with elder hostel tours, Edgar Casey aficionados and a mix of antiquarian enthusiasts from everywhere. And yet, the ancient mounds remain, even for the broader public that lives very close by, lamentably little known. Among the largest, most geometrically precise and best preserved earthen architecture ever constructed, these built forms have astronomical alignments no less sophisticated than those at Stonehenge and a scale no less enormous than the Peruvian geoglyphs at Nazca; and yet, obscurity is also among their foremost attributes. To be sure, incongruities abound. Consequently, the convoluted, contested, and ongoing 2000-year history of the Newark Earthworks—presently host, or perhaps hostage, to a private golf course and country club that restricts access to their principal features on all but four stiffly negotiated days per year—provides a specific case that exemplifies a wide array of more general observations about the big and baggy categories of “sacred space” and “sacred architecture.”³
By prevailing assessments, in their pre-Columbian prime, the Great Circle, and the Octagon Earthworks, the two largest extant components of the extensive Hopewell-era complex, enjoyed prestige as one of America’s premier pilgrimage destinations, “an American Mecca” and “sacred site” par excellence to which visitors from all over the eastern half of the continent travelled for spiritual rather than more mundane motives. For many Native Americans (and some non-Natives), the place continues to exude an atmosphere of intrinsic and irrevocable sacrality, a supernatural power discovered, not made, by humans. That view accords with the phenomenological formulations of the historian of religions, Mircea Eliade, wherein highly revered sites owe their appeal and prestige to divine agency, a “hierophany” or “eruption of the Sacred into the profane”\(^4\); and as a result of that permanent religious potency, that such sites were, are, and will remain forever “sacred places” is certain and nonnegotiable. From this vantage, the Newark complex, a human construction atop a landscape of transhuman dynamism, is a place to honor ancestors by engaging the same otherworldly aura and energy that attracted the ancient mound builders to this locale; and thus from that Native sensibility, the repurposing of the inexorably sacred site for a golf course qualifies as both a “defilement” and a “dispossession” of the most egregious sort.\(^5\)

Alternatively, for other constituencies such as the non-Native membership of a group calling themselves Friends of Mounds, the Newark complex was and is “sacred” in an important but a more circumspect, relative, and culturally specific sense insofar as the place enjoys a unique status—but primarily for its American Indian builders and thus for their descendants. That usage of the term, which lends credence and support to Native ontological investments without fully sharing them, comports more with those social scientists and religionists, like Jonathan Z. Smith, who insist that the special allure of sacred sites, rather than intrinsic and permanent, is socially constructed and contingent on the beliefs and practices of specific communities.\(^6\) People create rather than discover sacred places. Nonetheless, affirming the integrity of others’ deeply held reverence for the site presents, for caring activists, an opportune, indeed urgent, gesture of respect and conciliation. Terming the place “sacred” is, for them, an exercise in social justice and ecumenical religious tolerance that comes in validating a cosmological view different from one’s own, which thereby fosters cross-cultural, interreligious dialogue and begins to mitigate a history of abuse against American Indians. Though more on the grounds of principled empathy than confidence in the innate power of the earthworks, persons of that persuasion are equally indignant that the Moundbuilders Country Club’s occupation and control over access to the prime features of someone’s “sacred site” is a transgression that ought not be allowed to continue.
And many others invoke the “sacred site” label in an even broader sense to signify that the Newark Earthworks marks a singularly significant place that should be cherished, respected, preserved, and studied. During the past two hundred years, civic-minded residents, for instance, have frequently assessed the ancient earthen enclosures as the sort of “hallowed ground” that ought to be rescued from ordinary residential and urban development. For them, the place constitutes a kind of “sacred trust,” an element of Ohio’s and America’s heritage that responsible citizens are obliged to respect and protect. And more strictly academic but no less-committed proponents for preservation of the mounds, irrespective of skepticism about both the inherent otherworldly power of the place and claims to special entitlement by present-day Native groups who can provide only highly generalized descent lines to the ancient mound builders, are nonetheless emphatic about the exceptional value—and to that extent “sacred” status—of the site as a resource of enormous historical, archaeological, and scientific consequence. That broad application of the term, which appraises the earthworks as more like a research venue or a museum than a church, is a means of acknowledging their underappreciated historical significance, which, if more fully understood, could give all contemporary Americans due pause to appreciate what happened previously in the landscape they now occupy. In that wide usage, this “sacred site” is a place to learn rather than worship.

There is, then, a very wide range of heartfelt deployments of the laudatory label “sacred space,” each of which depends on more far-reaching religious, sociocultural, academic, and/or cosmological convictions. Some are predicated on Native epistemologies and assertions of a privileged connection to, and thus proprietary measure of control over, the holy ground of one’s ancestors; in these cases, claims to sacrality are, not infrequently, played as a kind of trump card that ought to afford the place an exemption from either scientific scrutiny or the legal constraints that apply to most ordinary landholdings. Other invocations of the term reflect an indignation about the mismanagement of the site that is grounded in more fully Western ethical models of social activism, justice, religious freedom, and an incentive to foster fair and open dialogue by affirming multiple, if disparate, investments in the same built and natural features. And others who use “sacred” in wider ways to mean something like exceptionally important, appeal to notions of “cultural heritage,” or perhaps the authority and mission of science, as a warrant for determined efforts to treat the site as a sort of laboratory space of scholarly inquiry.

In short, to reach a consensus that the Newark Earthworks is a “sacred site,” deserving of special deference and preservation—and therefore worthy of the consideration it is presently receiving for designation as an UNESCO World Heritage site—is a kind of working agreement, which glosses over
major disagreements about the actual status of the place and architectural remains. And there is, not surprisingly, even more fervent disagreement about the proper management of the Newark Earthworks going forward.

THREE ATTRIBUTES OF "SACRED SPACE": SUPERABUNDANCE, CONTESTATION, AND UNPREDICTABILITY

Impressed and intrigued that the very same earthen mounds engender such disparate claims to be a sacred place, serious students of "the hermeneutics of sacred architecture"—whose methodological aspirations are nonnormative and rigorously empirical—nonetheless want greater precision. In fact, for them, the long arc of the Newark Earthworks' remarkable past, troubled present, and uncertain future provides marvelous exemplification of three interlaced attributes that are at issue in the dynamics of virtually any enduring architectural configuration that has evoked that approbative distinction: (1) the superabundance and autonomy of sacred architecture, (2) the invariably contested status of sacred sites and buildings, and (3) the similarly inevitable unpredictability in the ongoing usage, interpretation, and "reception histories" of such sites.

Adopting a kind of circular presentation, first I will introduce in a succinct way some terminology and bibliographic touchstones pertinent to those three general attributes; then the body of the chapter will direct attention to their recurrent relevance with respect to the labyrinthine history, current status, and debated future of the Newark Earthworks; and at the end I will return to brief summary comments about that triad of tendencies. Though each of these very broad propositions may strike most scholars as unremarkable truisms—and when stated directly, few, I suspect, are inclined to object—we can nonetheless observe how often each of those premises is ignored or denied in the discussion of specific places, yet another matter for which the Newark Earthworks are piquantly exemplary. Each of the three, consequently, stands as a kind of corrective or a methodological recommendation for how to speak in more empirically accurate, less idealized ways about the status and workings of reputedly "sacred places" not only in Ohio but elsewhere.

First, regarding the so-termed "superabundance and autonomy" of sacred sites and buildings, I join those who caution that it is always too simple, if exceptionally common, to imagine that there is a stable, one-to-one correlation between built forms and their meanings. The usually implicit assumption that sacred sites and buildings have a "true" or "real" meaning that speaks to all sensitive users and is, therefore, available for discernment and recovery by scholars is a fiction. Martin Heidegger, for instance, acknowledged this
indefiniteness and flexibility of meaning with his disconcerting, if accurate quip that "[a] building, a Greek temple [for example], portrays nothing. It simply stands there in the middle of the rock-cleft valley." And Hans-Georg Gadamer, also persuaded that substantial built forms never disclose their full significance all at once, reasserts the "meaninglessness of buildings" in more affirming ways by stressing the "ontological plenitude" or "excess of meaning," which is characteristic of all that is symbolic life but is particularly evident in enduring works of art and architecture, most especially religious works. That is to say, ostensibly, sacred places and buildings have an autonomy, rebelliousness, unmanageability, and inexhaustibility insofar as the significances of abiding architectural compositions are seldom, likely never, confined to the carefully wrought but idealized expectations of their designers and builders. Long-standing constructions and ostensibly sacred places constantly reveal new meanings without ever revealing or "exhausting" themselves completely.

Accordingly, not only do the operative meanings of (or engendered by) built forms perpetually change over time, substantial works of architecture invariably invoke in any single era or occasion, a multiplicity of different meanings among the different constituencies using and experiencing them. This is the sense in which architectural meaning is, as Gadamer stresses, situational, "eventful," or "relational" insofar as meaning neither resides objectively in the built form nor subjectively in "the eye of the beholder," but rather in the occasion—or "architectural event"—that subsumes the physical forms and their users. From that view, it is entirely predictable that Indians, archaeologists, and golfers, each of whom brings decidedly different "preunderstandings" and interests to their respective experiences of the site, simultaneously appreciate the Newark Earthworks in very different ways. In fact, on this basis, it is more accurate than outlandish to assert that essentially every sacred place of renown is what David Chidester terms a "reinterpreted site"; and essentially every experience of a standing work of sacred architecture constitutes what Eliade terms a "revalorization," which is to say, a creative and interested reuse—or, depending on one's perspective, misuse—of a preexisting built form. Experiencing sacred places and structures is, unfailingly, an exercise in repurposing them.

Appreciating the superabundance of sacred architecture, among other consequences, puts in doubt the seemingly rightful control that many architects hope to exercise over the uses and interpretations of their own creations. To the contrary, privileging the meaning of an architectural work presented, with all sincerity, by its creators as the uniquely "correct" and "real" interpretation of that built form is to perpetuate a kind of illusion or, in Heidegger's and Gadamer's view, to commit a fundamental philosophical error. In their view, it is tempting but plain wrong to lock onto that deliberate design intention as
authoritative—and thereby dismiss all other apprehensions as mistaken, inauthentic, or invalid. Alternatively, expounding the meaning(s) of an acclaimed place or building, according to this hermeneutical proposition, requires composing the sort of "architectural reception history" that explores and takes seriously the fateful succession of so-called revalorizations, all of which reflect the interests and investments of their respective users and the very large share of which depart radically from designers' hopeful expectations. That is to say, if the goal is to ascertain the empirical history of a sacred site or monument, then apparent misinterpretations of meaning along with all manner of eccentric, unorthodox reuses—because they always do happen!—deserve the attention of scholars rather than their disapprobation and dismissal.

Second, regarding the sense in which sacred places are invariably "contented sites," though many religious structures and pilgrimage destinations—again the Newark Earthworks among them—are suitably presented as places of unification, reconciliation, and harmonious fellowship, they are, with almost equal frequency, places of disagreement, sometimes of the genial and productive sort and sometimes, as in this case, of extreme contention. Owing to the diversity of meanings that such places elicit, it is not surprising that they often become sites of struggle over any number of issues ranging from the interpretation of theological doctrines to national and ethnic identities, from civil rights of religious freedom and self-determination, to economic empowerment and access to the fruits of tourist traffic. Consequently, seemingly benign variability concerning the proper meaning and management of sacred sites very often escalates into impassioned accusations of expropriation, disrespect, and desecration, either inadvertently or deliberately. Sacred places are, nearly without exception, contexts of political intrigue as well as purveyors of religious insight.

The frequency with which Catholic officials, for instance, have issued prescriptive policies concerning the "proper" meanings and means of interacting with images or relics of saints speaks both to the depth of the Church's investment in stabilizing an authoritative use and interpretation of its sacred places and to the irrepressible persistence—indeed the interested creativity!—with which the apprehensions of actual Christian (and non-Christian) devotees depart from those official understandings. Were the experiential engagements of monuments and places more fully unified and less excitingly variegated, no such attempts at authorizing some meanings and stigmatizing others would be required and were the stakes limited more strictly to the theoretics of theology, attempts at legislating "correct" interpretations would be far less urgent. Furthermore, as we will also see in the case of Newark, scholarly interpretations that issue from different disciplinary positions, and thus different presuppositions about human nature and the guiding forces of socio-economic processes, are not only multiple but also disputatious. Vigorous
disagreements among Shawnees, village officials, residents, country club members, and Mormons are reechoed by the impatience and disagreements among academic interpreters. For scholars too the investments are deep and thus the stakes very high.18

And third, if sacred places are inevitably sites of ongoing revalorization and contestation, we ought not to be surprised that the course of the so-called architectural reception history of a long-enduring site like the Newark Earthworks is invariably subject to extreme and fascinating unpredictability. To the extent that buildings and sites have biographies, their life histories are customarily characterized by unforeseen twists and turns that could never have been imagined by the original designers. To borrow an insight from art historian Irvin Panofsky, the reception career of an abiding work of art or architecture, for example, centuries-old configurations like the Ohio mounds, is "tortuous, fortuitous, full of uncertainty, past echoes, and unexpected turns. It does not possess a logic; it has no constant direction, no goal."19 Especially for those monuments that far outlast the sociocultural contexts in which they were created—again the earthworks provide a preeminent example—the revalorative uses and apprehensions are liable to spiral farther and farther away from the beliefs and practices of the original builders and patrons. And thus, such durable constructions have the character of "open sites" insofar as they present fortuitous contexts in which to express concerns and discontent, very different from those that motivated their initial manufacture.20

Be that as it may, few scholars and even fewer religiously motivated devotees of ostensibly sacred places are willing to acknowledge their own interpretations are "creative and interested revalorizations." Far more often than affirming the equal viability of innumerable different perceptions of a site or building, worshippers (and academics) feel compelled to reject and denigrate other interpretations in favor of the correctness of their own. And no strategy of argumentation is more commonplace—as again we will observe at Newark—than contending that one's usages and understandings are neither new nor novel, but rather faithful recoveries of old, even original, usages and meanings of the monuments. These persistent proprietary claims to have resuscitated aboriginal beliefs and practices are, from the hermeneutical perspective annunciated here, equally predictable and, historically speaking, unreliable.

Yet here again, rather than lament the extreme disparity between original and obviously divergent subsequent meanings—and instead of aspiring to declare a winner in these contestations over the "correct" meanings of a revered old place—empirically-minded hermeneuts should acknowledge and appreciate that adventitious chain of appropriations. Indeed, it is in these unanticipated and variously idiosyncratic, profound, and manipulative revalorizations of sacred spaces that otherwise obscured religious and
sociopolitical priorities emerge most clearly. Yes, much can be learned from seemingly erroneous (re)uses and confounded (re)interpretations of seasoned and heavily trafficked "sacred places."

A REMARKABLE PAST: APPRECIATING AND (RE)CONSTRUCTING PRE-COLUMBIAN HISTORY

Based on these three propositions, the prospect of laying hold of the original, and thus authoritative, meanings and uses of the Newark Earthworks is not only a tantalizing but also a futile aspiration. The wide range of compelling though highly discrepant hypotheses concerning the ancient uses and intentions of these ancient monuments remind one that every "re-construction" of their past is, as Gadamer's hermeneutical perspective cautions, a "construction" that reflects the respective disciplinary presuppositions and interests of its scholarly author.\textsuperscript{21} As knowledge of prehistoric America advances, some historical (re)constructions are exposed as empirically nonviable (and to that extent false); but even the most well-informed new theories are not, according to these propositions, free from bias. Nevertheless, respecting the flexibility of architectural meaning does not require one to abandon the ample fund of historical information that archaeologists have ascertained. All is not speculation. We can, for instance, deliver fairly firm replies to a handful of the most basic historical questions about the ancient earthworks of Ohio, of which the Newark site is the outstanding exemplar.

To begin, when and by whom were the Ohio earthworks built? Though here we traffic in labels assigned to various cultures and eras by modern-day scholars rather than names that mound builders used for themselves, standard assessments credit the mounds primarily to two overlapping cultural traditions.\textsuperscript{22} The so-called Adena culture, which refers to a number of Native American societies who were occupying this area from about 800 BCE to 100 CE, the Early Woodland period, stands somewhat apart from the geometrical earthworks most at issue in this chapter. More directly relevant is the later but overlapping Hopewell tradition, composed of cultural aspects common to numerous groups that flourished in what is currently the Northeastern and Midwestern United States from 200 BCE to 500 CE, the Middle Woodland period; they get credit for, among countless constructions, the mounds at Newark.\textsuperscript{23} Very roughly speaking, then, the Newark Earthworks were built about the time of Jesus, or perhaps a few hundred years earlier, by peoples who, albeit lacking a certain line of descent to any specific tribal group, were assuredly ancestors of historical American Indians.

What kinds of Ohio, Hopewell-era mounds are there? Though all mounds were made largely of local rocks and dirt, three quite different formal types
are notable. First, are generally symmetrical conical mounds, of which a substantial number contain the burials of one or often numerous people; and while there are some burial mounds at Newark, archaeologists have (until recently) tended to minimize the role of human burials in that broader configuration. Second are the effigy mounds, which are built in the shape of some symbol or animal, most famously, the Serpent Mound in southern Ohio; and while the suitably titled Alligator Mound is nearby, this sort also plays only a minor role at Newark. Third, more numerous and by far the most relevant to the present discussion, are those abundant mounds that are configured in various geometrical shapes—squares, trapezoids, ovals, circles, and octagons. Indeed, the number of permutations on this theme is stunning.

In some cases, these enclosures have an irregular shape that follows the contours of ravines or other landscape features, for instance those at Fort Hill and Fortified Hill, which seem designed to protect a hilltop settlement. But a larger portion, like the two principal extant features at Newark, are laid out on largely flat terrain, low enough to seem less like defensive features than a kind of writing or inscribing on the landscape. Those two enclosures, now somewhat separate but originally linked by walled roadways, are the so-named Great Circle Earthworks, an open ring nearly 1,200 feet in diameter surrounded by fourteen-foot walls, and, across town, the Octagon Earthworks, composed of the 1000 foot-wide Observatory Circle that is joined by a narrow neck to the even larger Octagon. (“Octagon” commonly refers to this entire portion of the complex, which is the part presently covered by a golf course.) Though the specifics and even more the original intent of their astronomical references are much debated, many of these geometric mounds—and again Newark’s Octagon provides the paramount exemplar—assuredly do have abundant and highly sophisticated alignments to various celestial phenomena, most notably the movements of the moon.

Additionally, by way of appreciating the oft-overlooked pervasiveness of this stratum of mound-building culture in the region, how many mounds are there? Those intent on reminding us of the very extensive pre-Columbian habitation of this area can point to as many as eleven thousand to thirteen thousand prehistoric sites in Ohio, among which over three thousand include mounds—an abundance that startles nearly all lay audiences! Moreover, while a large percentage of Ohio mounds were flattened by agricultural and urban expansion—a measure of destruction that makes the preservation of large portions of the Newark complex all the more important—recent reconnaissance via airborne Light Imaging Detection and Rangine Technology (LiDAR), which is able to penetrate vegetation and to identify ancient constructions long covered over by farm fields, has identified more than six hundred extant mound sites in Ohio, another number that shocks almost everyone. The Newark Earthworks were, in other words, only the largest
of hundreds, maybe thousands, of mound constructions in a region that was heavily inhabited during the Adena and Hopewell eras. It is, therefore, a point of Buckeye pride that no other state matches this dense concentration of mounds; and, to be sure, for many (me included), among the most profound—and profoundly humbling—insights to emerge from the investigation of these ancient earthworks is that modern-day Ohio, a very recent development in the broader course of this region’s history, is built atop a landscape that was once extensively populated by mound-building cultures whose architectural endeavors rival any number of far more famous contexts. Assuredly, Euro-Americans are, in this respect, latecomers to Ohio.

Finally, in reply to a more venturous query about what sort of activities the Newark Earthworks were originally designed to support, it is crucial to appreciate at a minimum that, irrespective of the huge scale of its architectural conception, this was not the site of substantial permanent habitation. Unlike the great pre-Columbian sites of Mesoamerica, it was never as a city, even of modest proportions; and yet, according to prevailing hypotheses, Newark was a pilgrimage destination of enormous reputation and allure, “like Mecca or Santiago de Compostela.” The foremost archaeological evidence in support of that widely accepted view is a large but decidedly asymmetrical trade network, termed the Hopewell Interaction Sphere, wherein an abundance of incoming materials and objects—for instance, copper from the upper Great Lakes, mica from southern Appalachian mountains, shells from the Gulf Coast, and obsidian from the Rocky Mountains—is contrasted to the export of only very modest items made from flint found in the Newark area, that is to say, the sort of nonutilitarian tokens that pilgrims carry home. Additional support for the very plausible notion that the heavy traffic to the mounds was motivated more by religious than commercial concerns comes in the exciting (if still debated) discovery of a paved roadway, complete with parallel earthen walls, that runs arrow-straight for some 60 miles from Newark to Mound City, a similarly large earthwork complex at Chillicothe, Ohio. Though at present the Great Hopewell Road survives only in small segments, archaeologist Bradley Lepper has been persuasive in arguing that this may well have constituted a sort of ceremonial walkway into (and out of) the Newark complex, perhaps “a holy pilgrim’s path” like similarly long and straight “sacbeob,” or “white roads,” built by Yucatec Mayas.

In sum, we would be remiss to assume (as most archaeological treatments tacitly do) that, even in the pre-Columbian era, there was a perfect correspondence between the programmatic intentions of the earthworks’ designers and their users, be they local or far-traveling visitors. These were, from their initial construction, superabundant and autonomy monuments, which attracted Native peoples of significantly different cultures, languages, and belief systems who therefore experienced the mounds and roadways in
substantially different, probably contested, ways. Be that as it may, arguing by subtraction—that is, absent any persuasive military, commercial, political, or ecological explanation either for the huge astronomically aligned mounds or the Great Hopewell Road—a broad consensus emerges that they must have been designed expressly for “ceremonial purposes.” Nevertheless, that general agreement—that the Newark complex was conceived and constructed, first and foremost, as a pilgrimage destination and “sacred site”—actually opens and energizes rather than forestalls great disagreement regarding not only the particulars of its autochthonous inception but, even more, as we’ll see, its most suitable management in the twenty-first century.

A TROUBLED PRESENT: DESTRUCTION, PRESERVATION, REPURPOSING AND PERSISTENT CONTESTATION

In the context of the two-millennium reception career of the Newark Earthworks, “the present” starts at the end of the eighteenth century, when large numbers of European Americans began to move into the Ohio region. Irrespective of their wide and deep pre-Columbian prestige, the enormous earthen enclosures, by this time overgrown and untended, had long ceased to operate as a working pilgrimage site. Even the abundant and diverse Native peoples whom these settlers encountered, though deeply enamored of the mounds, were unable to provide any information about who had built them. With moorings to the original Hopewell-era design intentions quite fully cut, Heidegger’s seeming overstatement about the meaninglessness of architecture—that a building “portrays nothing” and “simply stands there” available to ceaseless reinterpretations—emerges as an entirely plausible and germane description of these old constructions. By this time, with the carefully calculated choreography of their designers now consigned to a largely forgotten past, the Newark complex comports more completely with Michel Foucault’s notion of “an open site,” which works like a palimpsest onto which various audiences can superimpose all sorts of expectations and questions very different both from those of its builders and from one another. Ironically, then, even—or, actually, especially—in their ruined condition, the superabundance of these built forms, now puzzlingly enigmatic, as well as impressive, inspired an unprecedentedly diverse spectrum of impressions and usages. At this point, the seemingly exaggerated claim that every experience of the built forms and landscape is a creative and interested “revalorization” is more accurate than ever.

Native peoples of numerous tribal affiliations that, by the nineteenth century, were long-established in the region, the Shawnee prominent among them, on the one hand, expressed great esteem for the mounds and, so it seems, imagined an important, if general, sort of connection to their builders.
Ample oral traditions testify that at no point, even in its abandoned condition, had the Newark complex ceased to be regarded as the sort of “sacred place” that both exuded extranatural power and provided a privileged context in which to honor “the Ancestors.” On the other hand, as noted, none of these Native groups had any empirically reliable historical knowledge about the creators of the earthworks nor, with any detail, about the ritual practices for which the enclosures were designed; and, no tribe could make a claim to be the primary heirs of the mound builders. Furthermore, nearly all Indians had either left or been forcibly removed from the region by 1850, the largest percentage relocated to Oklahoma and Kansas, widens further still the discontinuity between Hopewell and historical Indian affiliations to earthwork-based practices. Accordingly, the currently mounting interest in visiting and learning about the Newark complex displayed by the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma and other groups with historical, but not recent, ties to the region are, as Indian scholar Marti Chaatsmith suitably labels them, Native “re-investments” in an Ohio mound culture with which even their nineteenth-century counterparts were not well-informed. In fact, the present-day Indian enthusiasm for the Newark Earthworks is, in a sense, contemporary (second-order) revalorization of earlier revalorizations of a vastly older Hopewell work of architecture.

In any case, if nineteenth-century Native views of the Ohio mounds were, in all probability, discrepant and therefore contested, there is absolute certainty that the perspectives of European-derived settlers, even less well informed about the original design intent, were divided in stark and lopsided ways. For the large majority of Euro-Americans, the overgrown mounds simply constituted curious obstacles to their farming activities, and thus were plowed over without regret and otherwise destroyed by urban development. But a more historically inclined minority—most of whom presume the otherwise inexplicable earthworks had hosted “religious ceremonies,” though virtually none of whom express confidence in any abiding sacred energy—took a much stronger interest in preserving and documenting the mounds. Historian Richard Shiels describes civic-minded efforts to preserve the Newark mounds as early as 1853, which thereby account for their distinction as by far the largest of the Hopewell constructions to escape wholesale destruction. And in every era since then there has been a prominent non-Native voice arguing, often against considerable resistance, that the ancient enclosures constitute a precious and irreplaceable resource, deserving conservation and careful study. To accuse White constituencies either of complete indifference or total consensus with respect to the site is far too simple.

Though roughly half of the full complex was obliterated, early residents of the Newark area did, therefore, constitute the rare exception by preserving largely intact its two most prominent features—the Great Circle and
the Octagon—each of which would then embark on a very different sort of architectural reception history. With respect to the former, Shiels recounts a list of decidedly rambunctious nineteenth- and early twentieth-century repurpositions—very loosely termed “conservation efforts”—few of which show any sign of misgivings about desecrating a “sacred site,” but most of which do exude commitment to a kind of civic-minded interest in “the public good.” The conveniently flat, ample, and clearly bounded Great Circle, some 320 meters across, was utilized, for instance, as a fairground from the 1850s through the 1930s; repeatedly, beginning with the Civil War, as a military encampment and training ground; as the stage setting for Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show in 1884; as a race track for horses and later bicycles, motorcycles, and automobiles; as site to a dance pavilion and, in 1898, a summer resort, which eventually became an amusement park, Idlewilde Park, complete with a Ferris wheel, roller coaster, casino, theater, bowling alley, ponds for boating and swimming, and a European-style hotel and restaurant. This succession of community-oriented but otherwise impious “revalorizations” was, to put it mildly, drastically at odds with anything the Hopewell designers could have anticipated. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine more colorful confirmation of Panofsky’s proposition that the reception history of an abiding work of art or architecture is “tortuous, fortuitous, full of uncertainty, past echoes, and
unexpected turns. It does not possess a logic; it has no constant direction, no
goal.\textsuperscript{43}

By contrast, the other main extant feature, the Octagon, weathered a shorter
but not less controversial list of reutilizations. It was purchased in 1892 by
the Newark Board of Trade, a private organization that functioned much like
a Chamber of Commerce, that made the site available to the State of Ohio as
a summer training ground for the National Guard from 1893 to 1907, a reus­
age that was presented as doubly opportune insofar as, along with service
to the nation, it also served to protect the ancient earthen enclosure from
growing urban development.\textsuperscript{44} Eventually, when the National Guard moved
elsewhere, the deed was returned to the Newark Board of Trade that, in 1910,
made the fateful decision to lease the site to a newly formed country club.\textsuperscript{45}
Controversial from that earliest agreement, for some, the arrangement was
decreed as a shady ploy that used public money to put control of the property
into the hands of a privileged few; but the winners of the debate presented
the construction of a golf course over the Octagon—described in the \textit{Newark
Advocate} as a “benevolent act”—as the sort of felicitous solution that res­
cued the historic site while relieving the city of an expense that it could not
manage.\textsuperscript{46}

By the 1920s, the economic viability of Idlewilde Park had stalled; and
in 1927, a Licking County Conservation League was founded expressly to
assume responsibility for preservation and beautification of what was now
being called Moundbuilders Park. In 1931, the Licking County Historical
Society was organized with the stated purpose of “preserving the mounds”
and transferring oversight to the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical
Society.\textsuperscript{47} Deals were struck and plans made to transform both main sites
into more fully public state parks. To that end, in 1934, the Civilian Works
Administration, a federal agency, employed local men who repaired dam­
age to the walls of the Great Circle and to Eagle Mound in its center; the
end result was a wide open picnic ground. But the federal money ran out
before similar plans could be implemented at the Octagon, where the golf
course thus remained intact. In the ensuing years, even as legal ownership
of the Octagon changed hands, eventually (and now) becoming the property
of the Ohio Historical Connection (formerly the Ohio Historical Society),
the Moundbuilders Country Club was able to secure extensions to its lease,
including the most recent extension that does not expire until 2078!\textsuperscript{48}

Whether one assesses these “conservation” initiatives as influence ped­
dling or as conscientious exercises in public-spiritedness, it was not a public
that included American Indians, who are a very notable absence from the
nineteenth- and early twentieth-century wrangling over the site. Likewise,
salient for the purposes of this chapter is that none of these preservation
projects, irrespective of their avowed civic-mindedness—and irrespective of
declarations that the mounds constitute a kind of "sacred trust" that contemporary Ohioans are charged to protect—make any pretense of returning to the original uses and meanings of the Newark complex. These are creative, interested, deliberately "irreligious," and novel revalorizations that are explicitly acknowledged as such.

By the 1990s, however, a Native voice, perhaps quietly present in the background throughout the entire saga of shifting usages, did reemerge to assert in emphatic ways a right to reclaim the ancient complex as a space of prayer, devotion, and honoring ancestors. Though the absence of any federally recognized Indian tribe in Ohio exacerbates the lack of a unified Native perspective, these assertions of a privileged but distressingly disrespected connection to the Newark Earthworks were based, in large part, on a precolonial affiliation with the region; but even more pertinent to the present discussion are the ways in which those historically based demands were much intensified by supporting claims for the transhistorical potency of the site. Indians are insistent that this is an intrinsically and thus irrevocably "sacred site"—indeed the rhetorical deployment of that term has been a central feature of their protestations—and, moreover, that their reutilization plans, by contrast to others, will restore the ancient complex to a set of usages that are far more consonant with original Hopewell-era intentions. These are, in other words, creative and interested revalorizations that are legitimated by an assertion of unoriginality insofar as they ostensibly resuscitate aboriginal uses and meanings. As is very frequently the case with contested "sacred places," new reuses are presented as very old usages.

The presence of a private golf course on a site to which Indians and others are denied access is an obvious flashpoint for their resentments, grievances for which there is considerable non-Native support in the form of groups like Friends of the Mounds and the Ohio State Newark Earthworks Center. But Native remonstrations extend also to archaeologists who, having devoted whole careers to the study of these places, imagine themselves the real earthwork experts; and thus in that antagonism against academic investigators, Indians generate a quite different constellation of allies and adversaries. In fact, though Indians versus archaeologists and community activists versus the Moundbuilders Country Club constitute perhaps the two most high-profile fault-lines of contention, the dynamics among interested parties are a far more snarled tangle in which every group of stakeholders is diverse within itself. Neither Natives, country club members, city and state officials, local residents, archaeologists nor scholars of numerous other disciplinary persuasions speak with a unified voice. And consequently, given that jumble of competing revalorizations, resentments, alliances, and acrimony, to describe the Newark Earthworks, and especially the Octagon, as a "contested place" is, at best, a severe understatement.
AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE: EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL AND/OR RELIGIOUS REVALORIZATIONS OF THE NEWARK EARTHWORKS

Two centuries of sometimes sluggish, sometimes clamorous debate concerning the meaning, significance, and thus proper utilization of the Newark Earthworks set the stage for unprecedentedly shrill contention over how the ancient enclosures should be managed in the future. Given a lease agreement that runs until 2078, perhaps the most obvious possibility—for some a deeply disappointing outcome, but for others the happiest prospect—would simply be continuation of the current status quo, wherein the Moundbuilders Country Club restricts public access to the Octagon on all but a few days per year and the Great Circle remains an unassuming public park. Alternatively, however, predictions and recommendations of more purposeful futures range across three tiers, wherein the old monuments are revalorized variously as educational, social, and/or explicitly religious resources. Not mutually exclusive solutions, and for the most part not directly contingent on World Heritage designation, several of these hypothetical scenarios are already currently underway. A couple of examples of each sort, all mined from a 2016 interdisciplinary collection of essays on the site, should suffice.

First, the most obvious and least controversial set of futures for the Newark Earthworks entails continued enhancement of their role as an educational resource that will prompt contemporary Americans to appreciate the truly profound, but barely acknowledged, ramifications of living on a landscape once heavily populated by indigenous mound-building cultures. Architectural historian and cofounder of the Center for the Electronic Reconstruction of Historical and Archaeological Sites (CERHAS), the Cincinnati-based organization largely responsible for the elaborate web-based guide to the earthworks known as "The Ancient Ohio Trail," John E. Hancock has been perhaps the most articulate in arguing that success in that initiative will require a more experience-based pedagogical approach. Confessing his own very slow appreciation of just how marvelous these monuments are (and appealing to precisely the same hermeneutical tradition on which this essay relies), Hancock finds in "the primacy of experience" both the foremost cause and the most salient antidote to the near-invisibility of these fantastic built forms in the eyes of the wider public. He argues, again exactly consistent with the present discussion, that instead of viewing the ancient enclosures as "archaeological sites that hold knowledge about distant cultures," they ought to be conceptualized as "continuously meaningful works of architecture"—that is, inexhaustible built forms that can continue to reveal fresh and relevant meanings. And, he contends, moreover, that instead of passive media like books and lectures, it is the sorts of digitally enhanced and experientially interactive...
“tours” through these aged architectural works choreographed by CERHAS that can most effectively accomplish that. Hancock thereby builds a subtle and compelling case that, ironically enough, it is the contrivances of cutting-edge technologies and “augmented reality” that presently provide the most promising means of helping a general audience to fuller appreciation of these 2000-year-old constructions.

This counterintuitive but highly persuasive argument that, ironically, digital technologies—of course, unanticipated by pre-Columbian designers—constitute the currently most efficacious means of bringing back to life dormant meanings that reside in the Hopewell-era monuments reappears in the vision of the Newark Earthworks’ past and future presented by geographer Margaret Wickens Pearce. An expert in the history of indigenous cartography—which, she insists, operates with assumptions very different from those at work in Western map-making—Pearce argues that pre-Columbian engagements with these mounds belonged to a “process-oriented” and “embodied” cartographic tradition in which, instead of aspirations to produce the sort of fixed and final maps to which we customarily aspire, “mapping” was conceived as “an ongoing series of located or situated events among people and places, whereby maps themselves are fragments and not intended to carry all the meanings of the process as a whole.” Every ancient visitor’s participatory experience of the site was, in that sense, an occasion of mapping (or what I would term, an “architectural event”), a view that reechoes the hermeneutical proposition that the meanings of the Newark Earthworks are—indeed always have been—ever-emerging and never fully exhausted. Her plan, furthermore, opens the possibility that contemporary visitors, now equipped with various interactive and imaging technologies, can be, not unlike their pre-Columbian counterparts, active participants in an ongoing process of map-making that will, happily enough, “bring alive” the old monuments without, however, leading to a definitive diagrammatic rendering of the site. And, therefore, Pearce too is among those who predict that the formerly famous site can have a very relevant and promising future.

A second, not mutually exclusive set of recommendations for the earthworks’ future moves past pedagogy per se in favor of a more sociopsychological aspiration of (re)using the ancient mounds as a resource for the enhancement of identities, most notably, those of Native groups and individuals who, according to Indian sociologist Marti Chaatsmith, have both a special affinity and a special entitlement with respect to the ongoing management of the mounds. In her analysis, the disputed reception career of the Newark site provides a microcosm that displays the harsh colonialist realities of European incursion, broken treaties, and forced relocation, which led to a “history of erasure” wherein, distressingly, “the meaning of their earthen enclosures in Ohio drifted from the collective indigenous memory.” But
Chaatsmith is nonetheless another who anticipates a very bright and important future that has doubly salutary effects both for Ohio’s earthworks and for contemporary Native communities. On the one hand, prominent Indian scholars and artists as well as tribal leaders increasingly emerge as frontline resources for the preservation and thoughtful management of the Newark site. And, on the other hand, as the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma’s recently replenished affiliations with the architectural accomplishments of their ancient forbears well demonstrate, the Ohio mounds can also serve as a potent resource for present-day Indian communities, especially those with some historical connection to this region, to revitalize a sense of their own history and cultural heritage. Chaatsmith argues, in short, that Natives’ special investments in the site benefit both the ancient monuments and contemporary American Indians.

Likewise, relevant to this incentive for identity construction—and even more exemplary of the general workings of heavily contested “sacred spaces”—is the paired vision of the earthworks’ past and future presented by Indian scholars Duane Champagne and Carole Goldberg. Their commentary on “indigenous motivations, values, and practices about ancient holy places” stresses that, by stark contrast to Western assumptions about buying and selling real estate, traditionally, indigenous peoples do not “own” the land per se, but consider instead that “people belong to the land, like the plants, animals, places, and sacred bundles.” Extending that intriguingly inverted view back into the Woodland past, Champagne and Goldberg surmise that the Newark complex, as a major pilgrimage destination, was an exceptionally inclusive and “unguarded” place to which countless different groups would have felt an obligation for responsible “stewardship,” but none would have claimed exclusivist “ownership”; in that sense, the place engendered highly diversified but more conciliatory than contentious perspectives. Then, informed by a number of recent legal challenges in which Indian people have successfully reclaimed control of traditional “sacred sites,” they make a persuasive case that this nonhegemonic ideal of “belonging to the land,” and thus being compelled to share access with others, remains very much intact. Accordingly, in their upbeat forecast, were the Newark Earthworks selected as a World Heritage site, not only American Indians of numerous tribal affiliations but also “many indigenous peoples from around the world would probably want to attend and perform ceremonies.” Suitably enough, as in the Hopewell past, Newark could again be, if the permanent abode for few, a rewarding destination for many.

Finally, though again not mutually exclusive, are forecasts that push beyond pedagogical and broadly social rewards by envisioning the Newark Earthworks as a catalyst to ongoing religious insight and fulfillment. Ill at ease with incautious pronouncements that these places are “sacred” and that
the priorities of the ancient mound builders were overwhelmingly "spiritual," scholar of American religion and specialist in the dynamics of tourism and travel, Thomas Bremer, for instance, worries that the prevailing assumptions about the "religious" status of Ohio mound sites may actually have "more to do with the subjective concerns of the modern interpreters than they do with the ancient concerns of the people who built and used them." Bremer nonetheless trains his attention on the persistence with which, even now, "these ancient places have in fact attained religious significance for contemporary people as sites of modern religiosity." But why, he asks, and in what sense, do these aged constructions persist as religious contexts and resources? To explore those questions, he interviewed participants in a 2009 "pilgrimage," termed the "Walk with the Ancients," wherein a very diverse Native and non-Native group of some thirty walkers spent a week retracing the 60-mile path of the Great Hopewell Road; and he heard even from a self-described "religious skeptic," who anticipated little more than a long hike, that the occasion was intensely humbling and no less than "a highlight of my life so far." While avoiding simple suggestions that the "meaning-making journeys" of these modern-day pilgrims mirrored those of their Hopewell counterparts, Bremer does speak to what hermeneuts term the inexhaustibility of the earthworks by concluding that Newark presently is—and can remain in the future—an "auspicious place of modern meaningfulness" and, to that highly qualified extent, a "sacred site."

Architect and architectural historian Thomas Barrie similarly imagines that future visitors to the Newark Earthworks, whether Native or non-Native, can enjoy not simply educational and sociopsychological but also religious and metaphysical compensations. In his assessment, Hopewell-era usages of the earthen enclosures, "sacred spaces" that he also describes as "liminal spaces" or "places of mediation," simultaneously supported a wide array of broadly religious activities that included marking a group's territory, replicating, and thereby renewing the structure of the cosmos and, moreover, "facilitating ongoing connections with both deceased ancestors and the gods." Barrie then stresses both the continued relevance of these fundamental existential concerns for present-day people and the continued viability of the earthen precincts as propitious contexts in which to engage and work through those enduring dilemmas. In his view, contemporary visitors, not less than pre-Columbian pilgrims, are vexed by the paired perennial challenges of "the enormity of our environmental setting (over which we have little control), and the mystery of death (and what may lie beyond it);" and also like their aboriginal counterparts, modern-day travelers can find in the Newark Earthworks a specially pregnant environment in which to formulate workable solutions to those pan-human precarities. In that sense, the old forms remain, as numerous as these imagined futures contend, "continually meaningful."
In sum, the convoluted past and uncertain future of the Newark Earthworks present more than clear exemplification of countless general lessons about "sacred space" both as a historical phenomenon and as an academic topic of study. That labyrinthine, halting, and recently reinvigorated architectural reception history provides, furthermore, the sort of lens that magnifies and throws into high relief what is equally true but much less apparent for religious places and buildings with far shorter, tidier, and more consistent reception careers. And thus in the swirl of opinions around Newark one finds, along with all the rest, a set of cautionary clues about how to undertake the non-normative, rigorously empirical study of any instance of purportedly sacred space or architecture.

Even the most recent scholarly work on the site reflects, for instance, troubling slippage wherein the "sacredness" of the Newark Earthworks sometimes refers to an intrinsic extranatural power that supposedly inheres in the site and mounds, sometimes to the "hallowed ground" of one's ancestors, sometimes to a socially constructed quality that outsiders can respect without actually embracing, sometimes to the discernment of a "sacred trust" that has been imposed upon the citizenry of Ohio, sometimes to an acknowledgment of the site's unique significance as an imperiled research opportunity and, not infrequently, merely to a vague sense of specialness that engenders largely uncritical curiosity. Reliance on the term, though nearly always approving, is ambiguous in the extreme. And thus, especially for religionists, these ample but very uneven deployments of that designation, all of which are predicated on broader presuppositions and commitments, present a strong warning that attributions of the "sacred" status of a place are precisely the sort of loaded language that critical scholars are compelled to scrutinize and unpack.

The site additionally refocuses and magnifies each of the three broad propositions with which we began. Regarding so-called superabundance and autonomy, irrespective of tacit archaeological assumptions of univocal pre-Columbian apprehensions that were fully consistent with designer expectations, we have to suspect that, even in the Hopewell era, the meanings and uses of the enclosures were multiple and fluctuating; and more recent eras provide unassailable evidence of that ever-innovative variability. Having outlived their creators by two millennia, these mounds, as we've seen, occasion and endure a stupendous, in some respects absurd, concatenation of diverse repurposings—supplanting ancient ancestor worship and moon-rising celebrations with picnics, Ferris wheels, Civil War reunions, auto races and,
of late, golf tournaments, Aztec dance performances, powwows, and atlatl-throwing demonstrations. A true cacophony of reutilizations—an extreme case, to be sure—but one that forces to recognition the rebellious autonomy, "the surplus of meaning" and thus "inexhaustibility" characteristic of essentially all sacred spaces and architecture. To reiterate, all such contexts are "reinterpreted sites," and every experience of sacred architecture, even of a brand new church, is, to some extent, a creative and interested revalorization.

Regarding contestation, the checkered reception history of the Newark Earthworks—at no time more than at the present—demonstrates with equally unmistakable clarity that alternate opinions frequently escalate into anger, resentment, charges of desecration, legal challenges, backroom deals, and public protests. These are interpretive disagreements with deep roots and high stakes. From the empirical hermeneutical frame of this essay, the diversity of tussling interpretations is a fascinating inevitability, and thus an opportune teaching moment; but virtually none of the interested parties is willing to accept that their understanding of the site is simply one among a vast array of equally plausible options. Though shared indignation about the golf course actually provides a point of unification for otherwise disputatious voices, embracing one interpretation nearly always entails denigrating others. Archaeologists, uniquely equipped with historical information (and, in cases, religious-like convictions to "scientific" rigor), are well positioned to assert the superiority of their views over both laypersons and scholars of different disciplinary outlooks; for them, casting, for example, a Maya daykeeper's well-attended (re)utilization of the Ohio mounds to reenergize so-termed Crystal Skulls as "nonsense" is a matter of professional responsibility.

Indians, who strongly disagree among themselves as to who are the rightful descendants of the Ohio mound builders, frequently invoke a privileged standpoint that, for them, overrules the surmises of non-Native investigators; and, though less prevalent, Mormons also claim a kind of insider knowledge that supersedes conventional archaeological interpretations. Even the liberal-minded activists who champion tolerance and throw their energetic support behind Native attempts to gain fuller access to the site are, in the main, dismissive of Mormon and "New Age" revalorizations. This is, in short, the sort of heartfelt, insult-hurling contestation that shows no signs of impending consensus; but it does telescope the sort of stormy disagreement that so many sacred sites evoke.

Finally, regarding unpredictability, we do encounter some civic and recreational repurposings of the Newark enclosures that make no pretense of faithfulness to original usages. But still, the appeal of recovering the ostensibly first purposes and meanings is overwhelming among both scholarly and lay, Native, and non-Native constituencies; and empirically-minded hermeneuts too are urgent to understand as fully as possible the intent with which these
monuments were designed and the ritual uses to which they were put in the Hopewell era. But where most award those elusive antediluvian intentions an authoritative standing that consigns the array of subsequent reuses to the status of misapprehensions and mistakes, hermeneuts of that persuasion would position those initial conceptions, to the extent they are retrievable, as the opening episodes in an ongoing reception history that is, like an unpredictable life history, highly eventful, occasionally chaotic, and never teleological. No one can know what will happen next.

In this respect also the Newark Earthworks constitute an exceptionally tumultuous exemplar, but one that forces to attention the general rule that, where the histories of long-standing sacred places are concerned, trajectories are unreliable and endpoints unpredictable. To put all reusages on the same plane—as things that actually happen!—may seem, at times, an unserious endorsement of fatuous, frivolous, and flaky indulgences that thereby obscure the “truer” and more legitimate uses of the mounds. But not unwarranted annoyance with the fully democratic acknowledgment of all manner of self-serving and idiosyncratic revalorizations is really less an indictment of this empirically grounded hermeneutical approach than an eye-opening realization about the evocative nature and endlessly flexible appeal of such sites.74 And if that vicissitudinous unpredictability poses both frustrations for deeply invested aficionados of the mounds and extremely difficult questions for the policymakers charged to manage them, it also makes the Newark Earthworks a quintessential context in which to observe the dynamics of the excitingly ambiguous topic of “sacred space.”

NOTES


3. There is relatively abundant archaeological literature that deals with the Newark Earthworks. See, among numerous works by this leading authority on the site, Bradley T. Lepper, Ohio Archaeology: An Illustrated Chronicle of Ohio’s Ancient American Indian Cultures (Wilmington, OH: Orange Frazer, 2005). To date, the only academic book devoted fully to the site is The Newark Earthworks: Enduring Monuments, Contested Meanings, eds. Lindsay Jones and Richard D. Shiels (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2016), which includes fifteen essays by scholars of numerous and different disciplinary orientations. Note also that
abundant, diverse and reliable materials on the Ohio earthworks, Newark included, is available at “The Ancient Ohio Trail,” a heritage tourism website collaboratively developed by the Ohio State Newark Earthworks Center and the Center for the Electronic Reconstruction of Historical and Archaeological Sites (CERHAS) at the University of Cincinnati. http://www.ancientohiotrail.org


5. For a distinction between “defilement” and “dispossession” as two somewhat different ways of disrespecting a sacred site, see the editors’ “Introduction,” in *American Sacred Space*, eds. David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995) 2.


7. Since 2008 elements of the Newark Earthworks have been included on the “tentative list” kept by the U.S. Department of Interior from which the United States will make nominations to UNESCO for inscription on the World Heritage list. See http://www.nps.gov/oia/TentativeList/Tentative_map.htm.


Chicago Press, 1987) 30, provides a similar insight when he discusses "truth as the interplay of disclosure-concealment-revealment."


13. Regarding Gadamer's notion that the experience of art and architecture is always informed by one's "preunderstandings," and to that extent the "tradition" in which one participates, see ibid.


18. Note, for instance, that The Newark Earthworks, eds. Jones and Shiels, is an interdisciplinary collection of essays that forgoes any attempt at formulating a pretended consensus in favor of displaying the very wide disparities among different scholarly interpretations of the same site.


20. I borrow the notion of "open site" from Michel Foucault, The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences (London and New York: Tavistock/Routledge, 1974) xii, where he explains: "I should like this work to read as an open site. Many questions are laid out on it that have not yet found answers; and many of the gaps refer to earlier works or to others that have not yet been completed, or even begun."


22. Among numerous sources for this basic information, see Lepper, Ohio Archaeology.

23. In addition to the Adena and Hopewell, so-called Fort Ancient culture (1000 CE to 1650) constitutes a third, somewhat later set of mound builders active in the Ohio region.
24. See Bradley T. Lepper, “The Newark Earthworks: A Monumental Engine of World Renewal,” in *The Newark Earthworks*, eds. Jones and Shiels, 41–62, wherein the archaeologist author revises his long-held view that burial mounds were of only modest importance in the Newark complex by now arguing that “[u]ltimately, mortuary ceremonialism was the sine qua non of the Newark Earthworks complex as it was for many of the other monumental earthwork centers,” 57.

25. The plates in Squier and Davis, *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley* (originally 1846) still provides among the revealing inventories of the remarkable number of different geometrical (and effigy type) configurations in the Ohio mounds.

26. While still considered an integral part of the Newark Earthworks, the Great Circle is actually in what is now the adjacent city of Heath.

27. All discussions of the astronomical alignments at Newark rely on the pioneering teamwork of astrophysicist Ray Hively and philosopher Robert Horn. See their “The Newark Earthworks: A Grand Unification of Earth, Sky, and Mind.” in *The Newark Earthworks*, eds. Jones and Shiels, for their recent work, which cites and builds upon much of their earlier work.


33. Lepper, “Tracking Ohio’s Great Hopewell Road.”


38. Chaatsmith, “Native (Re)Investments in Ohio,” 220.

40. Most notable in this regard are the meticulous Smithsonian-sponsored surveys and drawings in Ephraim George Squier and Edwin Hamilton Davis's *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley: Comprising the Results of Extensive Original Surveys and Explorations* (1848), which continue to provide the most thorough and accurate inventory of the mounds, many of which no longer exist.

41. See Richard D. Shiels, "The Newark Earthworks Past and Present," in *The Newark Earthworks*, eds. Jones and Shiels, 27. Shiels's article provides the prime resource for this account of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century status of the site.


47. Shiels, "The Newark Earthworks Past and Present," 33.


49. Chaatsmith, "Native (Re)Investments in Ohio," 222ff.

50. Chaatsmith, "Native (Re)Investments in Ohio," 222, recounts a particularly infamous episode in which Native groups forced the termination of a modest archaeological excavation that was being undertaken at the Great Circle in 1992.


70. See the "Modern Rituals" section of the "Ancient Ohio Trail" website (www.ancientohiotrail.org/).
72. Note, for instance, competing claims among three federally recognized tribes of Shawnees based in Oklahoma but with Ohio descent lines, as well as nearly three dozen groups in Ohio to claim Shawnee descent, perhaps most prominently the Shawnee Nation United Remnant Band.
73. For one Mormon view on the Newark Earthworks, see, for instance, the video Lost Civilizations of North America, executive producer, Steven Smoot—written, edited, and filmed by Rick Stout (lostcivilizationdvd.com).
74. Regarding means of sorting the disconcerting, seemingly indiscriminant acknowledgement of all sorts of revalorizations, from the profound to the preposterous, see discussion of what I term "alternative protocols of architectural apprehension" in Jones, The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture, vol. I, 198–208.