

# Egotopia: Narcissism and the New American Landscape

John Miller

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This work aims to identify the physical ugliness that defines and homogenizes America's cities, suburbs and countryside. Believing that prevailing assessments of the American landscape are inadequate and injudicious, the author calls into question the conventional wisdom of environmentalists, urban planners, and architects alike. In this examination of what he sees as the ugliness that is the American consumer society, he argues that our aesthetic condition can be fully understood only by explorers of the metaphoric environment. Metaphorically, the ugliness of America's great suburban sprawl is the physical manifestation of our increasing narcissim - our egotopia. The ubiquity of psychotherapy as a medium promoting self-indulgence has deified private man as it has demonized public man. The New American Landscape, Miller argues, is no longer the physical manifestation of public and communal values. Instead, its commercialism is a projection of private fantasies and narcissistic self-indulgence. Individual interest and private passions can no longer tolerate, nor even recognize, aesthetic concerns in such a landscape dedicated to uncompromising notions of utility.



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