Heterotopia and perspective: Towards a different imagining of landscape

Henrietta Simson

Introduction

As Malcolm Andrews argues, landscape painting in Western culture comes into its own during the sixteenth century, encouraged by the Italian fashion for designing villas so that views of the surrounding countryside become framed by the windows, thus "pictorializing [the] landscape" (1999, 56). In Palladio's famous Villa Barbaro, this "pictorializing" is enhanced by frescos of landscapes painted by Paolo Veronese (1528–1588) that complement and supplement the actual land-scape views seen from the windows (Figure 7.1). Veronese's sophisticated use of perspectival techniques produces a vision that blends pictorial and physical land-scape space, the actual and the painted melding into a sophisticated but apparentlystraightforward, rationally convincing image. Although these frescos were painted approximately 450 years ago, ideas about landscape have remained remarkably static since then, and it continues to be understood in visual terms – as a scenic background to human narrative – whether as a painted, filmed, or photographed image or as a physical landscape to be viewed or surveyed from a distance. In the next few paragraphs I want to analyse the complexities within this "pictorializing" before setting out an argument that understands the landscape image (and by implication the landscape itself) in terms that challenge its construction under the globalised visual assumptions of early twenty-first-century capitalism.

When Leon Battista Alberti first theorised the technique of linear perspective in 1435, his focus was to aid the painter in the "natural" depiction of objectsand figures in order that they may make convincing stories ("*istoria*") rather than understanding perspective as creating paintings that depicted extensive space, which is how it appears 130 years later in Veronese's frescos and how it is more likely to be understood today (Alberti 2004, 67–78). Perspective now appearsto describe the actual properties of space and this elision manifests clearly inthe idea of landscape, and is reflected in the terminology: the horizon line, the dual vanishing and viewing points. Perspectival images appear somehow equivalent to both "natural human vision" and "objective external space," so that they seem to show their subjects in an unmediated, direct way (Mitchell 1986, 37). As such, they are susceptible to ideological power, and their relationship with West-ern paradigms is complex and far reaching. They have intertwined with capitalist structures since the Renaissance not least because, as Michael Baxandall has shown, the mathematical knowledge that propelled perspective's development was also an essential aspect of an increasingly sophisticated banking system. The formulas that were used by artists to measure and shape their paintings were the same formulas used by bankers and traders to calculate interest, convert currency,and to measure and cost their goods (Baxandall 1988, 96). Perspective is further linked to capitalist ideology by Martin Jay when he states that "the placement of objects in a relational visual field, objects with no intrinsic value of their own out-side of these relations, may be said to have paralleled the fungibility of exchange value under capitalism" (Jay 1993, 59). And with the development of Alberti's "centric ray" into the concept of the horizon line, perspective came to facilitate the measuring, mapping, and therefore conquering of space – enabling European imperialism and capitalist global trade (Steyerl 2011).

Perspective is fundamental to Western visual structures, and its influence on the

development of the concept of landscape cannot be overestimated. Space became understood in visual terms, while perspectival images appeared to describe the separation of Descartes's *res extensa* from *res cogito* through their dual vanishing and viewing points. In this way landscape became entrenched as "object," opposite to and utterly distinct from the "subject," which is defined as uniquely human. This is a double bind that fixed it as "nature" to our "culture" – passively understood as background to the foregrounded human – and also as "representation" – it is an image, formed in the rational mind and governed by the rules of perspective, and as such it problematically confirms the assumption of space that, as Doreen Massey states, exists as "stasis," rather than "heterogeneity" (Massey 2005, 19).

Figure 7.1 Paulo Veronese, Sala a Crociera, 1560–1, fresco, Villa Barbaro, Maser

This visual predicament has been critiqued since the linguistic turn that emerged towards the end of the twentieth century, whereby language and the interpretation of signs became the cornerstone for thinking within the humanities and social sciences, and the study of the image as "sign" superseded previous Western notions of the rationally produced image of equivalence.[1] The deconstructive practices that were developed by prominent thinkers on the image from this time such as Norman Bryson revealed the ideological appropriation embedded within "realist" images, i.e. the assumption that they can somehow directly represent their objects without mediation. However, this interpretative approach has resulted in an erasure of sorts, whereby images (and for present purpose images of landscape specifically) are ultimately seen in linguistic terms. W. J. T. Mitchell's writing from 1986 reveals this methodology:

The commonplace of modern studies of images, in fact, is that they must be understood as a kind of language; instead of providing a transparent window on the

world, images are now regarded as the sort of sign that presents a deceptive appearance of naturalness and transparence concealing an opaque, distorting, arbitrary mechanism of representation, a process of ideological mystification.
(Mitchell 1986, 6)

Understanding realist images as signs is clearly an important means of wresting them from ideological control; however, as Henri Lefebvre points out, the dis- course that frames this approach (which included the writing of Julia Kristeva, Jacques Derrida, and Roland Barthes) continues to consign space to the mental realm and eliminates the social dimension from its characterisations (Lefebvre 1991, 5). Their thesis, Lefebvre claimed, "assumes the logical, epistemological and anthropological priority of language over space," a problem whereby "[t]he pre-existence of an objective, neutral and empty space is simply taken as read, and only the space of speech (and writing) is dealt with as something that must be created" (1991, 36). This linguistic approach continues to privilege the mental realm over the physical. It leaves Western spatial assumptions unchecked in the process, and therefore becomes an inherently problematic reformulation of the Cartesian *Cogito* (Lefebvre 1991, 6). This inclination to assume a measured space across the picture plane (whether in a perspectival painting, a photograph, or through a screen) as a given, as something that seems to perfectly describe Descartes's *res extensa*, shows the difficulties that surround the imbrication of perspective, representation, and space, and the perpetuation of landscape as a passively consumed visual object.

With these historical burdens is it possible to re-formulate landscape images in ways that can shape a different relationship with the landscape itself? How can we get around the problems of landscape and representation? In the following sections I want to re-evaluate the landscape image and its construction and function under Western norms. I will argue that heterotopia, as theorised by Foucault, can help to do this through "suspending," "neutralising," and "inverting" the assumptions of realism, of objective space, and representation that surround its regimes (Foucault 2008, 17). New imaginings are crucial for a different formulation of landscape, and as Julian Reid shows the "space-image" is crucial for shaping the imagination:

> [The] space-image . . . is not an image of space, nor simply a spatialized form of image, but a space in which images live, that is, the living space of the image. It is a space in which the imagination locates itself as well as an image in which the imagination sees itself, that is, the image of imagination.
(Reid 2018, 45)

Reid defines the ship that Foucault invokes within his writing as a "space-image," a space that is also an image, that transports the imagination and in which it thrives (2018, 45). I suggest that the landscape image, rather than continuing as an image of rationally laid out "space," needs to become a "space-image" in order to establish a different imagining of landscape. It is through the "space-image" that landscape can be presented in non-perspectival ways that move it away from its association with representation and towards the persistent and shared space of materiality. The structures behind the image of landscape in Veronese's painting still shape ideas of landscape today, and our digitalised technologies are able to appropriate visual space in ways far more efficient than Renaissance perspective. The globalisation processes that drive the early twenty-first century are not remote from or irrelevant to this predicament, for the digital image stream propels them and reaffirms their ideological assumptions. New imaginings of what landscape might be are urgently required, imaginings that enable us to see it and our relationship with it, in ways adequate to the seemingly insurmountable problems of anthropocenic climate crisis and the planetary consequences of globalised capitalism.

Landscapes of difference

My practice as an artist engages with these ideas and asks whether pre-perspectival landscape backgrounds can be re-configured so that they critique this explicitly visual construction of landscape. Properties specific to the heterotopia, laid out by Foucault and elaborated on since in various ways, can be applied in order to enable a nuanced understanding of the landscape image, formulating it as a discursive object that calls into question previous dichotomies, that becomes an active agent in the way space and environment are imagined and therefore shaped. This process defines landscape as a co-subject by resisting the overtly optical effect produced by dominant (now digital, increasingly virtual) image forms and loosening the fixity of perspective's viewing subject/viewed object matrix. In doing so the image opens up to difference. Depicted fragments of wilderness landscape from fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italian painting (that crucially offer no perspectival view) can return to the present as translated forms that challenge the assumptions of a virtualised, digital image world and propose an alternative to landscapeas representation. Through their appropriation, these pre-modern landscape forms become reconfigured as radical propositions for our visual and spatial paradigms. Through the removal of all narrative elements (a process that also frees them from the specificities of their historical era) they reposition the idea of landscape from background towards the central focus of the image, no longer peripheral context, but a human-less subject in its own right whose material configurations are not subject to human narrative. In this way the rational language of representationis side-lined and these landscape forms leave behind the restrictive relationship they have with narrative – landscape as the "natural" setting for a "cultural" story, Their reformulation as twenty-first-century artworks unleashes their heterotopic force into a contemporary visuality underpinned by perspectival structures and shaped by global and digital capitalism.

This process of re-appropriation (analysed in the next section) exploits a practice of "othering," whereby the strangeness of these landscapes that operate out- side perspectival landscape space and representational image-making disrupts thesameness of the digitalised landscape image in its globalised, circulatory form. Landscape elements such as those depicted within the fresco cycles painted by Giotto or Pietro Lorenzetti in the Basilica of San Francesco, Assisi, problematize the overtly visual, later history of the landscape genre, with its prioritisation of naturalistically rendered extensive space laid out in front of the viewer who imagines (as depicted by Veronese) that they are looking through a window and could possibly step out onto the landscape beyond.

Rather than understanding landscape as a kind of scenery in front of which the human subject appears, I 4utilise these forms in order to 4radicalise4 the idea of the background and to oppose the genre's presentation of landscape as a cohesive view that extends across the picture plane and that provides an image of "nature"in which the (human) subject is then 4contextualised through narrative. Any previous narrative or scenic elements are removed, opening up the purely visual to new temporal and material possibilities, and shifting the resonance of landscape fromspace to time. A displacement from landscape as image to landscape as fellow material body, even something fragile that requires care, occurs. A fragment is theopposite to an extensive view and my works prioritise materiality over visuality, demanding imaginative and affective contact with their appropriated landscape forms, disarranging flat visual representation in the process. In this way they alsoshift our received understanding of historical linearity, bringing the distant past into the contemporary; earlier forms rediscovered as "unfamiliar" acting on the present, positing a different potential for landscape. Indeed, as Foucault says of Borges's

Chinese encyclopaedia, "the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the [5realisation of the] limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *that*" (1989, xvi, italics in original).

If analysis from the field of art history primarily entails a process of looking and writing, the process of making (or "re-making") introduces a new form of contact with an earlier painting, which emphasises the material "other" of the image. And by exploiting the paradoxical qualities that are concealed within our habituated perspectival modes of viewing, attention is brought to a spatial present via a new material body that moves between then and now, critiquing the 5spectacularised capitalist subject that is always headed towards an idealised technological future. Following Foucault's definition of heterotopia, these works reconfigure the relationship between language and the world, and so help rethink landscape as a "co -subject," unfixing it from its structuring as "objective space." As Foucault argues:

> *Heterotopias* are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this *and* that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy "syntax" in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite one another) to "hold together." . . . [H]eterotopias . . . desiccate speech, stopwords in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences.

(Foucault 1989, xix, emphasis in text)

The next section explores this idea of the co-subject through a discussion of four artworks that actively exploit the inherent tensions within the "syntax" that under-pins the landscape image including its relationship to narrative and to the human subject, to representation and to the technological appropriation of human vision associated with Western visual systems.

Landscape as co-subject

Landscape with a Spring (after Giotto) (Figure 7.2) explores what a landscape painting might mean if it contains no human narrative or subject. The painting shows a dry and featureless rocky outcrop in which, to the extreme bottom right, there is a small stream, a spring that emerges from a hole in the rocks. The painting copies from *The Miracle of the Spring*, part of the fresco cycle in the Upper Basilica in Assisi painted between 1297 and 1299 and attributed to Giotto (1266–1337). The frescoes show stories from the life of Saint Francis, as recounted by the Franciscan Prior General, Bonaventura. Here, Francis is travelling in the mountains with two monks and a peasant who (according to Bonaventura) has lent him his donkey. The peasant is weak from exhaustion and in need of some water. Francis kneels down and prays, and a spring immediately appears which is subsequently never found again. The fresco thereby defines a place in which the heavenly has miraculously and momentarily broken through, revealing the already heterotopic formulation of this "landscape-place." According to Foucault, the "Middle Ages" were a "hierarchical ensemble of places" where a cosmology existed in which "the supercelestial places . . . opposed . . . the celestial, and the celestial place was in turn opposed to the terrestrial place. It was this complete hierarchy, this opposition, this intersection of places that constituted what could very roughly be called medieval space" (Foucault 1989, 1). This hierarchy divided space, with each part understood in terms of its position within the whole. The world was shaped by symbols, whose language was hidden within it. Foucault's discussion of the heterotopia is linked to this larger project that explores

the relation betweenlanguage and "things," as exemplified in *The Order of Things*. He draws out the differing historical regimes of knowledge in Western thought, exploring ideas of representation and resemblance, and the persistence of language. Foucault sees that under the regime of representation (epitomised by Descartes's thinking "I") no resemblance is necessary between object and thought; a rational abstraction replaces the realms of symbolic correspondence that shaped the medieval world: "Representations are not rooted in a world that gives them meaning; they open ofthemselves on to a space that is their own, whose internal network gives rise to meaning" (1989, 86–87).

Figure 7.2 Landscape with a Spring (after Giotto), Henrietta Simson, 2010, 48 × 60 cm,oil and pigment on gesso

Language, the "word of God," shaped the medieval world through the idea of the"model"; it constituted the mystical origin of things, which could then reveal andbring forth its divine mysteries through symbols manifest in the physical world. In Giotto's narrative, the sudden appearance of the spring is confirmation of God'smysterious writing of the world. In this world of medieval resemblance, a deeperorder (that of a divine mystery) is revealed through symbols. Conversely, in the world of representation, the world is "object" and this deeper order is revealed only in the thinking mind, which *interprets* the world and reflexively recognises itself and its relation to the divine. The "Word" has moved from the physical to the mental sphere and the landscape becomes extensive empty space bereft of miracles. In this world visual representation relies more on abstract mathematicalqualities than it does on resemblance. However Foucault asserts that language persists in this visual, abstracted episteme of representation, although not in its previous existence, for "[i]t no longer appears hidden in the enigma of the mark"and not in future semiotic terms, "it has not yet appeared

in the theory of signification" (1989, 87). Accordingly, it reinforces the hierarchy and ideology of a scientific culture and its rational representations, a culture that emphasises the "naturalness" of its images, and landscape as objective space. The power of the heterotopia lies in its ability to break this apart because it breaks apart the order of language, interrupting the way it shapes things, undermining its relation to the spatial.

Giotto's fresco reveals the world as resemblance, divine mystery underscored in the sudden appearance of the spring. *Landscape with a Spring (after Giotto)* is of a different order – the title only suggesting that there was once a more significant event attached to the spring – while the narrative figures which orientate the miracle and which populate a world of resemblance are gone. As a heterotopic landscape it becomes unfixed from the previous medieval order of resemblance, and simultaneously presents an image of landscape that is not of the perspectival order of representation. The divine breaks through in an instant in Giotto's painting; here by breaking apart the language of representation and the visual, it is possible to focus on the landscape as subject *in itself*.

This absence of human narrative signals the lack of human subject. In *Landscape without Stigmata (after Pietro) (Figure 7.3)*, Pietro Lorenzetti's (c.1280–1348) fresco of *St. Francis Receiving his Stigmata*, painted in c.1320 also in the San Francesco Basilica (Lower Church) in Assisi, is reconfigured into a small panel painting from which St. Francis and the other friar, the small chapel, the bridge, and the seraphic vision have all been removed. Only the landscape remains – a rocky wilderness, barren except for two trees that punctuate the skyline, the dark blue of which is covered with a muted earth-red wash. A ravine zigzags vertically down the centre of the painting, and a small stream flows down this, spilling out into the dark pool that fills the bottom of the picture plane, giving the barren mountains a watery base which acts as a visual barrier to the viewer. This painting highlights the vulnerability of the object (or landscape) exposed and laid bare by the lack of human narrative. This sense is reinforced by the brittle, fragile gesso surface on which the landscape is painted, which contributes to a feeling of pathos in the work, pointing to the need to care for the "other" – as object or landscape. The ravine, as "stigmata" suggests that the landscape has been "wounded," by a presence no longer visible. This points to a new ecological ethics, where the lack of subject or figure, the "bracketed" human (as defined by Jane Bennett) (2010, ix) reveals the significance of the object in itself.[2] The scene is replete with an entirety of matter, as if one is looking in on a distilled and distant world, human presence evident (but not privileged) not simply by dint of it being an artefact, but also by the landscape's *embodied* character. This painted landscape does not represent a "natural space" in terms of Cartesian logic or the perspectival tradition of landscape, but instead operates in terms of affective materiality and imagination. It is a landscape that carries its own histories, and the traces of human subjectivity are visible within these, but it does not employ perspectival space to situate and implicate the viewer within the scene; its focus is instead on the landscape in its own right, and the viewer is confronted with a landscape that no longer frames the human subject, but that has re-positioned itself beyond the former subject/object hierarchies that shape the Western landscape tradition.

Figure 7.3 Landscape without Stigmata (after Pietro), Henrietta Simson, 2008, 65 × 60 cm, oil and pigment on gesso

Crucial to the definition of the pictorial object as defined through its affective materiality and not in terms of language (or human narrative), is the idea of distance.[3] And by identifying the landscape image as "distant" it becomes easier to see it as a body in its own right, rather than its characterisation as a view that is required to contextualise the subject through narrative. Distance here is emphasised as historical rather than spatial, landscape as the ultimately inaccessible "other." In an apparent aporia, redefining visuality and materiality in this way can foster a relationship between the human body and the landscape form that is founded on a shared embodiment. The process of removing the traces of subject matter so that the landscapes can stand as singular objects suggests affinity through the affective, a bodily rather than rationally based understanding, but this is a highly paradoxical empathy, these paintings being absolutely dissimilar in their emptiness.[4] There is no human subject depicted in them by way of narrative; they cease to be "scenes" or "scenery" in which human drama is enacted, and instead become replete and "distant." And as Timothy Morton says (not without irony): "To love extension . . . is to love the thingly quality of the other, in the ultimate, Cartesian sense: to respect what is truly other about the other" (2007, 179). Morton's argument reveals how "Nature" – the Cartesian "extension" of matter and space through which landscape is defined – is a constructed and problematic category, and he challenges the subject/object dualist constructions of the Western philosophical tradition. But through "loving" the "other" (in this case the *res extensa* of Descartes's *cogito*), we begin to empathise with that which is truly not the human subject. By recognising the distance within this shared but separated embodiment, landscape overcomes its role as backdrop to human life. Landscape as visual experience and landscape as material object become equally distributed within this work.

Hills and Other Spaces (after Martini) (Figure 7.4) develops a critique of the landscape image by drawing on Foucault's discussion of language as the hidden heart of representation that shapes and controls the rational understanding of images. It explores the tension between representational images and language. This tension, concealed and fundamental to the hierarchical formation of a separate human subjectivity, informs our perception of images as rationally drawn spatial structures. The painting again straddles two historical eras, but it

also straddles different spatialities and in doing so reveals the assumptions of the perspective paradigm and how this maintains the visual order of subjects and objects. The discussion of the previous two works was focussed on how the landscape can become a discursive object; here the focus is perspectival – how the assumptions of rational language and natural vision hide the fractured nature of the human subject (a fracturing rich in potentiality). The work is loosely drawn from Simone Martini's (1284–1344) equestrian portrait of *Guidoriccio da Fogliano* in the Sala del Consiglio in Siena's town hall, painted in c.1330. It consists of two

Figure 7.4 Hills and Other Spaces (after Martini), Henrietta Simson, 2014, 64 × 49 cm,oil on gesso panel

opposing hills, bleak with no distinguishing features other than a small lake on the top of the flat-topped hill to the right. The rocky ground is pale and arid, the effect a combination of the smooth but irregular surface of the gesso ground and a layering of painted washes. The contrasting sky is a deep blue, implying a night scene. In the sky, slightly to the left and high up towards the top edge of the panel, are two black circles that suggest orbs or holes. As orbs, they form two dark stars, but the impossibility that the light in the painting that falls across the hills and lake emanates from them instantly alters the viewer's perception, and they instead become holes in the gesso surface. They oscillate, being part of the pictorial illusion (as orbs) then part of the structure of the panel (as holes). Either way they are interruptions and break up the representational order of the painting. By doing so, they force it away from illusion so that the viewer is confronted with their own viewing, and recognises the image's and their own materiality within a more fully described visuality. As Dehaene and De Cauter state in their discussion of the triadic notion of heterotopic space, "Other spaces are *alternative* spaces, *altered* spaces, and often also *alternating* spaces, in the sense that two different time-spaces come together and switch from one into the other" (2008, 93, italics in original).

Hills and Other Spaces is an "alternating" space that exploits the inherently unstable nature of the viewing subject (and by extension the perspectival image), uncanny in its construction around the presence and absence of sight.[5] The black circles in the painting act like the black holes of the pupils, two eyes viewing the image from an unconnected point, so that the act of viewing or looking is revealed to the viewer, but from the opposite side of what is viewed, uncannily reminding them that the unified self is an idealised impossibility, the fantasy presented by capitalist images. As "holes" in the image's surface, these eyes become blind

spots that key absence – the absence of light and of sight, and of subjectivity. In order for globalised visuality to move beyond representation, these fallibilities need to be brought into continuous play and not disregarded in idealising constructions of vision and the self. And this is ultimately an appeal to the uncanny, to the unfamiliar that abides within the familiar as described by Freud, and used by recent writers such as Morton, to build new arguments for landscape and the human.[6]

Christine Boyer has recently discussed the problems of representation expounded by Foucault in his writing on the paintings of Velazquez and Manet, and recognises the presence of ideology in these "natural" images that are under-stood in terms of the mirror when she asks, "How is it that representation, an illusory image formed in the mirror, kills imagination and critical perspective?" (Boyer 2008, 70). This ideological construction of the painting as an image that passively and accurately *reflects* space as opposed to actively *constructing* it through language (an image that we "take as read" and assume to be "accurate") is exposed in Foucault's discussion of *Las Meninas*. Here he draws out the differences (and collusions) between the representational painting and the mirror, and between language and image and how these construct the viewing subject. As Boyer states,

> Recurring in Foucault's discourse on "other" spaces and on painting is the place of the spectator-subject, along with metaphors of the gaze and the mirror. In obscure and confused operations, Foucault is posing the problem of how the visible confronts the articulable, and how a counter-site is opened up.

(2008, 61)

The visible and sayable, meshed in an uncomfortable complicity under theorder of representation, when shown to be incompatible (in Foucault's argument through the operations of the heterotopic mirror) allow the viewer to see howthis "natural" vision is shaped by rational language. In an instant they are able "to comprehend the imaginary experience of the gaze via its imaginary displacement" (Boyer 2008, 62). This is how the black circles in *Hills and Other Spaces* function. By detaching the image from perspectival norms, where the spectatoris always implied, the latter is confronted with ambiguity. And it is within the space of uncertainty that the imagination can move, and that visual orders can reconfigure.

The processes of layering different spaces (so that that which is represented within the image is juxtaposed with the physical space of the viewer) and/or times (the historical past of the artwork and its reformulation within the present) are forms of spatial-temporal disruption, heterotopic actions that break apart the implied cohesive whole of the landscape image, replacing this with fragmented constructions that do not privilege the visual human subject. The strongly felt sense of embodiment within the medieval and Renaissance image is utilised so that these works can contest the present incarnation of the subject under capitalism, a virtual avatar, constructed through the latest (digital) perspective technologies. These govern and order visual space so that images become space *per se* – l i ved space conflated with representation – the former thus remaining inert and unconstructed, while the material reality that constructs the image is effaced (this effacement required if "natural vision" is to be simulated effectively). As a means to move beyond this, it is necessary to pull apart the psychological layering of the two-dimensional image's "screen" – its symbolic interface – so that this imbrication of visual, actual, and pictorial space can be unpicked. In Foucault's "third principle" he states that "[t]he heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault 1986, 25). These paintings, "incompatible" in

their non-representational, non-perspectival spaces act as "holes" in the main spatial milieu, and through a productive process of de-familiarisation, expose to ourselves our own sense of space, of landscape, inviting us to see anew.

Di Paolo Blue Wilderness (Figure 7.5) is a work that develops this idea of layering, exploring it via contrasting spatial and technological processes, combining sculptural forms, digital photographic manipulation, and pre-perspectival image space, and in doing so shows the technological elision of representational images and spatial experience. The modelled clay hills appear incongruous within the projected digital space and the technologically produced perspectival image is examined via this rearrangement, its paradoxical properties exposed. The work uses the wilderness landscape in which John the Baptist, depicted by Giovanni di Paolo (1403–1482) in 1454, roams, to defy the definitions imposed by the established terms of perspectival landscape or the textual de- construction of these, and instead focuses on an affective response to the material construction (rather than the removed or disregarded narrative forms) of the work. It draws out embodied connections and presents space in materially orientated ways rather than as that which is rationally cohesive and understood in purely visual terms. This recasting of the landscape image as embodiment – as opposed to a space constructed through the perspectival – moves beyond these restrictive categories, towards the notion, set out by Dehaene and De Cauter, of the heterotopia as *play* (2008, 87–102). In their argument they draw out the duality of labour and action that Hannah Arendt describes as "the human condition," introducing a third space that incorporates the "([now] mostly secularized) sacred space" of cultural and playful activities that they see as the innately creative and "irreducible" aspects of life (De Cauter and Dehaene 2008, 95). They define the Greek theatre and other recreational spaces as part of this heterotopic intermediary "third sphere" that mediates between the public and the private through a sense of play. *Blue Wilderness* "plays" with the norms of Western visuality, the habituated spatial perceptions produced under the assumptions of representation, what a landscape should do or be in a neo-liberal world, so that the knotted relationship between the landscape image and the landscape as a recreational space is revealed.

As a photographic or perspectival image, landscape becomes the desired object – the space itself, a conundrum recognised by Hubert Damisch as the fascination that perspective painting holds for us. Christopher Wood describes it thus: "We know the representation is not reality; and yet to a point we react to it as if it were real. Damisch calls this the double articulation of painting, representation and presence" (Wood 1995, 678). This "double articulation" emphasises the commodification of landscape under contemporary capitalism. It is sign and substitute simultaneously. It is a place of depicted recreation where one might go to escape from the travails of labour. Wood has discussed how these formulations are remarkably consistent throughout the history of landscape under capitalist visuality, where it is not only conceived as "parergonal" in terms of its function within the painting, but also in terms of work: "Recreation in Western pictorial culture . . . is meant to follow work and therefore stand outside it. It is, perhaps, a reward for work completed. But pleasure also prepares one to resume work by restoring or recreating the spirit" (Wood 1993, 55). This not only reflects contemporary attitudes to landscape, but its definition as recreational "parergon" is also found within Thomas Blount's Glossographia of 1670, in the period that popularised the genre of landscape painting in the West.[7] Landscape today is a place of tourism and recreation, a place to visit for the weekend or for a holiday. As an image it is tied up with this idea, a sign of leisure, adjunct to the capitalist economy. In this form it is invariably shown in romanticised and idealised terms, always clean, perhaps majestic, ultimately waiting there in the beyond to "refresh the spirit" or provide an "experience" ("the holiday of a lifetime"). These images work as excessive signs, as if the refreshment only needs to happen visually. Likewise Wood

describes how the act of painting sixteenth-century landscapes was seen as respite enough for the painter, it was not necessary to actually go anywhere; the process of painting itself was sufficient (Wood 1993, 55). Landscape in this form is visually consumed. Indeed, as Nicholas Mirzoeff underlines, "[c]apital has commodified all aspects of everyday life including the human body and even the process of looking itself" (1999, 27).

Dehaene and De Cauter explore the heterotopia through the idea of the holiday, with its etymological reference to what is holy ("holi"-day) underscoring the importance of recreation. They state that "[h]eterotopia is perhaps more easily identified by its time than by its space. It is not simply a space but rather a time-space" (De Cauter and Dehaene 2008, 92). Although the "time-space" of the commodified landscape image is fleeting (it is the interstitial "time-space" of the screen-saver), more widely, the leisure space of landscape under capitalism frequently acts as the space in which this "holy" time occurs. It becomes a "time- space." This "time-space" also describes the function of the early wilderness landscape, the caves and arid mountains depicted in the paintings that shape my practice. Located outside habitual living space, the wilderness landscape operates within its own time, a liminal place of transformation where life and death exist in close proximity. As depicted within these early paintings, saints and holy men and women departed to these places, withdrawing from society (and from the body) to prepare the soul for entry into heaven. These alien landscapes, removed from habitual

Figure 7.5 Di Paolo Blue Wilderness, Henrietta Simson, 2018, 50 × 36 cm, digital image, oil on clay

patterns of time and space, facilitated penance. *Blue Wilderness*, itself removed from habitual patterns of time and space with its non-corresponding elements, is a landscape that invites the imagination in, not for the distracted or passive enjoyment of the fleeting commodified image, but to be actively engaged in its suggestions and complexities.

Unfamiliar terrains

By appropriating the landscape forms of historical painting, through a process that layers and rearranges different temporal strata and in doing so breaks down the fixity of representational space, it is possible to access difference from within the dominant perspectival systems in a way that enriches our virtualised visuality. The process of removing the human subject — so central to these works — identifies how visual representation — the iconic — has operated in terms of the linguistic; how vision and narrative have been allied since Alberti's humanist concerns for perspective and the Cartesian annexing of the visual

within rational thought. By directing attention towards the affective possibilities of the image that arise from its embodied forms rather than from its narrative elements, it is possible to instead explore an idea of a shared materiality that collapses the dualistic hierarchy of human subject/landscape object and that shifts the notion of distance from a "view" to a material background brought close, or a distant past brought present. This process interrupts the perspectival norms by which we habitually define images, and instead directs their appeal towards that which is affective and unfamiliar, accessing the uncanny and revealing the representational image'sultimate failure to represent its object. The works exist in a form of "in-betweenness," and in this way they stretch the dualisms that are held to be so restrictive, establishing new possibilities for landscape as a category. As Hilde Heynen suggests, "Pursuing the idea of heterotopia offers a productive strategy . . . because it introduces a third term in situations where strict dichotomies – such as public/ private; urban/rural or local/global – no longer provide viable frameworks for analysis" (2008, 312). Utilising this "third term" within landscape and its representations opens up the dualistic problem of landscape/image, the heterotopia providing a useful methodology for moving beyond the impasse of the landscape image in its traditional forms. These landscapes move away from the dichotomies of nature/culture, subject/object primarily because they resist definitions set out by the genre of landscape painting and its perspectival structuring. They are not images of "natural" landscapes but cultural appropriations, and they are no longer the "object" through which the "subject" is constructed. As "outsiders" they escape the (perspectival, ideological) landscape way of seeing, and crucially,as parergonal forms they can be unfixed from their original time and can act on the present in ways that do not lock them into strict definitions as "previous" or "historical." This "in-betweeness" presents an inherent instability: they are not past nor strictly present, they are not nature and they do not establish an idea of landscape by using traditional landscape tropes. The works interrupt visual/spatial norms through this unbuckling of chronological syntax. This is a profoundly heterotopic process, one that reconfigures the habitual definitions of landscape interms of human narrative, and uproots these unfamiliar background forms from their supportive roles within their original locations. The reintroduction of these landscape forms into this culture, causes a disturbance in capitalist space-time, creating a "heterochrony" – a "slice[] of time" – as Foucault calls it, that interrupts time's linear progression as something that we pass through (2008, 20). Instead time accumulates, so that we are removed from its habitual patterning as streamlined and linear. Indeed, these landscapes do not operate within the spatial norms of contemporary Western culture either, disrupting these by the addition of their accumulated time. Spatial configurations that are not constructed by a Cartesian representational system are brought forward through the 700 years or so that their landscape forms have endured. They slip between past and present, "space-images" that re-focus the imagination on the landscape itself, its accrued time and its material body that is not just an image.

In *Specters of Marx*, Jacques Derrida establishes an ethics of appropriation where historical forms are not so much taken possession of, but rather the complex operation between "ghost" and present purpose is acknowledged and thehistorical form allowed to "speak" (Derrida 1994). These "ghosts" offer forgotten alternatives and present new potentialities. Rather than blending difference into the hegemonic conditions of globalisation, the appropriated forms can instead destabilise the spatial-temporal norm. This action defines the works here as part of a critical strategy of remembering, working in counter to the "eternalised present"of the Internet, and its specifically dislocated and spectacularised form of subjectivity that shapes twenty-first-century capitalism. Rather than being made from adapted commodities or directly carving out new meanings for historical objects, the works exist within the terms of a translation or transcription. The appropriated historical forms bring their own language to notions of the contemporary image, whose digital and cyber context is assumed in a fixed technological trajectory. As Hal Foster states, "The deployment of the outmoded . . . can still query the totalistic assumptions

of capitalist culture, never more grandiose than today" (2004, 16).

Foucault's project was always focussed, as Boyer suggests, on the "active engagement in liberation movements for prisoners, asylum inmates, studentresistances – all targets of administrative power and all inspired by the dream of a radical subjective freedom" (2008, 63). A new ethics can be found within the space of the heterotopia, where these paintings become discursive objects that act as facilitators and extend this "subjective freedom" to the landscape itself. They show how the previous division of subject/object that enforces the carefully separated forms that constitute images of landscape are problematically rigid in a world where such division is no longer possible, not even at bedrock level. Exploring these older visual conventions in the context of digitally produced and disseminated images also locates Western visual culture within its technological history. Materiality and visuality are realigned and this has implications for our spatial imaginings, and for how subjectivity is shaped. These works contribute to a discourse that challenges the removal of space (as landscape here) to the abstract realm of representation, where its radical potentiality is reduced. The need to understand space in broader and more dynamic terms is urgent, and the landscape image – rather than reinforcing it as representation – can do this via the actions of the heterotopia.

Notes

1 Works such as *Vision and Painting* (1983) by Norman Bryson supersede previous definitions of the image as put forward by art historians such as Ernst Gombrich in *Art and Illusion* (1977).
2 In *Vibrant Matter* (2010), Jane Bennett explores the question of the inherent agency within matter in terms that remove the hierarchical binary between subjects and objects, while not collapsing her thinking into a disempowering refusal of the human. In order to do this she "brackets" the human and re-examines social processes, accommodating the non-human components that exist within them.
3 For a discussion of images in terms of distance see Jean-Luc Nancy, "The Image – the Distinct" in *The Ground of the Image* (2005). For the re-thinking of distance as a positive and essential characteristic of landscape see John Wylie, "The Distant. Thinking toward Renewed Senses of Landscape and Distance" in *Environment, Space, Place* (2017). I am indebted to both arguments in shaping my own ideas of distance and landscape in my practice.
4 In his introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, Brian Massumi defines affect as a "prepersonal intensity" (1987, xvii). He later explores it as related (but prior) to "feelings" (personal) and "emotions" (social) in "The Autonomy of Affect" (1995) and in *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (2002).
5 Much has been written about the uncanny nature of the gaze. See especially Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho*-analysis (1998).
6 For the uncanny in terms of landscape, see Jean-Luc Nancy, "Uncanny Landscapes" (2005); Tim Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (2010); and John Wylie, "The Distant" (2017).
7 See Malcolm Andrews (1999, 30). See also Jacques Derrida (1987) for a discussion of the parergon's importance in the work of art.

Works cited

Alberti, L. B. 2004. *On Painting*. Translated by Phaidon Press. London: Penguin.
Andrews, Malcolm. 1999. *Landscape and Western Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Baxandall, Michael. 1988. *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bennett, Jane. 2010. *Vibrant Matter*, a Political Ecology of Things. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Boyer, M. Christine. 2008. "The Many Mirrors of Foucault and Their Architectural Reflections." In *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society*, translated and edited by Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter, 53–74. Abingdon: Routledge.

Bryson, Norman. 1983. *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

De Cauter, Lieven, and Michiel Dehaene. 2008. "The Space of Play: Towards a General Theory of Heterotopia." In *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society*, translated and edited by Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter, 87–102. Abingdon: Routledge.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. London and New York: Continuum.

Derrida, Jacques. 1994. *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International.* Translated by Peggy Kamuf. New York and London: Routledge.

———. 1987. *The Truth in Painting*. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Foster, Hal. 2004. "An Archival Impulse." *October* 110: 3–22. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Foucault, Michel. 2008 [1967]. "Of Other Spaces." In *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society*, translated and edited by Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter, 16–17. Abingdon: Routledge.

———. 1989. *The Order of Things*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

———. 1986. "Of Other Spaces." Translated by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics* 16 (1): 22–7.

Gombrich, E. H. 1977. *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. London: Phaidon.

Heynen, Hilde. 2008. "Heterotopia Unfolded?" In *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society*, translated and edited by Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter, 311–23. Abingdon: Routledge.

Jay, Martin. 1993. *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press.

Lacan, Jacques. 1998. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho*-analysis. Translated by Alan Sheridan. London: Vintage.

Lefebvre, Henri. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Massey, Doreen B. 2005. *For Space*. London: Sage.

Massumi, Brian. 2002. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham: Duke University Press.

———. 1995. "The Autonomy of Affect." *Cultural Critique, "The Politics of Systems and Environments"* 31 (Part II): 83–109.

Mirzoeff, Nicholas. 1999. *An Introduction to Visual Culture*. 1st ed. London: Routledge.

Mitchell, W. J. T. 1986. *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Morton, Timothy. 2010. *The Ecological Thought*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.

———. 2007. *Ecology Without Nature, Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. 2005. *The Ground of the Image*. Translated by Jeff Fort. New York: Fordham University Press.

Reid, J. 2018. "The Living Space of the Image." In *Spaces of Crisis and Critique: Heterotopias Beyond Foucault*, edited by David Hancock, Anthony Faramelli, and Robert G. White, 39–56. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Steyerl, Hito. 2011. "In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective." *e-flux* journal (24) (April). www.e-flux.com/journal/24/67860/in-free-fall-a-thought- experiment-on-vertical-perspective/.

Wood, Christopher S. 1995. "Reviewed Works: 'The Origin of Perspective,' Hubert Damisch, 'Le Jugement de Pâris,' Hubert Damisch'." *The Art Bulletin* 77 (4): 677–82.

———. 1993. *Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, Reaktion Books.

Wylie, John. 2017. "The Distant: Thinking Toward Renewed Senses of Landscape and Distance." *Environment, Space, Place* 9 (1) (Spring): 2–20.