Landscape after Landscape:

Before the genre and beyond the view.

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Abstract

This article is contextualised by the ideological implications surrounding the notion of landscape, including the relationship between its genre in painting and the development of European capitalism. It proposes the idea of the landscape fragment derived from the background scenery of early Italian painting, which stands in counterpoint to assumptions about the genre. These early landscape spaces are pertinent because they are not considered 'landscape' as such and are not constructed by entrenched Cartesian dualisms. I argue it is possible to re-evaluate restrictive assumptions about perspective and landscape, in order to raise questions of translatability and difference so as to replace the dominating norms habitually associated with these terms.

This article proposes three artistic interventions that set out to invigorate definitions of landscape; reformulating it in ways that are pertinent to the emerging Anthropocene era and to the crises this presents. It addresses the current discourse of materiality that seeks to move away from traditional subject/object dichotomies and the limiting definitions of landscape and space that these produce. Situated within contemporary fine art research, its context is a larger interdisciplinary project that draws broadly from art historical, geographical and philosophical discourses concerned with landscape, space and the visual. The landscape genre in painting, bound up as it is with ideas of perspective and tied to the ideology that shaped imperial European capitalism may have passed, but the structures of spatial configuration and subjectivity that defined it, persist. The challenge is to transform the relation between human subject and landscape environment so that the latter is not always constructed as the setting for human drama. I want to propose that a re-imagining of the earliest painterly formulations of what is now defined as landscape within Western visual culture, images from fourteenth-century Italy that show an initial probing towards the naturalism that subsequently came to be shaped by the dominant technique of perspective in Western painting, is a pertinent means for addressing definitions of landscape, space and of human subjectivity at this historical juncture. This re-imagining is a strategy whereby the other of landscape's history is allowed to emerge, bringing previous forms into the context of the present. It establishes an unsettling of prevailing definitions that allows new formulations to appear.

Three artworks are considered that constitute part of a body of research exploring definitions of landscape that move away from ingrained assumptions of its visual form as a 'view' constructed primarily according to the rules of perspective (either in terms of images of landscape or in terms of physical landscapes designed to be 'viewed').[1] Instead, these works derive from an earlier moment in the history of Western visuality, from the painting of the Italian artists Ambrogio Lorenzetti (c.1288-1348) and Giotto di Bondone (1266-1337) where landscape as a subject in itself is not evident; rather the landscapes form a background scenery, and act as a framing device deployed to shape the stories that are being depicted. Through these, it is possible

to explore ideas of landscape that challenge received understandings; by a method of appropriation whereby these backgrounds are 'lifted' from their supporting roles and are presented instead as objects or fragments in their own right. They then become destabilized forms that escape the habitual linear constraints of time, and that reconfigure the imbrication of landscape space and perspectival image structures. This process attempts to seek out meanings that escape the Cartesian and modern (European) rational worldview that has shaped entrenched definitions of landscape.[2] The perspective paradigm (as a structure that visualizes three-dimensional space in two-dimensions) is considered as having fostered an idea of landscape, which according to Denis Cosgrove encouraged a visual relationship with the land, establishing it as *landscape*, a problematic construction that encourages an ideological and disempowering conception of the environment and our relationship with it. These works propose instead that the idea of the landscape fragment, derived from pre-perspectival image constructions, can stand in counterpoint to the engrained assumptions about the landscape genre's traditional formation through perspectival technologies and tropes. (The horizon line, the 'landscape' as opposed to portrait orientation of painting/paper/photographs, the idea of this kind of image being a two-dimensional equivalent for what might be termed 'real' space, etc). This notion of a fragment shifts the emphasis of landscape conceived as an image towards that of landscape as something material, archeological, or indeed something fragile that needs to be handled with care; while reconfiguring ideas of how the landscape image operates in terms of space and time it is possible to expand the landscape-as-object / human-as-subject dualism.

I want to articulate a kind of *poiesis* that taps these older forms, in order to re-evaluate this definition of landscape seen through perspectival technologies and to delineate a relation to landscape through materiality and making as much as through two-dimensional visual assumptions. 'Poiesis', from the Greek *poiein* meaning "to act" or "to make," involves a process of *bringing out* that reveals these medieval landscape forms to us – made doubly invisible by dint of their over-exposure as historical images and their status as background settings. Aristotle defined *poiesis* as belonging to *technē* or craft, and opposed to *praxis,* which is action, and *theoria,* which is contemplation.[3] In spite of its modern association with Heidegger, whose phenomenological definitions of 'Being' established problematic ideas of landscape – associated with a 'homeland' and a cultural identity that excludes otherness – the word has resonance here, for it points to the possibility for redefining landscape as an active form, a 'making' rather than a static entity, trapped in its association with the technologically produced 'image.'[4] Heidegger defined the technologized modern world as the *world-picture*, a way of conceiving life as representation that is governed by a rational and scientific worldview, and the perspectival paradigm is bound up with this definition.[5] These works ask instead what happens if this conception is exchanged for one that does not 'see' the world (or the landscape image) thus, that removes the implicit focus on human subjectivity by excluding the narrative from the picture frame, so that landscape is no longer required to exist as background scenery, a perspectival setting in which human life is enacted. The perspectival paradigm is considered a dominant ideological structure within capitalism, and the genre of landscape painting has been critiqued

within these terms, Cosgrove's 'landscape way of seeing' providing the basis for definitions that understand landscape as decidedly ideological and problematic.[6] These works explore the possibility of escaping these dominant and disempowering norms, through a process of translation that highlights difference and draws on unfamiliarity.

INTERVENTION NO.1:

The painting entitled *Bad Government (After Lorenzetti)* (figure 1) is drawn from the work in Siena's town hall of the late-medieval artist Ambrogio Lorenzetti. It consists of what are now considered usual landscape forms: mountains and sky, hills and valleys, trees and a river. However this landscape is empty. It has no human figures or buildings to contextualize it or to describe a narrative; indeed, it is conceived as a fragment rather than as a coherent scene. Roughly half way down the painted surface the scenery stops and is seemingly ripped away – broken off in an irregular shape not determined by the contours of the landscape – and the rest of the painting is formed of undetermined greenish paint washes that run down to the bottom of the picture plane. In spite of the fragmentation, the painting is in fact an accurate reference to the Lorenzetti fresco as it is today, the green area referring to the blank space of the fresco repair, to the beige indifference of replaced intonaco. This area of green, and the deep red sky above the mountains (the colour of exposed underpainting), separate the image of the landscape from its picture plane, equated as one and the same for so long in the history of landscape painting. In doing so they force the landscape to float in a liminal, broken space, a space that has been removed from its usual pictorial constraints. This has the effect of distancing it from the viewer too, creating a strange, detached space, the landscape fragment that is key to this article. The painting's muted colours establish the somber atmosphere, no longer contextualised by the narrative elements, which are instead implied in its title. Time of day is impossible to determine,as is the season – the trees are green and fully leaved suggesting late spring or summer, but the river appears icy, while the hills have the warmth of yellowish green, the mountains that fall off in the distance are winter-bare. This all builds the sense of productive disorientation, whereby habitual ideas of landscape painting begin to fall apart. The painting describes a fragment of landscape space, but it is also a fragment in time as well, and it exists beyond the linear notions that shape these.

Figure 1: *Bad Government (After Lorenzetti),* Henrietta Simson, 2010, 90 x 70cm, oil and pigment on gesso

Between 1337-1340, Ambrogio Lorenzetti was commissioned by the 'Nine' elected officials of the merchant oligarchy of Siena, to paint a series of frescos allegorising the virtues of the Republic as the system of governance under which Siena and its territories operated. What are now referred to as the *Allegory and Effects of Good and Bad Government,* adorn the walls of the Sale dei Nove, the symbolic heart of medieval Siena's republic, and in which are depicted allegories of good and bad government in the city and the surrounding countryside. Ambrogio's frescos depict the life to be had under good government in the countryside and city, (which is watched over by allegorical figures including Peace, Justice, and Concorde) and inversely, the life that results from tyrannical rule, where scenes of destruction and ruin dominate in both the city and surrounding *contado* under the rule of the tyrant.[7] This painting (figure 1) is taken from the fresco that depicts the effects of bad government in the countryside in which, in spite of it being badly damaged, it is still possible to make out a landscape ravaged by war and destruction. Invading militias plunder the farmsteads, burning and destroying buildings in their wake, but in my appropriation these figures and buildings have all been removed. They are distant historical ghosts whose destructive actions are no longer visible. This has the effect of cutting the landscape adrift in history, unfixing it from the cultural meaning it was originally ascribed. Its framing role abandoned, it is now brought centre-stage, no longer a background it requires/demands attention on its own terms. It carries remnants of its past association with war and destruction but not in narrative form. Instead these are alluded to by the title and by the empty and desolate landscape. This process redistributes the power dynamic between human and landscape, subject and object, shifting the human to the periphery and offering the landscape form a principal position in terms of its meaning. This idea of landscape speaks to our current

ecological predicaments, and challenges the coalescence of the narrative space of the human subject with the perspective space that came to define it and shape modern western understanding.[8]

The emptied out historical landscape feels remote and distant in spite of its now central role, and it brings us to the heart of this investigation: questions of landscape as representation, of the perspectival tradition associated for so long with the idea of landscape under Western capitalism, the landscape image's imbrication with definitions of space and of its inferior position (as 'object') to the human subject, and ultimately, of whether we can think landscape differently by revisiting its earliest beginnings, excavating them to find something newly valuable to enrich our contemporary theories of truth. In what might be thought of as a post-landscape era, when we focus on a move away from dichotomies such as nature and culture (which are held together in the traditional landscape image) and seek instead new potentials by framing debate in terms of topology or ecology, redefining the landscape image might seem like an obsolete concern. However, I would like to suggest that this pre-perspectival picture-making can contribute usefully to recent developments in the discussions around nature, ecology, and the material object and its definition in terms of human subjectivity. Through linear perspective, landscape definitions are tied up with ideas of co-extensive space and consequently linear time (indeed, the ability to divide the surface of the earth up into measurable units was a result of the development of perspectival geometries), both of which form part of a rational understanding of the world, and foster an attitude that validates the conception of space as representation. This conception is articulated in Cosgrove's definition of landscape as an image, a necessary formulation that introduced a Marxist interrogation of the power structures at work, however one that subsequently secured its status as image. It is necessary to move beyond these rigid constructions of representation and space in order to facilitate an awareness of the other as a dynamic and self-constructed entity in its own right.

INTERVENTION NO. 2:

Heterotopia, (figure 2) continues and extends the ideas about the non-linearity of space/time, as suggested by the landscape fragment. It is a work that consists of a brown painted boat – constructed from wood, canvas, gesso and pigment – and a duplicated image of the small landscape panel *Castle by a Lake,* (c.1340) also painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti.[9] The large, dark umber boat sits on the floor of the exhibition space with its bow pointing towards the photocopy, positioned low down on the wall. Ambrogio's exquisite landscape scene depicts white cliffs and a pale turquoise lake, at the shore of which sits a small castle with farm buildings and cultivated land receding towards the background hills, dotted with dark trees. Moored in front of the castle is a wooden boat – an elongated coracle – larger than the castle, almond-shaped, enticing as an eye or a smiling mouth (figure 3). This is the model for the boat that sits on the floor, ready to transport the viewer between painted and physical worlds. Its matte, light-absorbing surface of pigments supported by the traditional painting materials of gesso, canvas and wood, bestow on it the appearance of an image, as much as it exists as a sculptural boat-form. As a result and in spite

of its three-dimensionality, it straddles the worlds of the exhibition space and the painted space (revealed in the photocopy) as a kind of hybrid presence. The installation blurs the boundaries of painting, photography and sculpture through its ambiguous materialities, which are combined and put to work in order to transform our encounter by representing the past as present and by reducing the fixity that exists between an original and a copy. The interplay between the 'original' panel, the duplicated photocopy and the ambiguous status of the boat (it is an original artwork but copied from another artwork, which is defined as its precedent as well as an 'original') is played out within the installation, indeed, the more the relationship is pondered, the more it seems to become unfixed. The Lorenzetti panel is not a straightforward original. It is also a precedent, (the definition of which being different from that of the original), and is absent from the installation, set inside a glass museum cabinet in Italy (because of its status as an 'original'). Indeed, this absent panel, the 'model' for the work, is itself hardly an intact, complete artwork. It is not a complete object (or indeed landscape) but along with its pair, (another small panel depicting a small walled coastal city) is a fragment of disputed function – perhaps from a wedding chest, or a cupboard door, perhaps part of Lorenzetti's now lost wheel map of Siena – and indeed disputed origin – Ambrogio Lorenzetti is one of a series of artists to whom it has been attributed.[10] While this 'original' fragment is understood as such because of the status bestowed to artworks, conversely, the endlessly reproducible photocopy has the status of original bestowed upon it by the same criteria (it is an integral part of a contemporary artwork). And the boat's status is confirmed as original in terms of it being an imaginative leap from a two-dimensional, painted model into a three-dimensional sculptural form, even while it refers to its 'original' in terms of its physical proximity to the small painted boat that exists in the photocopy. This close proximity of the boat-form to the photocopy establishes a spatial dynamic that enables the two boats to be read as iterations of each other. The two images, one a paper photocopy, the other constructed from the materials of a conventional painting, affect each other in terms of temporality and in terms of material presence and representation. In his famous essay *Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin explores the idea of the 'aura' and argues that it is bestowed on the original because of its fixed relation to its the site, while the copy has no such fixed position. He sees the aura (and its loss) as a defining aspect of modernity, for it disappears at the moment that it comes into being, i.e it is only through the invention of mechanical reproduction that it is revealed as something that attaches only to an original.[11] Indeed, as he states: "Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be."[12] Benjamin's ideas about technological reproduction are informed by his acute awareness of history, brought into sharp relief by the newly expanding consumerism of early twentieth-century spectacular capitalism. The notion of making a bridge to the past, of rescuing its objects from a forgotten eternity in order to reflect on the present is central to his project, and indeed suggests a particularly non-linear alignment of the past and present.

Figure 2: *Heterotopia,* Henrietta Simson, 2011, dimensions variable (boat: 210 x 40cm, width variable), wood, canvas, gesso, pigment and A4 photocopy

Figure 3: *Heterotopia*, (detail of photocopy)

This warping of historical sequencing offers the opportunity to establish a different formation of space as well as of time. Indeed, Doreen Massey has more recently explored ideas about a reconfigured spatial sphere that is dynamic and relational and not simply the static counterpoint to time, a result she claims, of a philosophical tendency found especially in Henri Bergson, structuralism and deconstruction, to ignore space as a containing property or to place it in the realm of representation while focusing on the temporal. (In effect, to de-politicize it.) And following Cosgrove, I would also like to add, of conflating the landscape with perspectival landscape images: "I am arguing for an abandonment of that dichotomisation between space and time which posits space both as the opposite of time and, equally problematically, as immobility, power, coherence, representation. The significance of this … is political."[13] Her argument is built around three propositions that claim (firstly), that space is constructed through interactions and is the product of interrelations; (secondly), that it is a sphere of multiplicities – "of coexisting heterogeneity" – and; (thirdly), that it is always under construction.[14] Encounters and connections define this idea of space, and do not simply occur within it, as if space were an inert container that facilitates a dynamic and progressive temporal dimension. In *Heterotopia*, two visual cultures – connected yet distant points on the historical 'timeline' of Western art – are rolled together so that linear time collapses into a new configuration with the spatial, an encounter which has the potential to produce new formulations of both. Michel Serres has discussed his ideas concerning the non-linearity and non-synchronicity of historical time with Bruno Latour, and states:

"Time is paradoxical; it folds or twists; it is as various as the dance of flames in a brazier – here interrupted, there vertical, mobile and unexpected. … It's not always laminar. The usual theory supposes time to be always and everywhere laminar. With geometrically rigid and measurable distances – at least constant. … No, time flows in a turbulent and chaotic manner; it percolates. All of our difficulties with the theory of history come from the fact that we think of time in this inadequate and naïve way."[15]

Although Massey's focus is on a redefined notion of space that speaks to post-colonial, feminist and queer concerns, while Serres's ideas emerge from his interest in uniting scientific and humanities thinking – and stretch the notion of the contemporary to its extremes – the two complement each other in terms of the space-time of *Heterotopia*, their commonality based in a re-evaluation of Cartesian dualisms, which persist, especially in received ideas about landscape and space, in spite of Einstein's theories and the discoveries of quantum physics. Henri Lefebvre's celebrated re-examination of space is also pertinent in this case. He argues that the shift from the philosophy to the science of space that occurred when Descartes's arguments finally eliminated previous Aristotelian definitions, had the consequence of eradicating the 'collective subject' and established space as supremely unassailable:

"According to most historians of Western thought, Descartes had brought to an end the Aristotelian tradition which held that space and time were among those categories which facilitated the naming and classing of the evidence of the senses. The status of such categories

had hitherto remained unclear, for they could be looked upon either as simple empirical tools for ordering sense data or, alternatively, as generalities in some way superior to the evidence supplied by the body's sensory organs. With the advent of Cartesian logic, however, space had entered the realm of the absolute."[16]

And while the fields of semiotics and post-structuralism in the philosophical ideas of his own time were assumed to have moved beyond Cartesian dualisms, he sees the persistent conflating of mental and social space, not addressed by these theorists, as problematic: "This school, whose growing renown may have something to do with its growing dogmatism, is forever promoting the basic sophistry whereby the philosophico-epistemological notion of space is fetishized and the mental realm comes to envelop the social and physical ones."[17] Lefebvre understands this as an error that is highly problematic for understandings and definitions of space, which consequently remains in the realm of representation, the problem identified by Massey and one that she deems is necessary to move away from especially under the conditions of the globalised neo-liberal present. Indeed she argues that throughout Western philosophical discourse, the spatial has been continuously associated with the textual and conceptual, a definition that places it within the realms of representation, rendering it static and politically inert.[18] Perspectival space has also been defined in these terms, a web of orthogonals that trap the painted object and mesmerise the viewing subject. It is indeed often seen – anachronistically – as the progenitor of this scientific paradigm, in spite of Descartes's definition of space as infinite *res extensa* not occurring until the seventeenth century.[19]

So how might we think space as in some way connected with material objects, rather than as the empty void in which these objects exist, and that Descartes's radical dualism describes? Modern science's space-time continuum is defined and shaped by the matter of the universe, however this is not immediately intuited and only understood by 'stepping outside' of received understandings of perspectival space and historical time to an objective viewpoint. *Heterotopia* combines two contemporary manifestations of a boat-image, originally painted nearly 700 years ago, and so makes visible certain paradoxes that exist within perceptions of space and time. It also suggests less linear ways that historical works might be received in the present, making manifest an imaginative engagement with the represented landscape, speculating on what this fourteenth century, two-dimensional, painted boat might look like, when removed from its mooring within Lorenzetti's painted lake. I called the work *Heterotopia*, as the notion of spaces existing in several places at once, but pulled together by a moment in time – i.e. the contemporary – enables it to address these questions of space and representation. Michel Foucault's notion of the boat being the heterotopia "par excellence" as "a site that is a non-site … a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea…" perfectly describes the multi-temporality of this work and demonstrates a resistance to rational definition or narration. This heterotopic boat travels between the categories of medieval and contemporary, two-dimensions and three, representation and object, and in doing so disrupts the spatial-temporal norms of the

globalised present so that these categories of landscape, materiality and space can be re-aligned and re-thought.[20]

INTERVENTION NO.3:

(Don't) Fall on Me, Arena Chapel (figure 4) is a parachute-like installation, which is anchored to the ground by polyester cords and inflated with fans from underneath to form a dome-like hemisphere, under which viewers are invited to step, and to look up. The silk canopy moves and twists, as if eager to break free and fly, to escape the ambient breeze and the directed air flow from the fans as they compete for control. The image printed on its surface is a panoramic photograph of the frescoed ceiling and upper walls of Giotto's Arena Chapel in Padua, which was completed in 1306. The work doubles as a piece of soft architecture as well as of an expression of sky – not linear and anchored by a horizon, but curved and constantly re-shaping. The buildings that surround it provide a stable reminder of the horizontal and vertical axes of perspectival space, while the parachute's printed architectonics fuse and then separate from the surrounding architecture in a fracturing of stable visual modes (figure 5). Giotto's sophisticated understanding of the shifting and altering interactions of architectural and painted space, is reimagined as the printed architectural features of the Arena Chapel (such as the windows) fuse with and then morph away from the classical architecture of the installation's surrounding buildings as the parachute moves and twists under the action of the fans and the breeze. The sense of the sky falling, or indeed of falling into the sky, is enacted by the metaphor of the parachute but is held off by the three metres high wire that holds the parachute up, suspending it above the ground. Instead, the parachute collapses into itself and then blossoms out as it is re-inflated by the fans. The intense blue of Giotto's ceiling sits below the expansive blue of the all-encompassing sky, not only referring to it as a physical reality but also as the idealised heavens, with its twinkling stars and medallions of Saints and holy figures. The parachute straddles this physical and imaginative gap, at once signifying the sky above while also establishing an idea of descending through it, being immersed in it. The silk fabric is assembled so that the 'right-side' forms the inside of the parachute, the focal 'zone' being under not above the parachute. When viewed from an exterior position, the printed image (paler on the exterior surface) and the silvery sheen of the silk combine to form an illusion of a virtual bubble interrupting the solidity of the surrounding architectural space (which provides a grounding of sorts) and can be seen as another example of heterotopic space. (The familiarity with the digital images and screens that populate our world validates this experience.) This architectural framing also suggests the sequential narrative of the frescoes and their Cosmati-esque surrounds. The action of the parachute forms a poetic parallel to the Christian doctrine represented in the frescoes, the spirit descending and then ascending, but rather than the portrait of Christ appearing at the apex of the blue hemisphere (as it does in the ceiling medallion), there is a blank hole – an empty space where the real sky enters – pairing faith with doubt, both also present in the process of making art.

Giotto's frescoes mark the dawning of the Western visual tradition defined as it is by the

Figure 4: *(Don't) Fall on Me, Arena Chapel*, Henrietta Simson, 2016, digital image on silk, polyester rope, carabiners, electric fans

Figure 5: *Don't Fall on Me, Arena Chapel*

rendering of three-dimensional space in two-dimensions, which linear perspective went on to exemplify. As the established historical narrative has it, he was commissioned by Enrico Scrovegni, a wealthy businessman and money-lender from Padua, to create a chapel in order to exonerate Enrico's father, who had amassed a huge fortune through the practice of usury, which was to the medieval Christian, a mortal sin.[21] Laura Jacobus suggests that this was not exactly the case, and has since revealed that the chapel was more likely to have been built in order to promote Enrico's standing among the ruling class of Paduan society. The Scrovegni had met disdain as not of noble birth and in spite of the family having risen in respectability and social position over the previous century.[22] It has also been suggested that the building of the chapel was a money-laundering exercise built as it was with funds Enrico inherited from his father, which would have been tainted by the practice of usury. Indeed, he is shown offering it up to the Virgin in the Last Judgment scene. Giotto designed the architectonics of the chapel to accommodate his painted scheme – three tiers of narrative frescoes depicting scenes from the life of the Virgin and scenes from the life of Christ – and incorporated painted architectural features such as the 'marble' panels in the dado zone containing grisailles of Vices and Virtues that run along the base, and the two small fictive alcoves on the chancel arch that sit level with the bottom tier of imagery. He surrounded the frescoes with decorative Cosmati-esque borders, and completed it with the huge fresco of the Last Judgment, which would confront members of the congregation as they left the chapel via the main door in the west wall. All this happens

underneath the intensely blue barrel-vaulted ceiling adorned with the golden stars and Christian medallions described above, and the central focus of the printed parachute.

Julia Kristeva has discussed this chapel in her essay "Giotto's Joy," in which she argues that the field of semiotics is ill equipped to properly consider painting as a language and needs to be modified by psychoanalysis in order to accommodate colour: "Although semiological approaches consider painting as a language, they do not allow an equivalent for colour within the elements of language identified by linguistics. Does it belong among phonemes, morphemes, phrases, or lexemes? If it ever was fruitful, the language/painting analogy, when faced with the problem of colour, becomes untenable."[23]

In her compendium of Julia Kristeva's writings, Toril Moi describes the "dynamic, process-oriented view of the sign" so associated with her thinking, and a construction useful to the concern to express the material object as more than an adjunct to the formulation of subjectivity and as separate to this, that are the focus of this next section of the discussion.[24] Kristeva recognised the fault line of language, "as at once subject to and subversive of the rule of Law," and her method of producing a discourse that confronts this impasse involves an appropriation of Hegelian dialectics.[25] This identification of the shortcomings of language demonstrates a search for experience beyond representation, and although Kristeva is included in Lefebvre's list of culprits who conflate the mental realm with the social or physical, he recognises her work as an attempt to move beyond the purely linguistic. This can be seen in the arguments she constructs in "Giotto's Joy," in which she attempts to account for the affective aspects of visual representation through an analysis of colour and pictorial space.[26] Her argument revolves around what she calls the "triple register of colour," a term she constructs by borrowing from Freud's psychoanalytic theory of the unconscious in order to address her concerns about the inadequacies of structuralism's linguistic analysis of painting.

According to Kristeva's argument, everything is experienced in the Chapel in terms of the blue ceiling, "the first colour to strike the visitor as he enters into the semidarkness of the Arena Chapel."[27] Her "triple register" addresses the problem of analysing painting within the purely verbal terms of semiology, which she sees as deficient in any analysis of the experience of colour and the particular pictorial space constructed by Giotto in the Arena Chapel. She turns to Freud's psychoanalytic theory of the topology of the human psyche, especially his analysis of the "hypercathexis of thing-presentations by 'word-presentations.'"[28] In what is a complex argument involving his description of the functions and interactions between the unconscious and preconscious mind, and how these can refine a semiotic analysis of art, Kristeva explores the process of exchange that happens between objects, experience of these objects, and expression of this experience (i.e. the triple register). Freud states that the original experience of the object (the "thing-presentation") would not only become lost to the psyche without the intervention of the "word-presentation", but that this "word-presentation" effectively enables the preconscious and conscious mind to come into being. The unconscious drive produced by the 'cathexis' of an object is subsumed by its verbal counterpart, and the "word-presentation" now straddles both the perceptual and verbal worlds, repressing the original instinctual drive generated by the

energy directed toward the thing or object, in order to re-present it as its sign in the system of communication that the "word-presentation" is part of.[29] This development results in repression but is also necessary in order that the individual is constituted as a subject, able to interact and communicate with other subjects in a shared system of signs. The price of this repression however, is alienation, and the subject will henceforth experience a lack in relation to the sign.

Kristeva adopts the triad of exterior drive / interior drive / signifier (the "word-presentation") and applies it to visual representation, re-framing it as her "triple register of colour". This triple register, like Freud's, is constituted of an outside, the body itself, and a sign. The "word-presentation" swings like a pivot between the unconscious and symbolic worlds, and so in the context of visual representation, as colour, is able to transgress the symbolic order (represented by the narrative) because it reconfigures the previously alienated subject through its access to the unconscious drives, diminishing the effect of the split subject within the symbolic order:

"In a painting, colour is pulled from the unconscious into a symbolic order; the unity of the 'self' clings to this symbolic order, as this is the only way it can hold itself together. The triple register is constantly present, however, and colour's diacritical value within each painting's system is, by the same token, withdrawn toward the unconscious. As a result, colour (compact within its triple dimension) escapes censorship; and the unconscious irrupts into a culturally coded pictorial distribution."[30]

And so, because of its unique access to the unconscious, but also adherence to the symbolic order, colour in the Arena Chapel unifies the split subject who experiences partial escape from the dominating symbolic realm through the re-emergence of instinctual drives but whose sense of self does not disintegrate entirely:

"Giotto's joy is the sublimated jouissance of a subject liberating himself from the transcendental dominion of One Meaning (white) through the advent of its instinctual drives, again articulated within a complex and regulated distribution. Giotto's joy burst into the chromatic clashes and harmonies that guided and dominated the architectonics of the Arena Chapel frescoes at Padua. This chromatic joy is the indication of a deep ideological and subjective transformation; it discreetly enters the theological signified, distorting it and doing violence to it without relinquishing it."[31]

This colour of Giotto's work at the Arena Chapel reintroduces the viewing subject to an instinctive, unconscious force usually kept at bay, away from the symbolic order of narrative and pictorial representation and in doing so it repairs the psychic repression that occurs in childhood as an inevitable consequence of entry into the symbolic and the development of language (and in this case visual systems of language including perspectival space).

However, this celebration of colour that is dominated by the ultramarine ceiling is not the only instance in the chapel where the symbolic order is disrupted in the terms identified by Kristeva, for this is also enacted through Giotto's treatment of painted space and the narrative scenes' interaction with the physical and eternal spaces of the chapel. His use of convincingly painted mosaic borders, grisailles and marble panels that mediate between painted and real worlds, reinforce the viewer's status within the space, while the fresco of the Last Judgment that

covers the whole of the west wall of the chapel exposes the viewer to that which is beyond representation and narrative, beyond the symbolic register. The scene depicts Christ resplendent at the centre, weighing the good against the bad, as described in the apocalyptic sections of the New Testament. Below and to the right of Christ is the visceral depiction of hell. At the top of the fresco, each side of the window, (which continues Giotto's blending of real and painted architectural features) are two angels, who roll back the 'sky' and implicitly, the narrative, into two scrolls, and in doing so they reveal the gates of eternity beneath. This aspect of the fresco scheme is remarkable, for it reveals a seemingly modern self-awareness for an artist from the fourteenth century, not only in terms of the practice of art-making, but also in terms of how the Christian narrative operates within the propositions of symbolic and physical space. The eternity of heaven is revealed behind the scrolls and hell is revealed beneath the painted layer as it is ripped apart by fire. Kristeva describes it thus:

"Yet the narrative signified of the Arena Chapel's nave, supporting the symbolism of teleological dogma (guarantee of the mythical Christian community) and unfolding in three superimposed bands from left to right in accordance with the Scriptures, is artificial. Abruptly, the scroll tears, coiling in upon itself from both sides near the top of the back wall facing the altar, revealing the gates of heaven and exposing the narrative as nothing but a thin layer of color. Here, just under the two scrolls, facing the altar, lies another scene, outside the narrative: *Hell*, within the broader scope of the Last Judgment…With the representation of Hell the narrative sequence stops, is cut short, in the face of historical reality, Law, and fantasy."[32]

The devotee, having previously been encouraged to experience a strong feeling of identification with the divine narrative through Giotto's employment of familiar faces, emotional realism and architectural sleight of hand, which unites painted and physical space, is suddenly confronted with its opposite - that which is not divine, the human realm of death, suffering, violence and sex. This is where the continuity of the narrative sequence as a history (and as a painting) stops and is broken apart. However, in Kristeva's terms this rupture recalibrates the power dynamic between viewed object and viewing subject, narrative space and embodied space, and facilitates a move beyond the confines of the structures of representation. It has implications for the understanding of landscape, which is so caught up with these painted structures of realism and physically convincing pictorial space.

Kristeva's argument is complimented by David Batchelor's discussion of colour in *Chromaphobia*, where he examines the extent to which colour has been side-lined and repeatedly marked as 'other' in Western culture. It has been seen as unsophisticated, feminine or exotic, a "permanent internal threat, an ever-present inner other which, if unleashed, would be the ruin of everything, the fall of culture."[33] His use of the word 'fall' intentionally recalls the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden: "Colour is a corruption, a lapse, a Fall."[34] This "fall" is physically and repeatedly enacted in *(Don't) Fall on Me*, the parachute collapsing as the breeze overcomes the fans, or when the fans cut out, upsetting the hierarchical order of heaven and earth, above and below. The ambivalence created by the brackets of the title suggests a longing for closeness with the ever-distant sky (or heaven), a yielding to the intense blue that is simultaneously held back by a fear of the complete dissolution of subjectivity, a push-pull process

that echoes Kristeva's understanding of colour as representative of – but elusive to – the symbolic order of subjectivity. The blue of the sky is created by dint of it being the shortest wavelength in the visible spectrum, and is poetically described by Rebecca Solnit as "light that does not touch us, does not travel the whole distance, the light that gets lost, gives us the beauty of the world…" because it scatters in molecules of air and water before it reaches us, and so is always far away.[35] As the signature colour of landscape, we yearn for it but it is always forever beyond our reach.

Giotto's blue heaven fills the space of the parachute, while the other colours of the frescoes merge and blend with the fractured, paler blue that disperses towards the edges in the frescoes of the scenes depicted on the walls of the chapel. The work combines the physical practice of making, of stitching the silk sections together, with the technological possibilities produced by panoramic photography, digital software and digital printing processes, uniting material process and making with the visual technologies that habitually present 'reality' to us in image form. The parachute acts as a metaphor that connects human and sky, and allows our imaginations to fall through the latter, bringing it down to us. It also enables the viewing subject to experience the affective nature of colour constructed in this way, a reconciliation between eye and body; the intensity created by the deep, expansive ultramarine, a counterpoint to the idea of realism expressed in perspectival space. In this way the work is a *poiesis* that redefines the representation of landscape – that moves *beyond* the notion of representation. It bends the visual technologies that have constructed landscape space in terms of a scientific and rational paradigm, and instead reconfigures the relationship between landscape and viewing subject into one of a non-gaze, a non-hierarchical arrangement. It can be seen as a subversive divergence from the paradigm of linear perspective, and combines Kristeva's analysis of colour with a destabilised and therefore liberated spatial realm, making it possible to propose a radical departure from the power structures that perspectival space is bound up with, in order to seek an alternative history to Western visuality in its inception. The pictorial sky, embodied in a parachute – an object that becomes physically attached to the body – is freed from its fixed position as that which is always above a horizon line and instead reconfigures the perspectival characterisation of landscape space.

These interventions share a common process of removing human drama from the appropriated fourteenth century painting, and of reframing them as places devoid of human figures (who cannot then act out their subjectivities in their spaces), so that they demand attention on their own terms. The traditional notions of linear time and perspectival space are distorted in order to escape the syntax, the language of representation. Through the bending and shaping of these visual modes, landscape is re-presented and the strangeness of the pictures from the historical past is extracted; images that had ceased to exist in any meaningful way through their over-exposure as touristic, historical images. The unfamiliar, the outmoded, the translated, these are necessary terms to embrace if a different conception of landscape and visual space is to be formulated. By revisiting these earlier forms of landscape that are crucially not constructed as *extensive space*, it is possible to reveal landscape as an object in its own right.

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NOTES

[1] Denis Cosgrove first argues that land became 'landscape' with the changes brought about by the establishment of Renaissance perspective in fifteenth- and sixteenth- century Europe. See Denis E Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984) and "Prospect, Perspective and the Evolution of the Landscape Idea," in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1985), 45-62, Blackwell Publishing on behalf of The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers). See also Malcolm Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), especially chapter three in which he argues that the early capitalism that flourished in the Italian city states of the 1600s enabled the aristocracy and wealthy merchants to build country estates, the villas of which were positioned so that their windows framed agreeable views of the countryside, thus equating the latter with landscape painting.

[2] In his *Principles of Philosophy* (1644) René Descartes (1596 -1650) defines space as three dimensional and co-extensive. Along with the Copernican revolution and Galileo's discoveries, his ideas represent the beginnings of the scientific rationalism that defines European thought from the sixteenth century onwards.

[3] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, translated and edited by Roger Crisp, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Book VI

[4] Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt, (New York: Harper and Row, 1977). Here he discusses *poiesis* in relation to *technē*. Heidegger's ideas of place and homeland are politically problematic not simply because of his association with National Socialism; they present a subject-focused position that denies the object as 'other'. This was critiqued by Adorno and Deleuze especially. See Theodore Adorno, *Negative Dialectics,* translated by E.B.Ashton, (New York: Continuum, 1973) and Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition,* translated by Paul Patton, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

[5] Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture" in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 115-154

[6] Martin Jay, "The Scopic Regimes of Modernity" in *Vision and Visuality*, edited by Hal Foster, (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), 9-10: "[Perspective] was … complicitous … with the fundamentally bourgeois ethic of the modern world. According to Edgerton, Florentine businessmen with their newly invented technique of double-entry bookkeeping may have been 'more and more disposed to a visual order that would accord with the tidy principles of mathematical order that they applied to their bank ledgers.' John Berger goes so far as to claim that more appropriate than the Albertian metaphor of the window on the world is that of 'a safe let into a wall, a safe in which the visible has been deposited'… At the same time, if philosophers like Martin Heidegger are correct, the natural world was transformed through the technological world view into a 'standing reserve' for the surveillance and manipulation of a dominating subject." Quoting Samuel Y Edgerton, *The Renaissance Discovery of Linear Perspective*, (New York: Basic Books, 1975), 39; John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (London: BBC, 1972), 109; Martin Heidegger 'The Question Concerning Technology' in *The Question Concerning Technology and other essays*, translated by William Lovitt, (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 17. John Berger also develops the argument that landscape painting cannot be considered without also considering the real issue of landownership and property. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC; Penguin, 2008), 106; the landscape as a "way of seeing" is first put forward by Cosgrove in *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (1984)

[7] *Contado* is the Italian term for the countryside that is adjacent to or surrounds a city-state, and is controlled by it.

[8] In *The Origin of Perspective* Hubert Damisch argues that the invention of linear perspective was fundamental in defining human subjectivity: "To say that our culture has been and continues to be informed,

and programmed at bedrock level by the perspective paradigm is more than mere wordplay – though language requires that perspective not be an object like any other, because, metaphorically speaking, it has a bearing on the conditions determinant of all objectivity, of the perception of objects, from whatever angle or point of view they might be considered, in relation to a horizon line and a set distance." Hubert Damisch, *The origin of perspective*, translated by John Goodman, (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 1994) 54

[9] This panel's attribution is disputed, I will follow that of the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena where it is housed.

[10] Apart from Ambrogio Lorenzetti, other accreditations include Simone Martini and Sassetta. See Timothy Hyman, *Sienese Painting*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003)

[11] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, translated by Harry Zorn, (London: Pimlico, 1999)

[12] Benjamin, "Work of Art," 214

[13] Doreen Massey, *For Space,* (London: SAGE, 2005), 47. Doreen Massey sadly and unexpectedly passed away in March 2016.

[14] Massey, *For Space*, 9

[15] Michel Serres with Bruno Latour, *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time*, translated by Roxanne Lapidus, (Michigan, University of Michigan Press, 1995), 58-59.

[16] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 1

[17] Lefebvre, 5 (The "School" to which he refers is influenced by the work of Edmund Husserl, and includes Noam Chomsky, J. M. Rey, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes)

[18] Massey, *For Space*, 20

[19] René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, translated by Blair Reynolds (Lewiston, New York: E. Mellen Press, c.1988)

[20] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces" (1967), *Diacritics* XVI/I, (Spring 1986), 27

[21] Dante's *Inferno*, part one of *The Divine Comedy*, describes usurers as remaining in the seventh circle of hell, where acts of violence (against nature, art and God) are condemned for eternity.

[22] Laura Jacobus, *Giotto and the Arena Chapel: art, architecture and experience*, (London: Harvey Miller, 2008), 3-12

[23] Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 216*

[24] *The Kristeva Reader*, edited and introduced by Toril Moi (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1986), 2

[25] Introduction, *The Kristeva Reader*, 10

[26] Julia Kristeva, "Giotto's Joy", in Norman Bryson, *Calligram: essays in new art history from France,* edited by Norman Bryson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 27-52

[27] Kristeva, "Giotto's Joy", 41

[28] Kristeva, "Giotto's Joy", 33

[29] Sigmund Freud, *Papers on Metapsychology: The Unconscious* in *The Standard Edition of the Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953), Vol. 14, 201-2

[30] Kristeva, "Giotto's Joy", 36-37

[31] Kristeva, "Giotto's Joy", 40-41

[32] Kristeva, "Giotto's Joy", 29

[33] David Batchelor, *Chromaphobia*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), 23

[34] Batchelor, *Chromaphobia*, 24

[35] Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, (Edinburgh and London: Canongate, 2006), 29