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Introduction Landscapes and Aesthetic Spatialities in the Anthropocene

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Landscapes and Aesthetic Spatialities in the Anthropocene

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Landscapes and Aesthetic Spatialities in the Anthropocene

Numéro dirigé par
Sandrine Baudry, Hélène Ibata, Monica Manolescu

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Introduction

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The Western idea of landscape, as a means to comprehend space in an intellectual, economic and aesthetic sense, is often considered to be the product of new environmental relations that developed at the beginning of the early modern period. According to cultural geographers, “[l]andscape first emerged as a term, an idea, or better still, *a way of seeing* the external world, in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries” (Cosgrove, 1985: 46-47), in connection with the emergence of individual land ownership and a “new spirit of place identity” (Olwig, 1996). The specific artistic practices and techniques—such as linear perspective—that were developed at about the same time and allowed the emergence of landscape as a pictorial genre and aesthetic concept (Gombrich, 1966; Cauquelin, 2000) have been said to partake of the same political operation of representation, which conferred both economic and cultural power over the natural world (Cosgrove, 1985; Williams, 1977). The golden age of Dutch landscape painting of the seventeenth century, whose relevant intellectual contexts are less related to linear perspective than to the art of surveying, is inextricable from economic and ideological concerns of land ownership and the political freedom to picture the land as a map (Alpers, 1983: 148-149). In addition, as Lytle Shaw suggests, Dutch painters such as van Goyen and Ruisdael showed Holland as “an intricate landscape made entirely by man” and their paintings were “performing dramatic re-enactments [...] of the Dutch creation of Holland” (Shaw, 2012: 82).

While these orientations point to growing confidence and increased control over space, the aestheticization of the natural world has also been understood as a form of separation from the latter. Landscape, it has been pointed out, is necessarily a cultural mediation, only possible at a remove, from the moment the viewer is no longer

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immersed in the land (by working it for example) and perceives it in a cultural or aesthetic manner. As Raymond Williams argued, “a working country is hardly ever a landscape. The very idea of landscape implies separation and observation” (Williams, 1973: 120). Or, to use Malcolm Andrews’s words: “Landscape, whether as *parergon* or Argument, is mediated land, land that has been aesthetically processed. It is land that has arranged itself, or has been arranged by the artistic vision, so that it is ready to sit for its portrait” (Andrews, 1999: 7). Such a separation from the natural world has been connected with the development of urbanization in the early modern period. Alain Roger, for instance, argues that the perception of landscape is specific to city dwellers, whose culture and distance from nature it presupposes: “La perception d’un paysage, cette invention de citadins, [...] suppose à la fois du recul et de la culture, une sorte de *reculture* en somme” (Roger, 1997: 26).

Anthropologists and geographers have insisted on the fact that landscape can also be defined as lived and built (Voisenat, 1995; Descola, 2013). Art historians have also reflected on the nexus of representing, constructing and experiencing space. One of the reasons why the art historical term “landscape” is so “desperately confused” has to do with the fact that it is “both our subject and the thing within which we exist” (DeLue and Elkins, 2008: 8-9). W.J.T. Mitchell’s thesis that “landscape is not a genre of art but a medium” (Mitchell, 2002: 5) grasps the double-edged character of the notion. As Olwig puts it, the notion of landscape lies at the intersection of “domain” (which belongs to the discourse of politics, economics, society) and “art of place” (which belongs to the discourse of aesthetics) (quoted in DeLue and Elkins, 2008: 158). The word thus contains two different words which have become intertwined.

Landscape may be understood as a perceived space to which is given aesthetic value, but also as a construct whose necessity seems to have arisen from an original separation. Beyond this initial separation, the history of the idea of landscape is articulated by episodes of tension between nature and culture, in which the urge to aestheticize natural environments appears to be related to a sense of loss. The idea of landscape both provided a solution and evolved to adapt to changing circumstances. Just as the drift away from the rural world, at the dawn of the modern period, is contemporaneous with the initial development of the idea of landscape—although not always directly correlated to it as Alpers’s analysis of Dutch landscape painting suggests (Alpers, 1983: 152)—the flourishing of landscape painting and nature poetry in the Romantic period could be seen as a response to industrialization and destruction. The success of the American sublime in the second half of the nineteenth century points to a need to capture—and also construct as part of the national myth—the fantasy of an untouched wilderness, at the same time as it was receding. As Braddock and Kusserow point out, 19th century American landscape painting (Cole, Moran, Bierstadt) inherited European aesthetic conventions and institutionalized a model of viewing the West and the national parks which prompted the neglect of other natural environments considered to be less impressive and less worthy of

attention (Braddock and Kusserow, 2018: 12-43). The resurgence of pastoral themes in British literature and arts of the 1930s and 1940s is intricately connected with the sense of decline conveyed by the succession of depression and war.

The premise of this issue of *Recherches Anglaises et Nord-Américaines* is that the current environmental emergency is not only a new moment of tension and loss, but possibly an ultimate crisis, one that has so considerably altered the balance between human and natural habitats that the idea of landscape itself needs to be re-examined, and new artistic and aesthetic spatialities need to be negotiated. We seek to highlight the environmental, social and political stakes of landscape, reflect on the entanglements of man and nature as represented in literature, art and film, and consider the assumptions and perspectives that cultural representations and practices offer to current discussions of the Anthropocene.

Rival conceptions of the Anthropocene have been formulated and polemical debates about its starting date exist. The age of Anthropocene is defined as an epoch in which ecological transformations driven by human activity are taking place on such a scale that they leave a perceptible trace on the planet's geological record. Paul Crutzen, who contributed to the recent popularization of the concept, traced its origins to the first industrial revolution and the invention of the steam engine by James Watt in the late 18th century, as it marks "the beginning of growing global concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane" (Crutzen, 2002). This first stage of the Anthropocene is often considered to have paved the way for a much more radical second stage, referred to as the "Great Acceleration," which is considered to have unfolded from the early days of the atomic age in 1945 (Steffen et al., 2004; McNeill and Engelke, 2016; Williston, 2015 and 2016; Waters et al., 2016). Since then, "the human impact on the Earth and the biosphere, measured and judged in several different ways ... has escalated" (McNeill and Engelke, 2016: 4). The planetary changes caused by human consumption and urbanisation have been perceptible in dramatic ways, what with global warming, the rapid decrease of natural habitats, the disappearance of animal and vegetal species at an unprecedented pace, or the growing levels of visible and invisible pollution. The pressure exerted by human action on ecosystems has been such that in many cases its effects are considered to be irreversible. While observers who lived through the first industrial revolution could still see nature as a force to reckon with and pondered about the frailty of human intervention and its ultimate erasure with the passing of time, contemporary observers note above all the growing imprint of humanity, the shrinking place of nature at a planetary level, and the growing awareness of the fact that Earth's natural resources are finite (Latour, 2015). The concept of Anthropocene and its implementation have been largely discussed and critiqued by the social sciences, for relying on universalist and anthropocentric assumptions (Demos, 2017), excluding whole populations from the "Anthropos" and remaining racially blind (Yusoff, 2019), depoliticizing the issue of ecology, masking the inherent inequalities in the

face of the climate and environmental crises, or minimizing the role of capitalism in the catastrophe (Beau and Larr  re, 2018). Still, the term provides a useful framework to analyze the evolutions in the artistic representations of landscape, to reflect on the current renegotiations of the boundaries between nature and culture and to reassess the relevance of aesthetic perceptions of space. Braddock and Kusserow, in the introduction to *Nature's Nation*, discuss the critical charge against the term "Anthropocene," but decide to preserve it for a variety of reasons: it appears preferable to other alternatives ("Capitalocene" or "Chthulhucene"¹), it "productively refracts and reframes the history of art" and offers a far-reaching periodization that blurs the distinction between human and geological history (Braddock and Kusserow, 2018: 12). Similarly, Vermeulen contends that the term "becomes useful if we accept that it is inevitably a misnomer" (Vermeulen, 2020: 9) and proceeds to use it in his study of literature and the Anthropocene. We will also keep this nebulous and difficult term which remains intellectually productive.

With the rapid degradation of our natural environments and the observable disjunction between the economic uses of territories and their aesthetic value, the need to give aesthetic meaning to the spaces in which we live has been more pressing than ever. Some recent exhibitions and publications have drawn attention to the continued relevance of the landscape idea and of landscape strategies that were developed to address earlier environmental crises. The aesthetics of the sublime has notably been invoked as a means to address the current sense of helplessness in the face of irremediable destruction, as well as convey ecological disaster (Guenin, 2016). Other strategies have consisted in challenging this Western-centric aesthetic which has historically been used to erase Indigenous people from the represented landscape, hence justifying their erasure from the actual territory. Contemporary Indigenous artists and researchers thus challenge the colonial narrative of a pre-anthropized land as well as the concept of Anthropocene itself, claiming it is intrinsically linked with the colonial project of severing "relations between mind, body and land," and can thus only be addressed by recognizing the value of Indigenous knowledge (Davis and Todd, 2017). Along similar lines, Mirzoeff urges for a "planetary countervisualisation" to the Anthropocene, a resistance to the forces that have made the Anthropocene possible. Part of this resistance lies in an attempt to reinterpret Western art with a critical eye. Mirzoeff shows that many famous examples of Western painting (Monet's *Impression: Sun Rising* of 1873, for instance) implicitly visualize anthropogenic effects (smog) but are not perceived as such, which leads him to describe an anaesthetic effect, or an "Anthropocene An(aesthetics)"

¹ For instance, Haraway criticizes the term "Anthropocene" and reflects on other possible names such as Capitalocene or Plantationocene, proposing Chthulhucene as a term that suggests "sympoiesis," a way of living and making together (Haraway, 2016: 33). In an interview, Haraway declares herself resigned to the widespread use of the term "Anthropocene" and highlights its biases (Davis and Turpin, 2015: 269).

(Mirzoeff 2014: 220). The term “critical” is an important one and it keeps resurfacing in discussions of art, literature and the Anthropocene. The critical components in contemporary art practices have been emphasized, in particular the attempts to engage with the politics of land use, border conflicts, climate change and normative spatial representation (Scott and Swenson, 2015). The landscapes thus emerging are necessarily “critical landscapes” and the contemporary artists who imagine them negotiate distinct art historical legacies and rely on distinct frameworks or disciplines. Thus, the legacy of Earthworks and Land Art is fundamental for some, while others mobilize references from geography, urban planning, geopolitics, also embracing activism. Scott and Swenson aptly call this heterogenous constellation a “critical mass of land-focused practices” (Scott and Swenson, 2015: 1). Land Art and Earthworks, from which sprang a plethora of artistic expressions later on, remain important references for understanding the conceptualization and practice of landscape art beyond painting and into sculpture, installation, video and performance art (Kaiser and Kwon, 2012: 31). The notion of “site” in Earthworks and Land Art sought to abolish the distance between observer and the space observed, between artist and environment thought to be inherent in earlier landscape painting, by introducing concrete elements from the site (rocks, earth) in the representation of the latter and thus rematerializing an abstract and removed relation. For Robert Smithson, this opened up the possibility of a “representation without resemblance” (Smithson, 1996: 364). This abolished distance, which went hand in hand with a refusal of the idealization of nature and of any proprietary claims over it, was and still is considered to be a salutary basis for a positive reconfiguration of the relationship between man and the environment (Demos, 2016). The notion of “landscape” is present in certain studies on the relationship between art, literature and the Anthropocene, as we saw in Scott and Swenson (2015) and also in *Arts of Living on an Endangered Planet*, where it features from the very title of the introduction (“Haunted landscapes of the Anthropocene,” Tsing et al., 2017) and is expanded throughout the volume. The notion is not elaborated on in *Art in the Anthropocene* (Davis and Turpin, 2015), for instance, nor in *Broken Nature* (Antonelli and Tannir, 2019), which prefer to use other terms such as “nature” or “environment.”

The prominent visual dimension present in the notion of “landscape” tends to create a strong association with a specific pictorial genre, but the notion is highly relevant for literature and literary studies as well. The “scape” in landscape refers both to the scopic regime and to the shaping of the land, which are both central to spatial representations in literature. In European Romanticism, the centrality of nature, the rise of landscape painting and the onset of the Industrial Revolution articulate landscape and the Anthropocene in many ways, having to do not only with the expression of a lament over natural destruction, but also with the attitude of nefarious idealization of nature that we have already mentioned. The tension and opposition between countryside and urban spaces becomes particularly prominent

in Romantic literature and is exacerbated in the early 20th century in the literary productions of modernism, both in Europe and North America. In the United States, landscapes abound in 19th century art and literature, where the American landscape placed under the sign of the rhetoric of the wilderness becomes a national symbol (pitted against the cultured landscapes of Europe) and also the focus of colonial expansion. Ironically, just as the American landscape was celebrated, its shaping involved destructive exploitation and the parallel creation of national parks. While some writers, like Cooper, presented an already vanishing wilderness in his novels, others like Thoreau focused on the texture of the familiar in Concord, Massachusetts and elaborated an environmental imagination that influences American culture to this day (Buell, 1995). Within the large body of studies on literature and space, on literature and the Anthropocene, the notion of “landscape” is more present in certain studies than in others. Gersdorf, for instance, points to its absence from most studies of 20th century American literature and considers it a very useful concept that she deploys in a study of literary representations of the American desert (Gersdorf, 2019). The notion of “landscape” also features repeatedly in Pieter Vermeulen’s recent *Literature and the Anthropocene* (2020), where the term refers to the mutual shaping of humans and environment as represented in literary texts. Studies of the Anthropocene in literature insist on the relevance of the latter in reflecting critically on our present condition, on the necessity to uncover the contemporary legacy of existing literary and intellectual traditions of thinking about nature (pastoralism, Romanticism), in continuously revisiting and enriching ecocritical theory and in investigating alternative spatialities and practices of thinking and writing about nature that are the blind spot of the dominant model of the Anthropocene. The analysis of literary and artistic discourses of women, minorities, the dispossessed and the formerly colonized seeks to “provincialize” the Anthropocene and deprive it of its universalist assumptions (DeLoughrey, 2019: 2).

This volume aims to explore the notion of landscape and its current relevance, as well as the possibility of new aesthetic spatialities, with a focus on the English-speaking world. The latter’s unique experience of the first industrial revolution, coupled with its colonial experience, means that it has long engaged with some of the environmental issues of our times (Bate, 1991; Davies, 2018), and developed the landscape idea in a way which resonates within the work of contemporary artists, as several articles in this volume show. Its early artistic response to the first stage of the Anthropocene provided long-lasting strategies to express the sense of disconnection from natural environments that has recurred throughout the industrial age, but also to cope with it, often in idealized and nostalgic representations of a fast-vanishing rural world. Constable’s paintings of rural Suffolk come to mind, as well as the ubiquitous picturesque idiom used by artist travellers from the late eighteenth century onwards. At the same time, the history of Britain and its former colonies over the last two and a half centuries has demonstrated the dangers of aestheticization, of

viewing industrialized, colonized and deforested lands through the conventions of the pastoral, the picturesque or the sublime, and thus of using landscape aesthetics as a denial of environmental destruction or as a tool for spatial appropriation.

The mediation of former landscape aesthetics, and the way they have informed more recent perceptions and representations of contemporary natural scenery, is examined in several articles, some of which look to Romantic aesthetics as revealing an early form of environmentalism and response to the first stage of the Anthropocene, while others examine the tensions between the possibility of escapism or idealization that these earlier conventions of landscape have offered and environmental concerns. Pascale Guibert draws suggestive analogies between Wordsworth's strategies for reconnection with nature and Gloria Anzaldúa's reflections, in her *Borderland* poems, about ways of healing both the Earth and our interaction with it. Mark Niemeyer's study of *The Last of the Mohicans* shows how Cooper's use of the aesthetics of the picturesque and the sublime partook of the construction of an idealized American wilderness that was to be central to the creation of a distinctive American literature. Elin Käck examines the representation of nature in modernist poems published in *The Dial*, focusing on the way they articulated tradition (pastoral conventions in particular) and an awareness of shifting relations between nature and culture. In her study of the wartime paintings of John Piper and Paul Nash, Hélène Ibata explores the Romantic influences that were still at work in their approach to landscape, arguing that both artists used them with critical distance and a new awareness of irremediable human destructiveness. Claire Omhovère's article refers to the way pastoralism is deconstructed in the works under scrutiny and to the survivance of the codes of the sublime in the visual representations of petrosapes in the case of the "Oil" series by Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky (1999-2010). Certain articles discuss the contradictions between idealized depictions of the wilderness (North American, but not exclusively) and the reality of natural destruction, as Mark Niemeyer shows in the case of Cooper. Monica Manolescu's article also reflects on the way art historical traditions are reworked in the work of two major 20th century artists, Helen Mayer and Newton Harrison, which revisits certain procedures inherited from Land Art. Sophie Gergaud's article similarly engages with canonical cinematographic representations of Indigenous peoples and landscapes, and representations produced by Indigenous peoples themselves in order to reclaim their proper place in North American space and history.

Some of the articles also share terrain insofar as they elucidate the shifts in geographical imagination that have occurred since World War II, resulting in a more interconnected world, a new understanding of environmental issues at a global level and a growing awareness of the frailty of the Earth, in the postindustrial and atomic age. This new geographical imagination necessarily led to new representations and practices of space, as becomes clear in the articles written by Monica Manolescu, who examines climate change and pollution in *The Lagoon Cycle*, Cécile Whiting,

who analyzes war representations in Peter Blume's *The Rock* and Claire Omhovère, who explores Canadian literary and artistic petroscares. The scale of modern warfare plays an important role in some of the articles, with parallels drawn between wartime destruction and the human impulse to damage the environment, as Cécile Whiting and Hélène Ibata show.

Several articles converge in addressing Indigenous and minority aesthetics and practices of space. They examine the confrontation with normative settler narratives tending to render them invisible. This is the case in Mark Niemeyer's elucidation of the Native American presence within the construction of the wilderness in Cooper, in Sophie Gergaud's analysis of cultural resistance and visual sovereignty in Indigenous cinema, in Claire Omhovère's discussion of the subversive connotations of the representation of oil in minority discourses, in Pascale Guibert's exploration of the renewed potential of landscape in Anzaldúa's poetics and in Monica Manolescu's reflection on how *The Lagoon Cycle* unveils the decline of the traditional dam system and of a depleted species in the lagoons of Sri Lanka.

Formal experimentation in literature as a means to address or at times heal the divisions between human and natural worlds is explored by several contributors. Elin Käck's analysis of anthropomorphism and of the bodily act of looking in modernist poetry, as well as Pascale Guibert's interpretation of Anzaldúa's text as the locus where the process of bodily reconstruction merges with that of reconciliation with the natural world, demonstrate the importance of textual form as a meeting ground and a place to reinvent landscape. Claire Omhovère examines postwar and contemporary Canadian narrative forms that are traditionally considered less noble than the novel (short stories in particular), that dare present petroscares otherwise absent from novels, that rely on irony or parody and that dramatize point of view to show the complicity between viewer and landscape. Monica Manolescu considers the hybrid nature of *The Lagoon Cycle* (textual and visual), in particular the graphic means employed by the artists Helen Mayer and Newton Harrison (use of extra blanks within verse) to suggest a dialogic approach to the ecological reshaping of the landscape.

The present issue thus highlights writers' and artists' use and awareness of existing conventions and their connotations, as well as their quest for new spatialities that would enable a more responsible approach to environmental issues. Can the writers' and artists' take on the natural world be anything other than an acknowledgement of irremediable change? Can they, as in the past, reclaim the ruins of the world in order to find in them fragments of new compositions? Or should they inevitably remind us of reality by confronting us with the scars of nature or the signs of humanity's destructive action? Is the paradigm of landscape still relevant in such a context? Can earlier forms of landscape, that were evolved to deal with past crises, provide partial solutions, or should we consider as some have claimed that we are living in a "post-landscape" era (Wall, 2017) and that new artistic practices of space are

necessary? These are some of the questions that are addressed by the authors of the following texts, which focus on contemporary literary and artistic spatialities while highlighting the aesthetic traditions that they engage with.

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Abstracts / Résumés

Keeping Humans Out of the Picture: The (Almost) Pristine Wilderness of The Last of the Mohicans

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Keywords: James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, wilderness, environment, cultural nationalism

Mots-clés: James Fenimore Cooper, *Le Dernier des Mohicans*, nature sauvage, environnement, nationalisme culturel

This article examines the depiction of the wilderness in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*. It begins by recalling that in the early decades of the nineteenth century, descriptions of pristine landscapes were relatively common in American writings, whose authors were often striving to create a distinctively national literature for the new country. Cooper drew on the traditions of the picturesque and the sublime and made use of "painterly" techniques to create a "constructed" wilderness setting for his romance. By 1826, however, when the book was published, the American environment was already in the process of significant transformation, not to say devastation, brought about by human activity. And some people, including Cooper, were already decrying this destruction. In *The Last of the Mohicans*, however, the author does not address environmental questions directly, as he had, for example, in his previous work, *The Pioneers*, but rather offers an image of untouched nature—of the way things used to be. Cooper does nevertheless incorporate reminders—which are all marginalized in one way or another to keep them out of the literary picture he creates—of the fact that the American landscape was already in the process of undergoing disfiguring change.

Cet article examine la représentation de la nature sauvage dans *Le Dernier des Mohicans* de James Fenimore Cooper. Il commence par rappeler que pendant les premières décennies du dix-neuvième siècle des descriptions de paysages vierges apparaissaient relativement souvent dans les écrits américains, dont les auteurs contribuaient souvent à la création d'une littérature nationale caractéristique pour le nouveau pays. Cooper faisait appel aux traditions du pittoresque et du sublime, ainsi qu'aux techniques « picturales » pour créer un décor sauvage « construit » pour son roman. En 1826, cependant, quand le livre fut publié, l'environnement américain était déjà en train d'être transformé, pour ne pas dire dévasté, par l'activité humaine. Et certains, dont Cooper, décriaient déjà cette destruction. Dans *Le Dernier des Mohicans*, pourtant, l'auteur ne traite pas directement les questions environnementales, comme il l'a fait, par exemple, dans son œuvre précédente, *Les Pionniers*, mais offre plutôt une image d'une nature à l'état pur, une image, en fait, du passé. Cooper néanmoins incorpore des rappels – qui sont tous marginalisés d'une façon ou une autre pour les garder à l'extérieur du tableau littéraire qu'il crée – du fait que le paysage américain était déjà en train de subir une défiguration irréversible.

A Landscape for Early 20th-Century Poetry: Pastorals of the Little-Magazine Avant-Garde

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Keywords: Hart Crane, Marianne Moore, Maxwell Bodenheim, Malcolm Cowley, eco-criticism
Mots clés: Hart Crane, Marianne Moore, Maxwell Bodenheim, Malcolm Cowley, éco-critique

This article considers four poems published in the little magazine *The Dial* in its 71st volume, which appeared in 1921. A forum for the transnational avant-garde at the time and home to Modernist poets such as Marianne Moore, Ezra Pound and others, this magazine provides insight into the main concerns of the writers of its time and constitutes a space where the relationship between Modernism, pastoral, landscape, and geology is explored. Marianne Moore's "A Graveyard," Hart Crane's "Pastorale," Maxwell Bodenheim's "Summer Evening: New York Subway Station," and Malcolm Cowley's "Mountain Valley" will be discussed together with both historical and more recent theories on landscape and aesthetics, nature, and the Anthropocene, including Alexander Blok's response to the 1908 earthquake in Sicily and Ludwig Mediner's 1914 call for new forms and techniques for the representation of urban environments in the visual arts. Placing these poems in a conversation with both contemporaneous and more recent theories on landscape and aesthetics, nature, and the Anthropocene makes it possible to discern how these poets' awareness of the aestheticizing practices involved in representations of nature informs their work, and to understand how they work to destabilize simplistic nature-culture dichotomies.

Cet article analyse quatre poèmes publiés dans la petite revue *The Dial*, dans le volume 71 paru en 1921. Cette revue, qui représentait un forum pour l'avant-garde transnationale de cette période et un point de repère pour des poètes modernistes tels que Marianne Moore, Ezra Pound et d'autres encore, permet de saisir les préoccupations principales des écrivains de l'époque. Elle fournit également un corpus à travers lequel peuvent être analysés les rapports entre le modernisme, la pastorale, le paysage et la géologie. Les poèmes "A Graveyard" de Marianne Moore, "Pastorale" de Hart Crane, "Summer Evening: New York Subway Station" de Maxwell Bodenheim et "Mountain Valley" de Malcolm Cowley seront analysés à la lumière des théories de l'époque et plus récentes sur l'esthétique du paysage, la nature et l'Anthropocène, auxquelles s'ajoutent la réaction d'Alexander Blok au tremblement de terre qui eut lieu en 1908 en Sicile et le plaidoyer de Ludwig Mediner de 1914 en faveur de nouvelles formes et techniques dans la représentation des environnements urbains dans les arts visuels. Le fait d'engager une conversation entre ces poèmes et des théories de l'époque ou plus récentes sur l'esthétique du paysage, la nature et l'Anthropocène nous permet de comprendre les mécanismes esthétiques qui régissent les représentations de la nature dans certaines œuvres de ces poètes et la manière dont celles-ci bousculent l'opposition simpliste entre nature et culture.

A questionable 'pleasure': Ruins in John Piper's and Paul Nash's wartime landscape paintings

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Keywords: Paul Nash, John Piper, ruins, Romantic aesthetics, landscape

Mots-clés: Paul Nash, John Piper, ruines, esthétiques romantiques, paysage

The resurgence of Romantic influences in British art, from the late 1930s through the 1940s, has often been understood as an escapist answer to the turmoils of the time, and a longing for a lost pastoral idyll. This essay, which focuses on the wartime production of John Piper and Paul Nash, argues that while Romantic associations were undeniable and painters harked back to the landscape aesthetics of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, such references were both self-conscious and critical. It suggests that just as they engaged in a dialogue with the traditions of the picturesque and the sublime, Piper and Nash underlined the impossibility of a return to these earlier strategies. Their awareness of an irreversible disjunction with the natural world meant that far from providing a reassuring refuge, their wartime landscapes and ruin paintings mostly made it apparent that the aestheticisation of devastation was in itself problematic, and that the artist had to confront the destructive impact of human action.

Le regain d'intérêt pour la tradition romantique dans l'art britannique des années 1940 a souvent été compris comme un déni des bouleversements de l'époque, et un désir de retour à une idylle pastorale perdue. La production de John Piper et Paul Nash dans le contexte de la seconde guerre mondiale peut toutefois suggérer que si les influences romantiques étaient indéniables et si ces peintres faisaient délibérément allusion à l'esthétique du paysage de la fin du XVIII^e siècle et du début du siècle suivant, ces références étaient souvent critiques. Il est possible de voir dans leur dialogue avec les traditions du pittoresque et du sublime, notamment, une conscience de l'impossibilité d'un retour à ces formes antérieures du paysage. En faisant état d'une disjonction irréversible avec le monde naturel, leurs paysages de guerre et peintures de ruines montraient avant tout que l'esthétisation de la dévastation était en soi problématique, et que l'artiste devait se confronter aux conséquences dévastatrices de l'action humaine.

Peter Blume's The Rock (1944-48) and the Post-war Landscape

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Keywords: Peter Blume, American landscape painting, air age geography, Second World War

Mots-clés: Peter Blume, peinture de paysage américaine, géographie de l'âge de l'air, Seconde Guerre mondiale

Peter Blume's *The Rock*, a painting that preoccupied the artist for the duration of the war (although he did not complete it until 1948), combines evidence of death and destruction alongside signs of renewal. In tune with a future-oriented ethos of that time, *The Rock* acknowledged destruction in the past but nevertheless held out hope for what lay ahead by reasserting the possibility

The Rock de Peter Blume, un tableau qui préoccupa l'artiste pendant toute la durée de la guerre (bien qu'il ne l'ait achevé qu'en 1948), associe des preuves de mort et de destruction à des signes de renouveau. En accord avec la philosophie tournée vers l'avenir de l'époque, *The Rock* reconnaissait la destruction dans le passé, mais gardait néanmoins l'espoir en l'avenir en réaffirmant la possibilité de

of rebuilding through human cooperation. This article examines how Blume's painting spoke to an emergent global consciousness that in its most idealistic form presaged a future of liberal humanism, but that, in its most crass form, eventually led to the development of global commercial networks and the exhaustion of natural resources.

reconstruire grâce à la coopération humaine. Cet article examine comment la peinture de Blume évoquait une conscience mondiale émergente qui, dans sa forme la plus idéaliste, présageait un avenir d'humanisme libéral, mais qui, dans sa forme la plus grossière, a finalement conduit au développement de réseaux commerciaux mondiaux et à l'épuisement des ressources naturelles.

Imagining the Lagoon in Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison's The Lagoon Cycle

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Keywords: Helen Mayer Harrison, Newton Harrison, *The Lagoon Cycle*, art and environment, site, landscape

Mots-clés: Helen Mayer Harrison, Newton Harrison, *The Lagoon Cycle*, art et environnement, site, paysage

This article addresses the representations and practices of space in American artists Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison's *The Lagoon Cycle*, a pioneering multimedia work of environmental art completed between 1972 and 1985, currently in the collection of the Centre Pompidou. The work explores the lagoon as *topos* that stands in between the concreteness of site and the abstraction of metaphor. The article discusses the genealogies of the artists in relation to their use of site and their inscription in a critical reflection on landscape, it elucidates their use of fieldwork as a cultural practice and it uncovers the performative and conceptual dimensions of the lagoon. The main objective of *The Lagoon Cycle* is not to successfully restore degradation, even if a lot of speculative energy is channelled towards imagining the technological, economic and pragmatic frameworks that would make it possible. As a conceptual project whose utopian ambitions prevent it from materializing, *The Lagoon Cycle* asserts the role of art in elaborating an ethics and aesthetics of attention, in reflecting critically on the present and in projecting the

Cet article analyse les représentations et les pratiques de l'espace dans l'œuvre *The Lagoon Cycle* des artistes américains Helen Mayer Harrison et Newton Harrison, œuvre hybride et pionnière de l'art environnemental réalisée entre 1972 et 1985, qui se trouve actuellement dans la collection du Centre Pompidou. Cette œuvre explore le lagon en tant que lieu privilégié qui se situe à l'intersection du site concret et de la métaphore abstraite. L'article se penche sur les généalogies des artistes en ce qui concerne leur usage du site et leur inscription dans une réflexion critique sur la tradition du paysage. Il étudie la manière dont les artistes s'emparent de la pratique culturelle du travail de terrain. Enfin, il explore les dimensions spéculatives et performatives de la représentation du lagon. L'objectif principal du *Lagoon Cycle* n'est pas de réparer la dégradation, même si beaucoup d'énergie spéculative est dépensée pour imaginer les cadres technologiques, économiques et pragmatiques susceptibles de rendre cet objectif possible. Ce projet conceptuel dont les ambitions utopiques l'empêchent de se réaliser matériellement

future that might result from perpetuating the current situation.

affirme le rôle de l'art dans l'élaboration d'une éthique et d'une esthétique centrées sur l'attention à l'environnement, dans la réflexion critique au sujet de notre présent et dans la projection de l'avenir qui pourrait attendre l'humanité si la situation actuelle perdure sans aucun changement d'attitude.

Picturing Oil: A Tour of the Canadian Petroscape in Words and Images

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Keywords: Canadian literature, petrofictions, global warming, landscape writing

Mots-clés: Littérature canadienne, pétrofiction, réchauffement climatique, écriture paysagère

The transforming effects of oil need to be made visible, if we are to understand its impact on the societies that have grown dependent upon it, and unleash the imaginaries necessary to inspire an energetic transition. Art certainly has a role to play in this matter, as made clear since the turn of the Millennium by unprecedented developments in ecocriticism, in parallel with the production of artistic work that has sought to bring oil and its attendant logics into view. This article will be observing this epochal change through the narrow prism of the petroscape, the representation of the oil fields, in English-Canadian fiction and the visual arts.

Cet article a pour point de départ les analyses qu'Amitav Ghosh a consacrées à l'impuissance de la littérature face aux réalités de l'exploitation pétrolière et aux enjeux du réchauffement climatique. Le développement des humanités énergétiques a depuis lors démontré que les arts ont un rôle essentiel à jouer pour préciser la place qu'occupe le pétrole dans notre expérience sensible. À la fois matière première et énergie, les hydrocarbures ont en effet pour caractéristique paradoxale de passer le plus souvent inaperçues parce que, fluides, plastiques et diffuses, elles sont partie intégrante de tous les aspects de la vie contemporaine. Il s'agira ici d'observer comment les hydrocarbures ont néanmoins fait une entrée discrète et précoce dans le champ de la représentation à travers l'émergence du pétro-paysage dans la littérature et les arts visuels du Canada anglophone.

"We are all healers": Romantic Curanderismo in the Poems of Gloria Anzaldúa's Borderlands/La Frontera—The New Mestiza

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Keywords: landscape, anthropocene, healing, Anzaldúa, Wordsworth

Mots-clés: paysage, anthropocène, soin, Anzaldúa, Wordsworth

The present chapter consists in a reflection on the poetic landscapes of our modernity, seen as possible soft healing agents to an environment

Le présent chapitre mène une réflexion sur les paysages poétiques de notre modernité, comme possible soin des paysages que l'hu-

which humans have altered so much, leaving ineradicable traces, that a new name was required for this new era: the Anthropocene. Four voices, equally listened to, will support this reflection: French philosopher François Jullien's, who, in his *Living Off Landscape* poses the necessity to think anew western landscape, choked from its very origins; anthropologist-cum-curandera Elizabeth de la Portilla's, from San Antonio, TX, who retraces what it means to be a curandera today, what healing consists in; Chicana poetess-cum-curandera from the Rio Grande Valley, Gloria Anzaldúa's, who, in the poetic gestures which are also healing techniques manifested in her *Borderlands* poems, encounters and prolongs the modes of relation which, at the end of the 18th century, in England, William Wordsworth, sometimes seen as the father of modern landscapes, initiated through his poetry. We will see how, in the parallel effacement of an almighty subject and consumable object which these four texts stage, landscape offers itself as the locus of love.

main a abimés, conduisant à nommer d'un nouveau nom une ère géologique nouvelle, marquée par l'empreinte humaine: l'Anthropocène. Elle croise, pour être menée, quatre voix auxquelles on prête également attention: celle du philosophe français François Jullien, qui pose comme point de départ à son ouvrage *Vivre de Paysage* la nécessité de repenser un paysage occidental meurtri dès ses origines; celle de l'anthropologue-cum-curandera Elizabeth de la Portilla, de San Antonio, Texas, qui réfléchit à ce qu'est être curandera aujourd'hui, à ce qu'on soigne et comment; celle de la poétesse-cum-curandera chicana de la vallée du Rio Grande, Gloria Anzaldúa, qui retrouve, parmi d'autres, dans ses gestes poétiques qui sont également pratiques de soin, les modes de relation qu'initia par sa poésie, à la fin du xviii^e siècle, celui qui fut parfois nommé père des paysages modernes, William Wordsworth. Nous verrons comment, dans l'effacement du sujet tout-puissant et de l'objet consommable que ces quatre textes mettent en scène, c'est à la possibilité d'aimer que le paysage ouvre un lieu.

Indigenous Cinemas and Futurisms: How Indigenous Visual Arts Are Shifting the Narratives and Offering a New Relationship to Space and Landscapes

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Keywords: indigenous cinema, indigenous futurism, visual sovereignty, narrative sovereignty, decolonization

Mots-clés: cinémas autochtones, futurisme autochtone, souveraineté visuelle, souveraineté narrative, décolonisation

Defined by their tragic past and largely denied a thriving present, Indigenous peoples are absent from mainstream present-day worlds and imagined futures. This twisted representation can largely be blamed on mainstream films and media, which have contributed to emptying the supposedly "new" and "discovered" territories from their first inhabitants: to become fully American, the conquered spaces had to be given a

Réduits à leur passé tragique et exclus d'un présent florissant, les peuples autochtones sont largement absents des mondes contemporains et futurs imaginés par la société dominante. Ces représentations déformées de la réalité véhiculées principalement par les médias, et par le cinéma en particulier, ont contribué à vider visuellement les paysages nord-américains de leurs premiers habitants: pour devenir pleinement américains, les espaces

new aesthetic aspect and value, one that deprived them of their former Indigenous components whose very existence was hence denied. Yet, for decades now, Indigenous filmmakers have been working hard to make sure their visions be seen, their aesthetics be (re)considered, and the shaping of the landscape by their ancestors recognized, thus correcting the old western traditional narratives while producing portrayals of Indigenous peoples as human beings engaged in contemporary life, entangled in space and inseparable from their territories. A new generation of Indigenous artists is now taking the creative world a step further, revisiting and shifting the narratives while taking a deliberate leap forward in time and reclaiming space. Indigenous futurisms enable us to dive into artistic visions about Indigenous places in the future and their role in shaping a common, collective, and diverse destiny for those landscapes.

conquis de ces « nouveaux » territoires « récemment découverts » se sont vu privés de leurs anciennes composantes autochtones et attribuer une nouvelle esthétique. Depuis des décennies cependant, des cinéastes autochtones travaillent d'arrache-pied pour que leurs visions soient prises en compte, pour imposer leurs propres esthétiques et pour que les multiples façons dont leurs ancêtres ont façonné les paysages soient enfin reconnues. Ce faisant, ces artistes corrigent les récits occidentaux habituels et contribuent à créer des personnages autochtones s'affirmant comme des êtres humains contemporains et complexes, intrinsèquement liés à leurs territoires. Une nouvelle génération d'artistes autochtones va encore plus loin en nous proposant de faire un bond en avant dans le temps : les futurismes autochtones nous font ainsi plonger dans un avenir où le destin des divers paysages qui nous entourent se joue en commun.

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