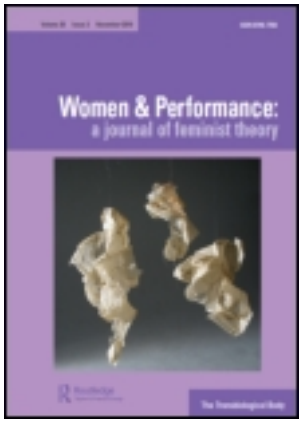

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Epilogue: Landscape in, around, and under the performative

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This epilogue to the dossier on "Feminist Landscapes" asserts that, like the performative and its periperformative vicinities, landscape matters (and is volatile, fascinating, and queer in the ways it matters and performs). The 10+ theses that follow set landscape in motion as a verb in, around, and under the performative, which means that they do much, if not most, of their volatile, even alchemical, work (in aspect, mood, modality, voice) in what Eve Sedgwick theorized as the periperformative's neck of the woods. Each thesis inflects the verb "to landscape" by conjugating a conceptually significant verb form with a complex instance of landscape in the performative by a contemporary woman artist actively engaged with landscaping. These landscaping performatives and periperformatives do their work through diverse assemblages of media and technique. But this is not a turn from landscaping to its representation understood as some sort of second-order remove from the real dirt and raking muck in the scaping of land. Ultimately, these 10+ theses develop the vital alchemy of what it means for feminist theory and practice to put landscape into serious play as a transformatively shaping multi-tense verb.

Keywords: periperformative; queer theory; feminist theory; landscape theory; landscape as verb; matter and materialization; queer and feminist art practice

> For a long time I boasted that I possessed all possible landscapes . . . I made rules for the form and movement of every consonant, and with instinctive rhythms, I flattered myself to have invented a poetic verb accessible, sooner or later, to all the senses. I reserved the translation. It began as a study. I wrote of silences, nights; I noted the inexpressible. I fixed the vertiginous whirls. (Rimbaud [1999], "Alchemy of the verb," *A season in hell*, 1873)

What would it alter for the theorization of landscape as well as for the conjunction of "feminist" and "landscapes" to put landscape into play as a verb? This is no easy alchemy to perform or sustain, as Rimbaud's own haltingly difficult movements above suggest.[1] His poem "Alchemy of the verb" shifts the conventional terms of landscape studies in poetry from nouns and the things to which they try to refer (the task, for example, of such landscape genres as the Georgic and the

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Pastoral, the topographical poem and the picturesque view) to conceive of and encounter landscape as a matter of complex relations between verbs and the worlds on which they attempt to act. And yet, with a boasting opening turn, the poem also shifts perspective: landscape is taken as a noun – one quite literally seized as a thing to be possessed, even (or especially, given this poem's ambition) when it is in the plural of "all possible landscapes."

The potential arrest of such possessive nouns notwithstanding, I cannot help but see "Alchemy of the verb" via such queer re-iterations of Rimbaud's *A Season in hell* as David Wojnarowicz's photo series *Rimbaud in New York* (1978–9) in which the decadent French poet's face in the form of a sad paper mask floats adrift, on the figure it renders anonymous, from the cold grey shore of Manhattan Island to the rotted interiors across the "social landscape" of the metropolis.[2] I recognize how easy it would be to dismiss the turbulent alchemy of the poem's take on landscape and its shifts between noun and verb. How could one not see its invocation of the rhetoric of possessive mastery over matter as yet one more act in a long sequence of landscape representations that Mary Louise Pratt characterizes as the perspective scene of "the master-of-all-I-survey" in which feminized land is laid out for the appropriative masculine eye, pen, paintbrush, or camera?[3] Nevertheless, I am taking the challenge of providing an epilogue to this dossier in *Women & Performance* on feminist landscapes as a chance to work with what I see as the still haunting promise of nouns oscillating into or becoming verbs, matter that becomes active, the latent possibility of a kind of "fixing" that does not arrest but rather moves with the vertiginous and the whirling without converting such pivots into stasis.

Why does this vibration of landscape between noun and verb matter for feminism?[4] In the chapter "Bodies that Matter" and through a reading of Aristotle on the transformative potentiality that gives "hyle" (the Greek word for matter and for wood) its meaning and value, Judith Butler activates a pun that makes matter, the noun, a verb: matter that matters.[5] As she underscores, this is hardly an "idle pun" for it does the work of developing the argument that matter (the matter of trees and of bodies) is an ongoing process of materialization and of meaning and value-making. The materiality of objects such as Aristotle's wood and our bodies ourselves is constituted in and conditional upon transformative activity.[6] This understanding of matter as movement between noun and verb has vital consequences for how we understand landscape, its action and process, for feminist thought and practice: from landscape as a settled place or fixed point we instead encounter landscape in the performative, landscaping the relations of ground to figure, the potentials of bodies, and the interrelations of humans, animals, plants, and what we call the "environment."

W.J.T. Mitchell's "Imperial landscape" from his widely influential edited volume *Landscape and power* (now in its 2nd edition) opens with nine theses on landscape which he understands not as a genre but as a medium of exchange and a social hieroglyph, that is, a medium found in all cultures and yet also a historical formation intimately associated with European imperialism. For Mitchell, history is in some sense "over" or at least overdone: he asserts that landscape is ultimately

an "exhausted medium," one "no longer viable as a mode of artistic expression."[7] The kicker is the declaration, "Like life, landscape is boring; we must not say so."[8]

For Mitchell, sex and gender certainly go without saying: at least, they nowhere come into his view. This epilogue returns the volley to Mitchell's nine theses that skirt sex and gender entirely, a hedge that is directly related to the way Mitchell's theses still hold landscape as a noun, albeit a "medium" that moves, though the aim of the volume is ostensibly "to change 'landscape' from a noun to a verb . . . a process by which social and subjective identities are formed."[9]

There is more at stake in this push to enact landscape as verb than the production of identities: the high-stakes matter and matterings, for example, of production and reproduction, bodies and acts, desires and habits, sex and death, the making and unmaking of life itself. And this is not at all to leave the question of the "imperial" or the colonial behind but, rather, to bring the intimate relays between post-colonial biopolitics (i.e., the constitutive links between life in the metropole and death in the margins) and the powers of landscaping to the fore. In this connection, we might wonder at the confident ease with which Mitchell can pronounce himself bored by a particular artistic genre and exhausted by its history, and how these two forms of yawning indifference might be related to his inability to see how and why sex and gender matter.

It is in this spirit of wonderment that I set in motion the ten+ theses to follow. They build on the "landscape trouble" I first developed in my response to the round-table discussion on theorizing landscape published in the volume *Landscape theory*.[10] While that essay kicked up some trouble regarding many points of contention from the question of how the location of theorizing matters and how theory travels to the landscaping of theory itself, the sallies most pertinent to this dossier in *Women & Performance* on feminist landscapes would be the insistence on theorizing landscape not from a reinstatement of the unified subject of a certain version of phenomenology (a turn for which the round-table discussion called) but rather a recommitment to the difficulties of thinking and feeling from the place of the divided and differenced subject. Or, in other words, I made a plea for mucking in the tough terrain of that which resists any easy unification or forced harmonics:

> The transcript of the conversation cautions that direct confrontation with the problems of subjectivity – and I conjecture the specter of differences and divisions – will end up ruining the conversation. However, I cannot help but be tempted by what ruin promises to usher back in. I have already outed myself as a descendent of a Jewish Diaspora family who is reading and writing from a temporary perch in a gated community in Dallas, Texas. The easy part is to add the elective affiliations of queer and feminist as well as an admission that I have long mistrusted the orchestrated "harmony" of the conversation piece version of landscape. Let me close with a call for ruin, that is, if ruin means theorizations based in embodied, sensate encounters with landscape that involve mucking around in the pleasures, difficulties, shame, and desires of the differences within and without.

But I think there is room for misreading my declaration that "feminist" and "queer" are "easy admissions for me when it comes to talk of landscape." Although "queer" and "feminist" might be understood as a long-standing and easily reconciled pair based on identity and with a lineage going back even to the eighteenth century

(as in certain readings of such romantic friends as Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby, also known as the ''Ladies of Llangollen,'' who eloped from Ireland to Plas Newydd, Wales where they dedicated their lives to each other and the cultivation of an ornamented farm). And yet they are also a dynamic and even radically unsettling coupling more consistent with the turbulent energies of landscape as verb.[11] Indeed the connections and turbulent crossings between feminist and queer might also be understood to exceed identity or affiliation. In *Queer Ecologies*, Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erikson distinguish their ''queer ecology'' as one in which queer is both the noun of perceiving and experiencing individuals and communities and the verb of calling into question the norms of sex and nature.[12] We could push this both/and of feminist and queer in the interrogation of ''nature'' further and argue that landscape, that hybrid of nature and culture, already queers in its persistent flux between the settlement of nouns and the unruly potencies of verbs, between, for example, the matter, valuations, and meanings of bodies (human, animal, and plant) and the matter and biopolitics of sex (geneses and mutations of life far in excess of heterosexual reproduction and desires that transgress the rules and bounds of gender, genre, and species).

Let me kick off then with a little rephrasing: like the performative and its periperformative vicinities, landscape matters (and is volatile, fascinating, and queer in the ways it matters and performs); we must say so. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's extension of J.L. Austin's *How to do things with words* to theorize what she calls the neighborhood around the performative's illocutionary acts or, in her coinage, the ''periperformative'' begins with the ur-example of the rhetorical force of a single string of negations of the performative from the Gettysburg Address: ''[b]ut, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate – we cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow this ground.''[13] It is necessary to remark not just that this primary instance of what Sedgwick importantly theorizes as the periperformative (that ''neighborhood'' of statements that ''cluster'' around the seemingly stronger performatives) is an event that took place on the Civil War battlefield over the contested ground of plantation slavery (now a national park, though a site of trauma far from resolved) or that the periperformative is itself a spatializing formulation which she articulates in such geomorphic terms as ''clusters,'' ''outcrops,'' ''geological amalgams,'' ''neighborhoods,'' and ''peripheries.'' Most of all it seems imperative to point *under* the performative to the authorizing ground that the periperformative shakes, that is, the re- or anti- or un-landscaping work that periperformatives such as the Gettysburg Address do through their negations, protestations, and failures to do the performatives of which they speak and around which they crop up.

The 10+ theses to which I now turn put landscape into obvious play as a verb in, around, and under the performative, which means that they do much, if not most, of their volatile even alchemical work (in aspect, mood, modality, voice) in the periperformative's neck of the woods. Each thesis inflects the verb ''to landscape'' by conjugating the verb form with a complex instance of landscape in the performative by a contemporary woman artist actively engaged with landscaping. These landscaping performatives and periperformatives do their work through assemblages of media and technique, particularly diverse photographic, audio, filmic, and video

processes, meshes of film and live performance or "filmformance," hybrids of oil on canvas and painted porcelain and painting and cartography, and combinations of sculpture, body art, earthworks, and site-specific installation.

Nonetheless, I want to make clear that this is not a turn from landscaping to its representation understood as some sort of second-order remove from the real dirt and raking muck in the scaping of land. These are all instances of material process involved in making or "worlding" the "worlds" they might otherwise seem merely to depict. Further, while the most conventional verb form of the noun landscape and the one first featured in the OED is its use to denote the act of depiction, representing some thing as a landscape (a use that dates back at least to the seventeenth century) and its second, ostensibly more modern form (the first instance in the *OED* dating from the 1920s) is to lay some thing out (e.g., a garden) as a landscape, the recurrent prepositional phrase "as a landscape" should point us already to the flux of landscape between the thing (some thing landscaped or to be landscaped), its representation (the outcome of the process of being landscaped but also what it requires or means to appear "as a landscape"), and the process of its conversion. And this transit between thing, representation, and process should also remind that landscape's complex temporality – its many and interconnected tense forms – inheres already in the tensive action of being and becoming "as landscape" that these landscapes in the performative stretch.

Thesis 1: *Landscape is*. This form of the simple present is and is not an illusion. Landscape's appearance of mere being, its isness does not make landscape a simple thing. For landscape to be, for it to function as ground, setting, locus, or environment, it must take place. Landscape's isness should thus be understood as an effect of what landscape does; its intransitive action resides in this transit between verb and noun. Landscape's intransitive simple present performs the action of creating the seemingly unchanging effect of an eternal continuous present, an immutable or even sufficient ground for action or claim. Landscape's isness does not just make up the setting, stage, space, or frame of the performative but supplies its very condition. The illusion of isness is so strong that one of the most powerful and resilient effects of landscape is this impression of simple being in an eternal and immutable present that has not and could never be otherwise, an effect otherwise known as "naturalization."

But the banal effect of naturalization is also uncanny. Beirut-born artist Mona Hatoum's installation (Figure 1) *Interior Landscape* (2008), for the historic Fondazione Querini Stampalia museum during the Venice Biennale, takes its name from the sparse minimalism of a single room in the exhibition that, with its mattress-less cot made of barbed wire, pillow embroidered with human hair, cut-up map, coat hanger, and nightstand with cardboard tray, links the assumed externality and matter of landscape to spaces of domesticity, privation and exile and the inner worlds of feeling, sensation, and consciousness that also matter. Like the room itself, these furnishings just are. And yet the overdetermined device of the map shredded into the shape of an empty market bag hangs forlorn next to the equally overdetermined instrument of the twisted wire coat hanger; both puncture the airless confines of the intransitive simple present, rending the seams of isness to expose landscape as

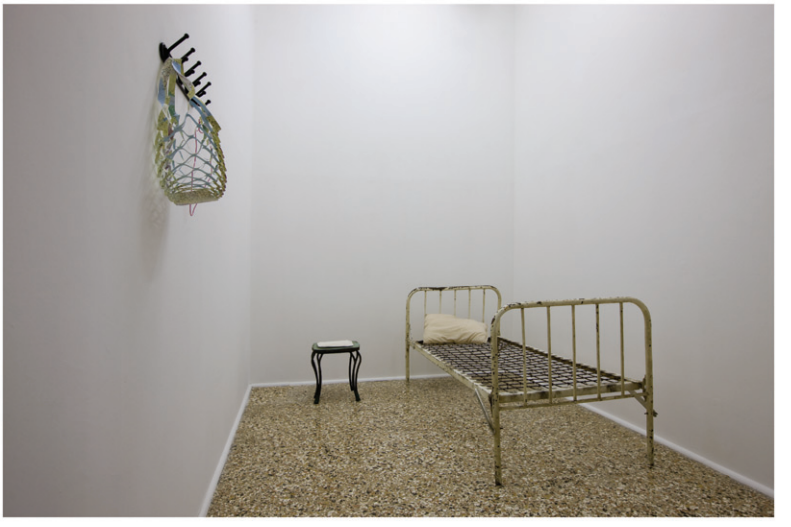

Figure 1. Mona Hatoum, *Interior Landscape*, 2008. Steel bed, pillow, human hair, table, cardboard tray, cut-up map and wire hanger; dimensions variable. © the artist. Photo: Agostino Osio. Courtesy Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venezia.

anything but "natural," if natural means that the pains and injustices of the present are inevitable and immutable.[14]

Thesis 2: *Landscape is landscaped.* Understanding landscape's isness as process anticipates landscape in the passive form of the simple present, that is, as the outcome and ostensibly stable sign of the very activity its simple presence would seem to occult in its effect of merely being or displaying certain qualities. Indeed, the most common usage of the verb form *paysager* of the French noun for landscape or *paysage* is as an adjectival modifier for a garden type, the *jardin paysager*. The "landscaped garden," a term developed in the eighteenth century to distinguish a kind of garden whose mode of construction labors to dissemble the very labor by which its effect of simple presence is produced, reveals more generally one of the main ways landscape performs to convert its construction into the seductive and haunting ground or surround of a kind of "pure" presence without evident or obvious explanation or source for how it comes to be.

The verbs "dissemble," "occult," and "convert" should not be taken to mean that landscape landscapes only in terms of what is and is not immediately perceptible to the sense of sight. The terms "soundscape" and "acoustic landscape" for the spatializing, dimensionalizing and even materializing effects of soundwaves point to the way landscape invisibly grounds and surrounds. Kristin Oppenheim's looping sound installation *Cry Me A River* (1992) which I first experienced at the *elles@centrepompidou* exhibition (2009–10) in the room dedicated to "Disparitions/ Disappearances" and photographic works that employ various technical means to evanesce the body, slows and stretches one line, "I cried a river over you" into an

elongated, tonal river of tears that make the very lines of longing of which they are also the result. This elongated rivulet of longing sounds of longing lead back neither to the lover over whose loss the tears and sound pour nor the body of that singing voice, nor the actual recording device, nor the old ribbons of sound-recording tape, or other technologies for the production of the soundscape of feeling and sensation: all are hauntingly present in their absence.[15]

Thesis 3: *Landscape is landscaping*. This is not a tautology. Landscape's effect of a continuous present should not occult landscape's action as a form of the progressive present. This does not necessarily make landscaping "progressive" in the sense of politics, ethics, or aesthetic value though the turn to landscaping in a moment of ecological thinking and practice might imply otherwise. But it does uncover the ongoingly processual aspect of landscape's performance, its not just taking place, making place, or decaying or even destroying place, or what Deleuze and Guattari called territorializing and deterritorializing, but also and importantly its being and changing in and over time without final outcome despite the illusion of "isness" and the effects of naturalization.[16]

One contemporary woman artist who has most consistently and importantly used her art practice to conceptually interrogate and intervene in our understanding of landscape as process, including ideological process, is Deborah Bright whose *Battlefield Panoramas* (1981–4) exercise the periperformative possibilities of collaged wide-angle black-and-white photographic views to unsettle the memorializing devices for landscaping terrains of wars (as with the Civil War sites Bright photographs) that are arguably not yet over. But it is her more recent interventions, particularly the *Glacial Erratic Series* (2000–3), a sequence of lush color shots of the changing aspect of Plymouth Rock at different seasons of the year, that especially crack the seemingly rock-hard imperviousness of landscape as unchanging durational presence and ostensibly solid ground of possessive claims including the founding of nations. *Glacial Erratic (storm surge)* (Figure 2), an Iris print on textural Somerset Velvet, exposes the ocean waves battering against this fetishized rock, the ocean spray an instance of the literally "erratic" in action or the unpredictably and even suddenly changing "nature" of what we might otherwise hold as self-evident and immutable truths.[17]

Thesis 4: *Landscape landscapes*. The absurdity of the repetition makes the transitive action of landscape no less true. It also serves to bring out landscape's auto-generating qualities. One of the great and dangerous conceits of landscape discourse is the notion that landscape is necessarily and only a man-made artifact, a device that serves to shore up human agency as exceptional by denying the agential force of the earth itself as well as the animals and plants who also depend on it and whose activities co-shape and scape it. Versions of the auto-generating landscape certainly have their own and agonistic political uses, ranging from such imperial and patriarchal controls of reproductivity as Jean-Jacques Rousseau's fantasy community of Clarens in his novel *Julie or The new Heloise* that ostensibly depends on nought outside itself, to the anti-colonial discourse of the auto-generating rhizomic root system that can regenerate from any part. The contested politics of the

Figure 2. Deborah Bright, *Glacial Erratic, (Storm Surge)*, 2003. Iris print on Somerset Velvet; 31 × 37 inches. Edition of 5. Image courtesy of the artist.

auto-generating landscape confirms the necessity of confronting not just the power of landscape to produce itself but also landscape's power to act on the very bodies that such comforting fictions as the man-made landscape attempt to disembed from it.

Performance artist Nao Bustamante's most recent work *Silver & Gold* (2010) (Figure 3), a homage to Jack Smith's fantastic and obsessive filmic rites to a volatile and literally potent nature, deploys a hybrid assemblage of live performance and film or "filmformance" to inhabit and explode to devastating absurdity – with the aid, for example, of a buzzing swarm of electric pink, bejeweled and vibrating penises in an abundant field of lilacs – the gender, sex, and colonial politics of the Pastoral Utopia and its romanticization of reproductive and agricultural labor. While a full analysis or even narrative summary are far beyond the limits of this epilogue, the punctum of the piece is its central piece or hyper-valued part, the techno-artificial vibrator dildo, the decorative and superficial accessory turned live and rogue insect and then more than surrogate with the actual potency and independent (and even, in this case, voice and oracular) will to generate and, in this case, also end the life of the woman's body into which it is incorporated and which it transports across the fungible boundaries of female and male, life and death.[18]

Thesis 5: *I landscape*. It is undeniable that the performative form of the verb "to landscape" lacks the overfamiliarity and the socially and legally binding force of the conventional "I do" (Austin's central example, as Sedgwick elucidates). But the seeming distance between the conjugal "I do" and the conjugation of "I landscape" should not obscure the at once necessary and yet necessarily contested ground (national, state, religious and customary laws that restrict who can do it, with whom

Figure 3. Nao Bustamante, Film Still 3 from *Silver & Gold*, 2010. Filmformance, a combination of live performance and film projection; 45 minutes. Image courtesy of the artist.

and where, the rights and restrictions of property and land governance and ownership that come with the "I do") that props up the seeming it-can-happen-anywhere magic of the "I do." The recent spotlight of heated battle placed on marriage and immigration law in the United States, that is, on the possibilities and limits of the marriage-making "I do" and the citizen-making "I pledge," should rather serve to illuminate the performative but no less shaky ground of other illocutionary acts on which they depend: the colonizing and nation-making acts of "I plant this seed (and/or flag)," "I claim this land," and "I consecrate (or dedicate) this earth."

And yet such acts also hold the possibility of surrogacy, impersonation, and appropriative mimicry that Karen Knorr's *Candide after Voltaire* (Figure 4) (from the photo-tableau series *The Virtues and the Delights* [1992–4]) mines in its restaging of the culminating garden scene of Voltaire's novel with its famous concluding exchange with the tutor Pangloss, whose assertion that "there is a concatenation of all events in the best of possible worlds" (words emblazoned around the circular frame of Knorr's tableau) Candide counters with, "let us cultivate our garden." In Knorr's revision a watering can with a rather large and erect spout takes the place of Voltaire's central actor, not just questioning to whom the "I" of "I landscape" or that seemingly inclusive "us" of "let us cultivate" refers, but enacting the claim that privileged masculine authorizing and founding agency can be usurped with a landscaping tool – even handily so.[19] Although Knorr's accompanying statement on "reinventing history" underscores the humor and irony of such slippery acts of performative surrogacy, the watering can – it is just too tempting to say – asserts the "I landscape" in the form of the "I can."

Thesis 6: *Utopia will have been landscaped*. Landscape in the future perfect raises a related problem of and for conjugation. It is not just that the noun utopia would

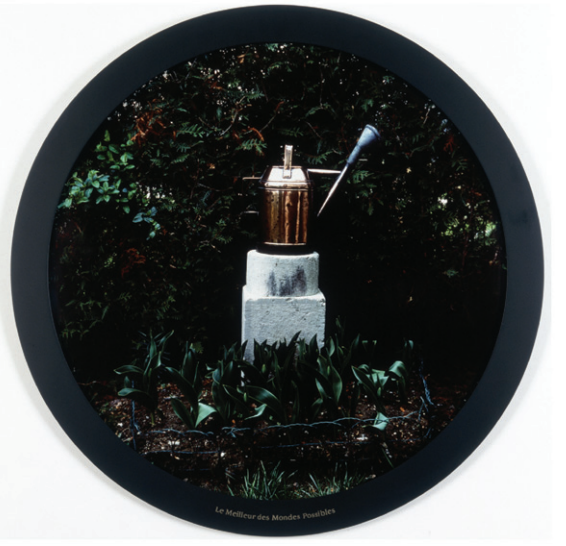

Figure 4. Karen Knorr, *Candide after Voltaire*, from the photo-tableau series *The Virtues and the Delights*, 1992–94. Cibachrome mounted on aluminum, framed in black with platinum signage; 92 cm in diameter. Editions of 5. Image courtesy of the artist.

seem to insist that the perfectly landscaped place has no place (i.e., literally u-topos). Or that despite the many feminist, lesbian and lesbian-feminist land experiments in realizing alternative social, affective, and labor relations on this earth, there is no resolution between the utopic in the sense of the impossible because it has no place and the utopic in the sense of the ideal on which all those who claim the names lesbian and/or feminist can actually agree. Although landscape promises to give actual, material, viable and even sustainable form to the most cherished, the most seductive, the most motivating of values, the utopia of the "will have been landsaped," I would suggest, is a promise that continues to move just out of reach into the "elsewhere" of the yet to come.

The fiercest critiques of Lisa Cholodenko's mass-release feature-length film *The Kids Are All Right* (2010) have been launched by those it would claim to represent, a melancholy fact that betrays the stakes in using a version of cinema vérité to dramatize an experiment in not just the conjugal (a lesbian couple with two kids from a sperm donor) but also the inhabitation of a domestic version of the (very classed, very Anglo) American dream in the future perfect form (there, in the house and garden with the white picket fence, two parents, two kids, and a dog, will have been Paradise).[20] While the unfinished garden (laden with sex, class, race, and gender stereotypes) at the center of the film points by negation off the frame to the promise of a landscaped utopia and dreams that never actually materialize, the film leaves its viewer instead with the aesthetics (and arguably the realities) of discomfiting humor and profound awkwardness: an exercise in cinematic wish un-fulfillment that rends a tear putting us closer to the real we don't want. When the lesbian couple's daughter rebuffs the sperm-donor-would-be-Dad with the

words, ''I thought you'd be, I don't know, better,'' we also hear the film's *mise-en-abyme*, its commentary on its own refusal to deliver the vital alternatives we may wish to see enacted and its insistence instead on exploring the difficult topography of disappointment and desire at that place where the elastic rubber of the future perfect hits the rough road of reality-testing.

Thesis 7: *Landscape. Landscape period. Or, to put landscape in the imperative more strongly: landscape!* I will admit that this slogan or rallying form of landscape is rather hard to envision over a fist on a T-shirt – hardly comparable to ''fuck'' or ''resist.'' And imagining that landscape in the imperative could release the energies of ''queer'' would seem to strain the limitations of landscape's isness, its effects of ''naturalization'' and attendant ''normalization,'' to the untenable. Yet this is precisely the point: landscape is at once a social imperative akin to the coercive, subjectivizing power of norms and an unbinding or alternately binding, reconfiguring force. To landscape is not just to take place or shape matter: it is perhaps most conventionally a process of spatial arrangement, the laying out of perspectives and views, creating relationships between humans, plants, and the land that supports them. To landscape in the imperative, then, is to conscript the forging of some links, commands that often inevitably mean untying others. These linkages may be spatial but they are also affective. Landscape! A charge I would argue that is as much about the makings of sex and gender, the communities of attraction and competition, whom and how we love as what kinds of places we can make or inhabit.

The commanding and constructing, interpellating and resisting force of landscape in the imperative is why I turn to Catherine Opie's *Football Landscape 1 (Fairfax vs Marshall, Los Angeles, CA)* (Figure 5) from her ''High School Football'' series (2007) on display this fall in the ''Catherine Opie: Figure and Landscape'' exhibition at LACMA (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), which was organized to accompany the ''Manly Pursuits: The Sporting Images of Thomas Eakins'' show: work that could not be more obviously ''about'' the arena of masculinity and its cultivation through high-stakes, physically-punishing team sport.[21] And yet the landscape of the athletic field is not just under (like Astroturf or chalk-lined grass) or around (like the perimeter and perspective-defining bleachers or stadium seats) the more important performative of the athletic competition itself. Landscape, the command and its answered or refused echoes, surge through the shaping energies of the sport. Its calls and responses are what make and animate the relationships of land and bodies and the electrifyingly attractive or repulsive thrill of Opie's wide-angle center-anchored perspective on the football field at night that places us right on the ground, close enough to witness the muscled tension in the face-off of one player against another. This hot field of the eroticized action of pumped and competitive masculinity could not, it might seem, be more distant and different from another kind of landscaping practice or pastime, that of the ''sissy'' or ''fag'' whose answer to the interpellating but also threatening social imperatives of a certain kind of hetero-masculinity might sound more like video artist Kutlug Ataman's tale of growing up: ''I didn't know I was gay then, but I was always crying. So my parents gave me a little plot in their garden and I started growing orchids.''[22] And yet the playing field of football and garden plot for cultivating orchids share more than we

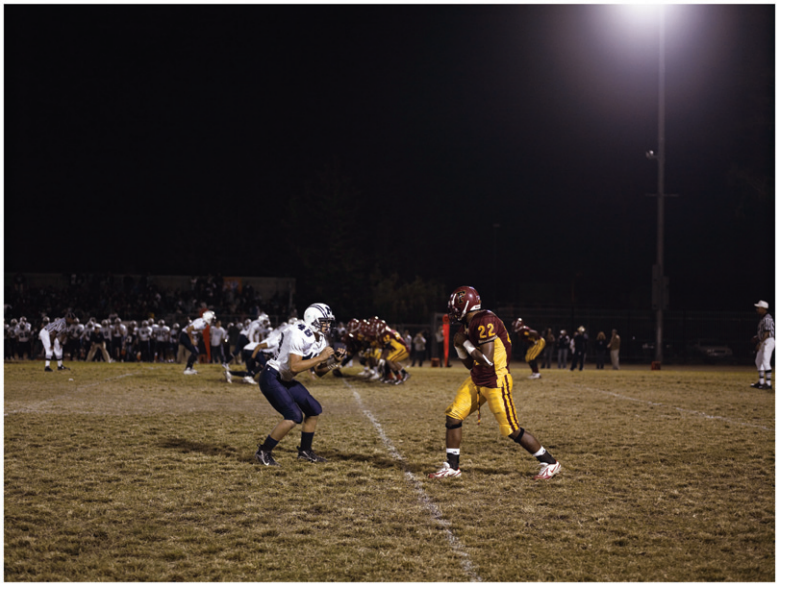

Figure 5. Catherine Opie, *Football Landscape 1 (Fairfax vs Marshall, Los Angeles, CA)*, 2007. C-print; 48 inches × 64 inches. Edition of 5. Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles and the artist.

might want to admit at this moment of the national notice given to gay teen suicides and high-school bullies. The practices for the cultivation of masculinity represented by the playing field and the garden plot are no simple opposites for they relationally occupy the wider field of the practices of gender, sex, community and affect that make and also remake the social field of conscription and the resistant and transformative possibility that is landscape in the imperative.

Thesis 8: *She landscaped, they landscaped, it was landscaped: there is no simple past*. While the most obvious form of landscaping in the simple past might seem to be nostalgia or grief for a lost homeland, I am not at all convinced there is anything simple about nostalgia. The rules of conjugation tell us that the difference between the simple past and the progressive past, the question of whether an action, including the expression of a feeling such as grief, has been completed or not, is a matter of aspect or the perspective from which the action is viewed. You can say that again. And, indeed, according to some other rules such as those of the psychoanalytic concept of melancholy that have been so important for queer theorizing about the experience of gender, sex and race in a cuttingly binary system, we are impelled to do so, over and over again. Particularly in Judith Butler's reworking of Freud in "Melancholy gender," there can be no such thing as the simple past, if we cannot mourn, if the loss of who, how, and what we love is not also a loss that is grievable.[23] Or, in other words, when who, how, and what we love cannot also be landscaped in the sense of taking place, when we cannot, for example, put our grief to bed,

Figure 6. Patricia Cronin, *Memorial to a Marriage*, 2002. Carrara marble; over-life size. Cronin Kass plot, Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx, NY. Image courtesy of the artist.

including via the now privileged ritual of garden plot burial in a cemetery (many of which since the nineteenth century have been designed on the model of the landscaped park).

So what does one do, what do we do when/if we cannot do an "I do" that makes the loss of a loved one legible in an acknowledged way? One answer to the question is to conjugate landscape in the far from simple but rather melancholically voiced past of a grief that is not yet over, as in Patricia Cronin's *Memorial to a Marriage* (Figure 6). Cronin's sculptural installation carved out of Carrara marble on the model of Courbet's *The Sleep* and unveiled in 2002 is, in the words of the press release, "on view through eternity" on the site of Cronin and her partner Deborah Kass's joint plot at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, New York.[24] Cronin's double and doubled grave and funerary monument dedicated the ground of the cemetery to a mourning without foreseeable end over the loss of a legally binding "until death do us part" as well as the dream of a publicly and officially sanctioned recognition and remembrance of a conjugal form that transcended even death.

Thesis 9: *It was being landscaped when . . . . is progressive and continuous in name only*. The incomplete sentence fragment "it was being landscaped when" may work to stall its incipiently progressive tense of landscape and so to serve to bring out the post-colonial temporality of landscaping: the imperfect (to say the least) past as an ongoing, uncompleted, and yet potentially interrupted action on the present and future. I have argued elsewhere that landscape was a technology of empire that produced its effects of power and justified its appropriative claims to land through the sign of its seeming opposite, the anti-empire empire or landscape that appears to have preserved the features of the place, that is, in a form that appears both

Figure 7. Adriana Varejão Meat à la Taunay, 1997. Oil on canvas with porcelain plates; 67 × 76 inches. Image courtesy of the artist.

progressive in the political and evaluative sense (an anticipatory or proto-environmentalism) and continuous rather than as a rapacious and productive break with the past in a seemingly inevitable and necessary outcome that ensures the conservation of land and its features.[25]

Whereas such imperial discourses and practices of landscaping attempt to reframe acts of decolonization as destructively ripping forces, the counter-colonial or subaltern activation of landscape in the periperformative negative of the discontinuous and imperfect past exposes the rending and radically altering power of the interruption. Brazilian artist Adriana Varejão's *Meat à la Taunay* (1997) (Figure 7) serves us a copy of nineteenth-century French landscape painter Nicolas-Antoine Taunay's "innocent" view of an ostensibly unchanged and unchanging Brazil produced during his travels as part of a French "modernizing" expedition in 1816, a mission which included the founding of an art academy for ostensibly benign education in the rules and techniques of the metropole.[26] While Varejão repeated the placid surface of the exported Pastoral oil on canvas view, her work also breaks this surface illusion with the rending excretion of oozing paint, handling the oozing paint to resemble the Brazilian stew, the feijoada, with a raw, cannibalizing twist (a form of aggressive appetite and (in)digestion which served as a potent metaphor for the activities of Brazilian modernism). Yet hers is not a simple obeisance to either the French or Brazilian male masters who came before her. While Varejão also copied the painted porcelain plates associated both with Dutch colonization and trade in Brazil and with feminine domesticity, her plates serve up the history of landscape

representation in broken pieces and the landscape of Brazil and the landscape of the history of art in the wake of colonial and counter-colonial acts as unhealed wounds.

Thesis 10: *Landscaped is not just a simple present or simple presence*. While it has become a truism of Marxian and materialist-informed readings of landscape to remark on and critique landscape's concealment of labor and especially its self-making or construction, such an insistence on this particular disappearing act of landscaping can serve to conceal another by its repetition that landscape's primary action in the present tense appears as or in the form of landscaping, whether for the sense of sight or sound. But I will press the periperformative power of landscaping further to assert that landscaping can and even often acts through negation, displacement, concealment, or disappearance, even of itself. That is, I want to insist on a deeply counter-intuitive understanding of landscaping as an act of erasure, evacuation, or abstraction: consider for instance the extraction of a human, plant, or animal body from one site and its transplantation to another which, in the history of colonial science from the early modern period onwards, has all too often taken the form of the emptied, cleared or blank space of the specimen drawer, printed page, or display case. This anti-landscaping effect of landscape, or the absence of landscape presence, is where the histories of slavery, colonial bioprospecting, the construction of race in terms of an ostensibly visible typology, and the invention of photography cross.

Carrie Mae Weems's intervention into this crossed and vexed site, *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried* (1995) (Figure 8), takes the form of a photographic installation of C-prints with sandblasted text on glass that reproduce and re-present the daguerreotypes, made in 1850 by Columbia, South Carolina photographer Joseph T. Zealy for Harvard comparative zoologist Louis Agassiz, of African-born male slaves and their New World plantation-born daughters. Abstracting these images even further by reframing them within black mats and re-photographing them through a red filter that heightens contrast and reduces the details of the background, Weems's installation hails the viewer with a sequence of statements etched across the glass of 4 of the 15 images made by Zealy: ''You became a scientific profile, an anthropological debate, a negroid type, and a photographic subject.''[27] While I discuss Weem's work and the Zealy daguerreotypes extensively elsewhere, the point I want to make here is that the obviousness of Weems's devices of abstraction call attention to the negative landscaping or relandscaping work that these photographs do in producing their ''objects'' as scientific profile, anthropological debate, negroid type, and photographic subject via their the negation of and abstraction from the very slave trade and plantation landscapes that make this terrible alchemy – the attempted conversion of human subject into extractable, exchangeable, saleable, transplantable ''object'' – possible.

Thesis $n+1$: *If it were landscaped in X way, then*... There is no subjunctive or conditional formulation of landscape capable of reducing or even arresting the radical uncertainty of landscape's performative and periperformative powers in an era marked by contestation over the ethics and politics of order- and genus-defying

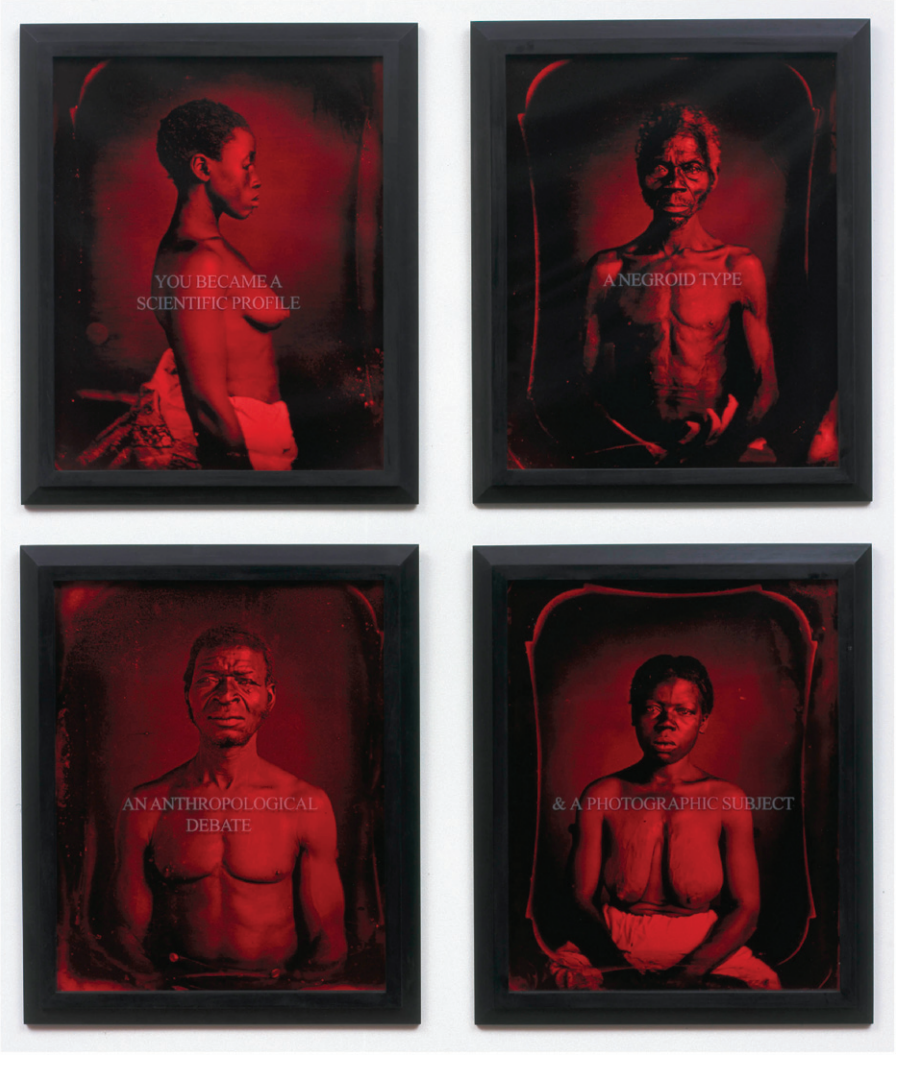

Figure 8. Carrie Mae Weems, *You Became a Scientific Profile/ A Negroid Type/ An Anthropological Debate/ & A Photographic Subject*, 1995–6. C-print with sandblasted text on glass; 26 1/2 × 22 3/4 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY.

hybrids that constitute entirely unprecedented and yet viable forms of life as well as of their production, including techniques beyond those of sexual reproduction. These chimerical grounds are not just those of the stem-cell lab or environmental "niche" capable of hosting a transplant. They are also the profoundly undecided terrain of the open-ended if/then questions of a longer history of colonial biopolitics, imperial landscape and mapmaking, and feminist interrogations of the mattering of the sexed-gendered body and of understanding and control of the means of (re)production.

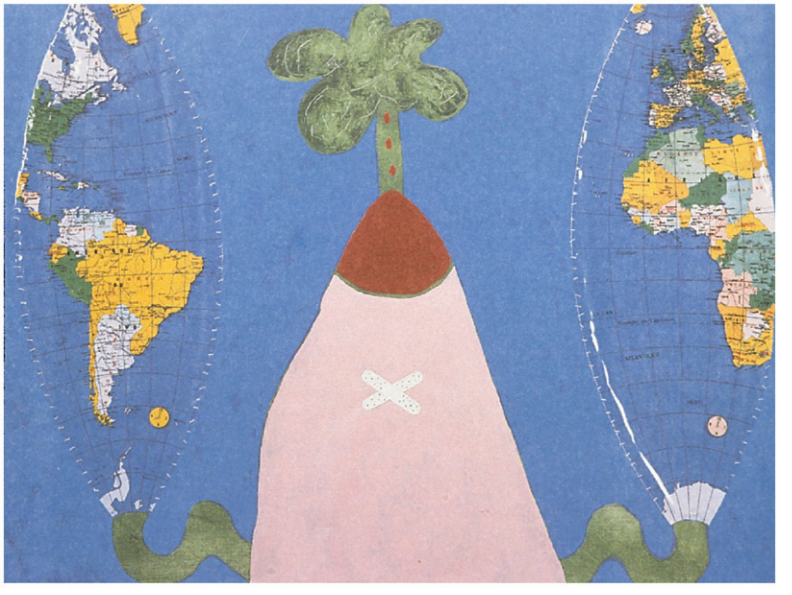

Figure 9. Ofelia Rodriguez, *Landscape with Two Hemispheres Floating*, 1994. Oil, acrylic, sewing, photocopying and collage over canvas; 1.25 × .97 metres. Image courtesy of the artist.

Colombian painter Ofelia Rodriguez's *Landscape with Two Hemispheres Floating* (1994) (Figure 9) inter-splices a bisected and flattened globe with the anatomical splaying of the interior of the human body. This map of the hot tropical zone re-presents the Southern hemisphere of both body and world, giving enlarged prominence to the continents of South America and Africa in the form of hybrid sex organs. But these organs do not just cross and estrange male and female. If Rodriguez's *Landscape with Two Hemispheres Floating* hybridizes world, human and plant, then it also lays out for our view the seemingly impossible site of new forms of landscaping generation: from the composite uterus, ovaries, penis, Fallopian tubes, and pink breast of yet another new world rising betwixt the hemispheres of the old and the once new comes the green spray of a widespread palm . . . .[28]

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Jill H. Casid is Associate Professor of Visual Culture Studies in the Department of Art History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. As a historian, a theorist of visual culture, and a

practicing artist in photo-based media, her work explores the productive tensions between theory, the problems of the archive and the writing of history, issues of gender, race and sexuality; hybridity, chimerism and the complex crossings of human, animal and plant; and the performative and processual aspects of visual objects and imaging. Her contributions to the transdisciplinary field of visual studies include her book *Sowing empire: Landscape and colonization* (2005) and her forthcoming book *Shadows of Enlightenment*. She has just begun a new book project, *The volatile image: Other histories of photography*, that reconsiders photography as a complex and unstable medium. Her interest in pursuing the implications of "trans" for the study of visual culture and interrogating the global turn extends to the international visual culture conference on the theme of "trans" which she co-organized (at University of Wisconsin-Madison in October 2006), the anthology she is planning on *Visual transculture*, and the Clark Art Institute conference, "In the Wake of the Global Turn", which she is co-convening with Aruna D'Souza for 2011. In addition to creating a new curriculum in visual culture studies, she also helped to found and served as the first director of the Center for Visual Cultures at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Notes

1. Rimbaud 1999; this translation is my own.
2. Wojnarowicz 2002.
3. Pratt 1992.
4. Indeed, given its elision from such anthologies as the otherwise inspiring reader in feminism and visual culture edited by Amelia Jones, one could ask whether landscape matters at all for feminist theorizing and practice. See Jones 2010.
5. Butler 1993, 31–2.
6. Ibid.
7. Mitchell 2002, 5.
8. Ibid.
9. Mitchell 2002, 1.
10. Casid 2007.
11. On the Ladies of Llangollen's gardening practices, see Moore, forthcoming and Casid 2005a.
12. Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson 2010, 5.
13. Sedgwick 2003.
14. Hatoum, Bensmaia and Bertola 2009.
15. elles@centrepompidou: Musée National d'Art Moderne 2010.
16. Deleuze and Guattari 1972 and 1980.
17. Bright and Rand 2006. See also www.deborahbright.net.
18. See the artist's own website, www.naobustamante.com.
19. Knorr 1993.
20. Halberstam 2010.
21. Bedford 2008.
22. *New York Times* 7 November 2004. I thank Michael Jay McClure for this reference.
23. Butler 1997.
24. Castro 2003. See also www.patriciacronin.net.
25. Casid 2005b.
26. Rommens 2006.
27. Casid, in prep. Weems's work with the Zealy daguerreotypes was initially shown as "Carrie Mae Weems Reacts to Hidden Witness," 1995, J. Paul Getty Museum of Art, Malibu, CA. While a fellow at Radcliffe's Bunting Institute in 1996, Weems developed it into *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*. See also Wallis 2003.
28. See www.ofeliarodriguez.com. Casid 2011.

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