The anti-landscapes of the Arctic: understanding circumpolar sea–land relationships from a Lacanian perspective

Abstract: Anti-landscapes are spaces that do not sustain life (Nye, 2014). In the circumpolar regions, the transformation between landscape and anti-landscape occurs both materially and symbolically, shaping the Arctic into a contradictory space. How can the Arctic anti-landscape be understood within the Lacanian triad of three orders? In what ways does the study of anti-landscape offer new perspectives on the wicked problems of the Arctic marine environment? This chapter tries to answer these questions by mobilizing visual culture and human geography, offering an interdisciplinary understanding of Arctic anti-landscape. Through the interpretations of different types of Arctic anti-landscape in the context of industrialism and the Arctic exploration, I tend to seek the potentials to energize the land–sea sustainability of the Arctic regions.

Keywords: Arctic; Anti-landscape; Representation; Materiality; Contradictory space; Jacques Lacan

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Introduction

Anti-landscapes are spaces that do not sustain life (Nye, 2014). They are dysfunctional spaces. They may have natural causes, but can also be created by unintended consequences of human actions. Some are temporary, while others are intractable and difficult to restore. Since the 1960s, anti-landscapes created by humans have increasingly attracted the awareness of cultural geographers and environmental historians.

With the rapid industrialization over the last two decades, the uneven circumstances between industrial development and environmental conservation of the Arctic have caused diverse geographical landscapes, some of which are anti-landscapes. The Arctic anti-landscapes undergird the narratives of climate change, environmental degradation, dystopia, grotesqueness, sustainability, heroic exploration and so forth. The practice of capitalist globalization and spatial restructuring activities has triggered a set of environmental problems related to climate change and marine pollution. Although oceans of the Arctic can be monitored, analyzed, and understood through all kinds of scientific methods, anti-landscape images, at the level of mass communication, are perhaps still one of the most direct and powerful media for representing ocean issues. Therefore, the study of anti-landscape is an important supplement to the scientific approaches for understanding ocean issues.

American art historian W. J. T. Mitchell (1994) sees landscape as a process of interaction between human intentions and nature, changing the word ‘landscape’ from a noun to a verb. When the materiality of place conflicts with the conceptual space, it triggers a failure of this landscaping process. This failure may initiate the transformation and reorganization of spatial relationships in the context of the dynamic growth-oriented capitalist globalization. Mitchell (1994/2002) raised the notion of space, place, and landscape as a dialectical triad, and attempted to associate it with French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s three orders theory: the triad of the Symbolic, the Real and the Imaginary. This chapter develops Mitchell’s hypothesis, building a framework of a Lacan–Mitchell triad. By analyzing different positions occupied by anti-landscape in this triad, two types of anti-landscape can be elaborated. Here, I appropriate Lacan’s tripartite model as an analytic tool. I applied the three orders of the Symbolic – the Imaginary – the Real as a framework to the cultural and aesthetic studies, instead of using an orthodox psychoanalytic method that exams the clinical accuracy. Thus, I must omit the position of the personal ‘subject’ in Lacan’s psychoanalysis theories, and instead focus on the interactions and interconnections among the three orders.

Due to the specificity of the theoretical framework, this chapter studies two cases, Melkøya Island and the cities of the Kola Peninsula, with separate forms of empirical materials. In the case of Melkøya, I used landscape imagery delimited within journalistic photography to investigate how the filming techniques shape the image into an anti-landscape. In contrast, in the case of the Kola cities, I explored within the Google panoramic map. This was in order to avoid the re-creation of images' meaning operated through the photographic strategies – for instance, perspective, framing and light – and to visually approximate an embodied approach to the place, rather than examine the representations of it.

This chapter is situated at the interdisciplinary junction between visual culture and human geography. Landscape is a proper interdisciplinary entry point. In the field of visual culture, studying the meanings of representation – semiotic meaning, social construction, ideology, visual hegemony, etc. – helps to overcome the 'natural attitude', which is an attitude that takes the images as they are for granted, coined by American art historian Norman Bryson (1991, p. 1). To understand the Arctic landscape, it is essential to be aware of the limitations of representation, or the political and ethical critique becoming an unexamined dogma (Mitchell, 2005). This awareness is the basis of modern environmental consciousness.

This chapter examines two cases, both of which are situated in the Arctic Circle and have close interaction with the Arctic seas. Melkøya is close to the interface of the Norwegian Sea and the Barents Sea; the Kola Peninsula is bordered by both the Barents Sea and the White Sea. Moreover, they both have a direct or indirect environmental impact on the adjacent sea area. Mining is the basis of the economy in both places. Melkøya is a small island with a total area of only 0.69 square kilometers. However, Europe's only large-scale liquefied natural gas plant, the Hammerfest LNG plant, is located on it. In contrast, the Kola Peninsula is much larger. It is one of the largest peninsulas in Europe, covering an area of about 100 000 square kilometers. Both places attract extensive attention from environmental groups due to marine pollution. The large mining operations are also responsible for greenhouse gas emissions and climate change in the Arctic. These problems are no longer regional, but closely linked to the process of globalization. However, although anti-landscape narratives are often associated with environmental problems, the emergence of the Arctic anti-landscape and the wicked issues of the Arctic seas are not always on an equal footing; they are certainly not unrelated either, and the relationship between them is complex.

One of the difficulties in dealing with marine issues is the limitation of our land-based perspective. Researcher of climate change Øyvind Paasche and researcher of environmental and marine biology Erik Bonsdorff (2017) have pointed out that because we can only see the surface of oceans from a two-dimensional perspective, it creates additional obstacles and challenges to our understanding. However, what they fail to mention is that it is also this limitation of perspective that has contributed to the dominance of scientific discourse on ocean issues. Our knowledge of wicked ocean problems is largely based on measurements, data analysis, component testing. These positivist approaches are very effective in helping us understand specific problems, but they can hardly help us grasp the dialectic relationship between land and ocean in the process of the globalized capital configuration of space. Thus, it is necessary to examine the relationship between landscape and sea through an interdisciplinary perspective. As presented in this chapter, the interpretive analyses of Arctic anti-landscape imagery provide us with a critical perspective beyond scientific methods, which is the dominant voice in today's ecological studies.

What is anti-landscape? A Lacan–Mitchell approach

Space, Place and Landscape – A Lacanian Perspective

Marxist cultural geographers discuss landscape in terms of the representation of power. David Harvey (1996) pointed out the contradiction between the place-bound fixity and the spatial mobility of capital. In this dynamic process, the old landscape is devalued, destroyed, and redeveloped. Doreen Massey (1998/1999) also agrees with a representational way of seeing landscape, where symbols of social relationships, dominant power, and identities of a place in different historical periods appeared synchronically.

Mitchell (1994), on the other hand, takes a relatively moderate attitude, seeing landscape as a process of interaction between human intentions and nature, instead of taking a reductionist perspective and decoding landscape as symbols. He suggested changing 'landscape' into a verb and investigating how it works as a cultural practice. Mitchell (1994/2002) also elaborated that the concept of 'space' has an abstract and geometric character, and he agrees with the Marxist theorists, like David Harvey and Henri Lefebvre, that the idea of time and space are social constructs. As a result, Mitchell suggested turning the notions of space, place, and landscape into a dialectical triad. In this triad, a place is a specific location, a space is a 'practiced place', and a landscape is 'that site encountered as an image or "sight"' (p. x). Accordingly, landscape is restricted and regulated by the rules of space.

Furthermore, Mitchell made comparisons between his place – space – landscape triad with Lacan's three Orders. Lacan's terms 'the Real', 'the Symbolic' and 'the Imaginary', also known as 'the three Orders' or 'the three Registers', together form a classification system of Lacan's psychoanalytic theory. This system is a topological framework, which not only refers to distinct aspects of the psychoanalytic experience, but, from Lacan's perspective, is also a structure that rules the world. Therefore, Mitchell deemed the three orders to be a structure of the logical configuration for understanding landscape. As Mitchell pointed out, a space belongs to the register of what Lacan calls 'the Symbolic'; the notion of place can be seen as the Lacanian Real, which is the site of trauma or the historical event (Mitchell, 1994/2002). However, Mitchell does not elaborate very much on how the Lacanian psychoanalytic triad can be used as a framework for understanding place, space and landscape. Thus, I will briefly develop the Lacan–Mitchell triad: place (the Real) – space (the Symbolic) – landscape (the Imaginary) and interpret how we can comprehend anti-landscape with this epistemic tool.

Lacan's concept of the Symbolic implies a set of symbolic structures, for instance, laws, rules, prohibition, and control. Mitchell links space to the dimension of the Symbolic, or Lefebvre's 'conceptualized space' – a dominant space within a society for the practices of social and political power. This dimension can be coded, transformed, and manifested in landscape. On the other hand, the register of the Real is a difficult concept to grasp. It has shifted several times over the decades during Lacan's work. Generally, the Real is a sphere that resists symbolization. It is the dimension of what exists outside symbolization (Lacan & Rose, 1982). The Real is impossible to integrate into the Symbolic order, thus it has a traumatic quality. The Real also has a dimension of matter, and it is the 'material substrate underlying the Imaginary and the Symbolic' (Evans, 1996, p. 163).

A place also has distinctive physical and material qualities. It is the space of perception and practice, where an attempt is made to conceptualize and symbolize the conceived space, although it can never be fully dominated and restricted. David Harvey (1996, p. 294) defined a place with double meanings: 'a) a mere position or location within a map of space-time constituted within some social process or b) an entity or "permanence" occurring within and transformative of the construction of space-time'. The first definition emphasizes the temporal–spatial boundary of a place, while the second one is closer to Mitchell's emphasis on the definition of place, presupposing the existence of an entity as a place. The entity of a place is formed in a specific spatio-temporal order and determined by certain socio-ecological

processes (Harvey, 1996). Such an entity cannot be recognized but has critical ontological importance. This is similar to the Lacanian order of the real, which is not cognizable, but affects the existence and activity of the practical subject within it. Therefore, at Seminar VII in both 1959 and 1960, Lacan (Lacan & Miller, 2007) likened the Real to Kant's *Ding an sich* ('Thing in itself'), whose most important feature is not that it cannot be perceived, but that *Ding an sich* has an ontological significance.

For theorists influenced by Heidegger's phenomenology, the place is portrayed as sustaining and nurturing. Through excavations into the purpose of place construction – the recovery of the art of dwelling – Heidegger poses the question of the relation to nature, because ontologically place is the locale of the truth of being in nature (Buell, 1995). Here Lacan arrives at a consensus with the classic existential concept – the Real sought by Lacanian psychoanalysis and Heidegger's veiling/unveiling are guided by a similar concept of truth (Jameson, 1977). To be more precise, when talking about a place as the Real, the 'place' I am referring to is the Heideggerian authenticity of place.

Lacan's Imaginary is the realm of image and imagination, the order of 'surface appearances which are deceptive, observable phenomena which hide underlying structure' (Evans, 1996, p. 84). It is always alienated and structured by the Symbolic order. As Lacan pointed out, the Imaginary can be decoded only when it is rendered into symbols (Lacan & Granoff, 1956). Similarly, Mitchell (1994/2002, p. x) defined landscape as a space which 'the imagination seeks to change and appropriate'. It has connotations of illusion, fascination, and seduction. Landscape also has connotations of illusion, fascination, and seduction; it is alienated, and is always represented following the power and regulations of the conceptualized space.

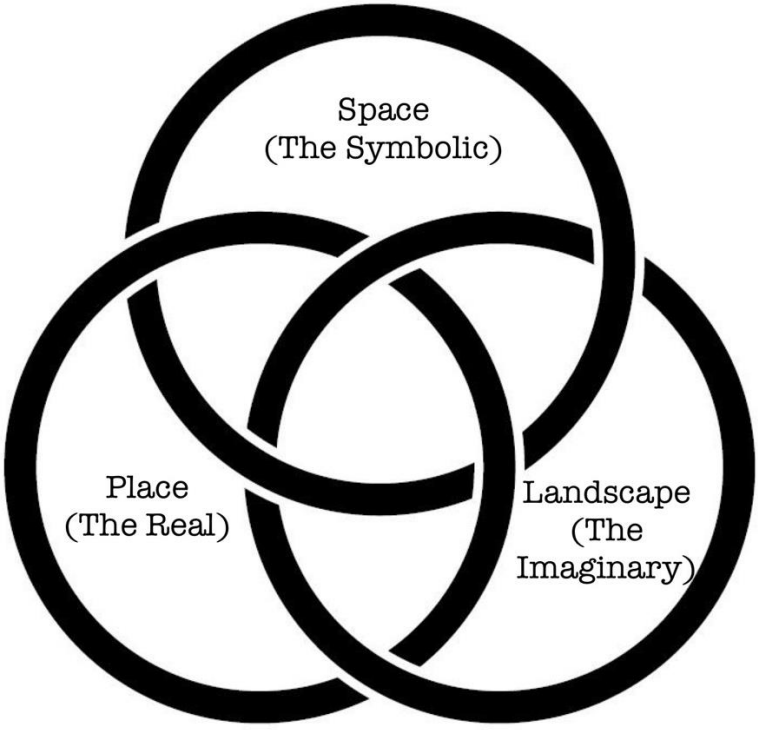

Figure 3.1 The Lacan–Mitchell triad

I would therefore suggest that Lacan's triad as a theoretical framework (Fig. 3.1) can be employed as a way of understanding space, landscape and place. In dealing with anti-landscape, this framework can help us understand better the dialectic relationship between landscape and anti-landscape.

Understanding Anti-Landscape in the Lacan–Mitchell Triad

According to historian David E. Nye (2014, p. 20), the narratives of anti-landscapes often imply three stages: '1) there once was a healthier, sustainable place that supported life but was vulnerable; 2) whether by accident or design, that place was severely damaged and no longer could support human communities; 3) nevertheless, that place might be recuperated and again become a landscape'. These narratives show an anthropocentric tendency, considering a place's ability to support human life as an important reference. However, in the Arctic, the imbalance of economic development and environmental preservation leads to a diversity of anti-landscapes, some of which show a counter-narrative to the anthropocentric perspective.

The position of anti-landscape in the Lacan–Mitchell triad has a double layer. Firstly, the representational anti-landscape refers to the landscape projected with negative cultural meanings. For example, during the 19th and early 20th centuries, the typical images of the Arctic often show a pristine territory that is empty, unknown and might have potential danger. These landscape images are appreciated for the innocence, romanticism, and sometimes heroism of the explorers entering the primitive space. Some of them are frightening and grotesque, filled with dystopian or apocalyptic fantasies, and linked with unknown creatures and prehistoric beings frozen in the ice, and the narrative is often linked with explorers and exploration. However, another type of image is becoming particularly common in today's news media: melting glaciers, emaciated polar bears, homeless seals – all indicating the present Arctic environment and climate change. In these images, the position of the Arctic is reversed, from a mysterious nature worthy of awe to an ecology that is fragile and in desperate need of protection. Old aesthetic values of the Arctic ceased, and the new ideas provide the images with different cultural meanings. We can therefore define the latter as representing an anti-landscape, which has been destroyed and no longer has the capacity to sustain life, as opposed to the Arctic landscape in the past. To understand it in terms of the Lacan–Mitchell triad, the Arctic is framed with an alternative Symbolic order when alienated into the Imaginary of anti-landscape.

The second layer of anti-landscape includes certain forms of non-landscape, which the environmental historian Maunu Häyrynen (2014) terms 'lost landscapes': these scenic places used to have cultural importance, while the value of landscape ceased due to political, economic or social causes. A temporal dimension exists in the narrative of a lost landscape, through which the landscape may also be physically changed. The lost landscapes are degraded into places when their visual value is reduced, and materiality regains its dominance. Intrinsically, the lost landscapes are elusive, resisting the spatial mobility of a new symbolic order, or become barriers to further capitalist accumulation (Harvey, 1996). This makes it harder to re-landscape the places into new sites.

The above two layers of anti-landscape are in different positions in the Lacan–Mitchell triad. The first occupies the position of landscape (the Imaginary), which is the projection of ideas in a place, presented as representation, and performs the function of the Imaginary, announcing the destruction of the peaceful, idealized landscape with a negative image. This anti-landscape is deceptive and alienated, calling for the resurgence of the old illusion with spectacularized images. The second retreats into the sphere of place (the Real) as the visual value is reduced or the old symbolic order collapses. As mentioned above, a place is the product of the conjunction of time and space; it carries a historical dimension. If we go one step further to be more radical, as Marxist philosopher Fredric Jameson (1977) argues, what is meant by the Real in Lacan is simply history itself. It thus appears in the authenticity of place, that is, the history of place.

Amid the impact of massive modern industrialization, how does one return to the authenticity of a place? Heidegger emphasizes that this authenticity of dwelling is being destroyed by technology and rationalism. This is where the traumatic dimension of place lies – in the devaluation and destruction of place as it is repeated in the geographical expansion of capitalism; yet a fierce process of spatial restructuring is also in constant resistance to the progress of capitalist expansion. Generally, Lacan followed Freud's definition of 'trauma':

> We describe as 'traumatic' any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield. It seems to me that the concept of trauma necessarily implies a connection of this kind with a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli. Such an event as an external trauma is bound to provoke a disturbance on a large scale in the functioning of the organism's energy and to set in motion every possible defensive measure. (Freud, 1961, p. 23)

Spatial resistance and reconfiguration lead to a disturbance in the coherent fantasy of a place, and this generates a trauma, which is manifested in the lost landscape. One can only experience it through being rooted in the place. As the cultural geographer Yi-fu Tuan (1977, p. 8) argues, 'a truly rooted community may have shrines and monuments, but it is unlikely to have museums and societies for the preservation of the past'. When the history of a place is marked in the form of a memorial, it has become a commodified heritage, divorced from the dwelling experience.

The representational anti-landscape and lost landscape are not static. Just as Lacan used the Borromean knot[1] to describe the topology of the three orders, the Lacanian psychoanalytic orders are in a continuous state of interaction, and this is also true of the Lacan–Mitchell triad. Within this interaction, the anti-landscape becomes dynamic. Cultural theorist Werner Bigell (2014) defines landscape as projections of cultural meanings into space, and once the process of projecting fails, and it manifests in the landscape, it could be an anti-landscape. For instance, in the post-accident landscape of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, when the physical reality clashed with the idea of 'the controllability of atomic power' (Bigell, 2014, p. 131), it led to a nuclear accident. Eventually, Chernobyl became a global symbol and a tourist destination. In fact, the accident at Chernobyl encompasses both layers of anti-landscape. When the projection of ideas onto the physical world fails, this area first undergoes a traumatic process of de-landscaping. As Chernobyl's former myth of 'safety and reliability' was shattered, there was no longer a coherent consistency between landscape and place, but a fissure emerged. The anti-landscape at this point exists as a place (the Real), a reminder of the undeniable existence of reality. However, unlike David E. Nye's anti-landscape narrative, this place did not reconstruct the myths of the past but was re-landscaped as a symbol of failure. When it is re-presented as a ruin and a spectacle, it becomes a different anti-landscape – a landscape with a negative connotation. Once it is represented again, the Symbolic re-engages, and the traumatic qualities dissolve. It is instead re-symbolized, even commodified, although what is represented is a record of trauma and history. The historical event is restructured with an alternate discourse. It is no longer a symbol of Soviet military power; in contrast, it has become a demonstration of or a sign of human incompetence. Furthermore, Chernobyl still retains this symbolism today. On 24 February 2022, the first day of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone was captured by the Russian Armed Forces. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called it 'a declaration of war against the whole of Europe' (Shabad, 2022). Chernobyl's mythological significance transcends its place-based qualities and was widely disseminated in the media. We cannot predict whether another ideology against this symbolic connotation will later be projected onto the ruins, but as Žižek (2011, p. 80) argues, perhaps the best attitude to Chernobyl is to let the flourishing nature take over the site – it 'had to be abandoned'.

To sum up, anti-landscape may be either landscape (representational anti-landscape) or non-landscape (lost landscape). When it appears as landscape, it is a misidentification and alienation of place under the coordination of the conceptualized space, and this alienation may transform a place into a spectacle. On the other hand, the lost landscape is often accompanied by the capitalist spatial practices. When a place is unified by a new social, cultural, or ideological space, the old landscape loses its cultural value and becomes part of the unsymbolized place again. Such anti-landscape is incognizable, and is thus impossible to be fully dominated by either the conceptualized space or experience.

Arctic anti-landscape

The geographical specificity of the Arctic leads us to look at the Arctic anti-landscape in a particular way. For example, an oil spill in an Arctic bay requires a longer recovery process than if it occurs nearer the equator, because of the low temperature. In the context of global warming and ecological conservation, melting glaciers and rising sea levels are also typical Arctic anti-landscapes, connected not just to the Arctic as a specific location, but also to global ecological concerns.

The massive interest in Arctic images today is mainly based on two aspects: the Arctic landscape seen as a direct representation of climate change – a warning 'canary', and the industrial development of the Arctic's resources and strategic potential (Larsen & Hemmersam, 2018). The debate between Arctic landscapes and anti-landscapes also engages with both these discourses.

Melkøya – A Failed Projection

<p:text>Equinor's Hammerfest liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant is located at Melkøya, Norway. Figure 3.2 is a photograph provided by Equinor ASA (formerly Statoil and StatoilHydro), a Norwegian state-owned multinational energy company. This photograph was published on its official website under the title 'Our approach to sustainability', to convince the public that the environmental impact has been minimalized: 'Drawing on technology, competence and experience from harsh weather operations, we are approaching the North with a strong focus on safe operations and respect for the environment' (Equinor, 2022). However, Equinor has been heavily criticized by environmental NGOs for destroying the surrounding environment of their oil projects (Vik, 2017).

Figure 3.2 Equinor ASA's photo of Hammerfest liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant in Melkøya, Norway

Bellona, an international environmental NGO based in Oslo, Norway, provides an image of an anti-landscape in the same place (Fig. 3.3) in a report titled ‘Hammerfest LNG fire caused by negligent maintenance practices, major Bellona investigation finds’ (Digges, 2020). The photographs provided by Bellona and Equinor show different landscapes at Melkøya. In Equinor’s photograph, the camera was parallel to the horizon, and the Hammerfest constructions only occupy a small part of the image. Sea, sky, and the island jointly demonstrate a quiet and harmonious image, with muted and neutral colors, creating a quiet atmosphere. In the background lie the snow-covered mountains, and there is no trace of any environmental damage. It is difficult to identify the function of the facilities, and no workers or residents can be seen. The whole site presents a picture of perfect coordination between technology and the environment. The seemingly small scale of the LNG plant, as well as the seascape in this photograph together indicate that the construction is located at a remote and insignificant site, which will never lead to any serious consequences for the sustainable development of the Arctic.

Figure 3.3 Bellona’s photo of Equinor’s Hammerfest LNG plant

In contrast, Bellona’s anti-landscape photograph was taken at night and has a strong contrast between warm and cold color tones in its original colored picture. The photograph has been taken as a diagonal composition from a bird’s-eye view. It’s easy to see that this photo provides a clearer view of the different construction areas than in Figure 3.2. It is difficult to divert our attention from the fire and the billowing smoke on the right-hand side of the photograph, which is the main factor converting this image into an anti-landscape. The black smoke is a symbol of environmental pollution, which runs counter to Equinor’s claim of ‘respecting the environment’.

In this case, the same location has been represented by different landscape images, as projections of two contradictory discourses: the source of extraction and industrial development, competing with the protection of the fragile ecology in the Arctic Sea. Under the acceleration of globalization, imperialism has shaped a myth of ‘order’ and ‘perfection’ over chaotic and pristine nature. This myth is coded into the landscape by using a series of visual strategies – horizontal composition, neutral color tones, photographing from a far distance and so forth. These visual strategies are used to normalize the landscape into a place

with a permanent entity, inventing the sense of ‘permanence’ in Melkøya as a sustainable sign of human control over nature.

Bellona’s photograph, however, breaks this myth, turning the harmonious and quiet relationship between technology and nature into an image of environmental crisis. Similar to Equinor’s photograph, Bellona also tries to normalize the image into a common landscape: the introduction of this photograph on Bellona’s website, ‘A view of the Hammerfest LNG plant at night’ (Digges, 2020), indicates that it is just a normal night at Melkøya; residents here have become used to the air pollution. Of course, this introduction is not intended to convince the viewer that ‘air pollution is an inevitable consequence of industrialization in the Arctic’. On the contrary, the normalization of this spectacle is meant to highlight the anomaly of this island.

Referring to Lacan’s discussion on the register of the Imaginary, the normalization of landscape achieves a disorienting effect. It leads the viewers to misidentify the illusive landscape as the entity of a place. According to Lacan, the projection of the Imaginary indicates an original constitutive recognition (Lacan et al., 1988). Landscape, as a mediation of the viewer’s recognition of a place, is destined to distort the viewer’s relationship with reality, and it drives the subject to identify the symbolic relationship between humans and nature into the register of Symbolic.

When adopting a distinction as to whether an image is determined by its Imaginary or Symbolic function, we can refer to Ortigues’s formula: ‘The same term may be considered imaginary if taken absolutely and symbolic if taken as a differential value correlative of other terms which limit it reciprocally’ (Ortigues, 1962, p. 194). The Imaginary is in the regime of the eye while the Symbolic is in that of the ear and language (Jameson, 1977). That is to say, Figure 3.3 becomes an anti-landscape only when the symbolic order intervenes, the image becomes dominated by an opposing ideology and returns to the visual representation; if the linguistic and symbolic dimensions are ignored and it is considered only from the visual dimension, it loses its counter discourse and collapses into a landscape image. Furthermore, to comprehend Figure 3.3 as a landscape image instead of an anti-landscape, the question is whether it illustrates a punctum leading to the Real?[2] We already know that the Real cannot be represented directly, but only by way of mediation on the Imaginary and the Symbolic. In addition to the fire and smoke, I found something more disturbing – to the left of the image, the construction works are still brightly lit in the night, and therefore functioning as normal. Compared to the represented traumatic visual symbols, perhaps these are closer to Melkøya’s direct local experience – working day and night to get involved in the global capital practice.

Under the conjunct restriction of this homogenized framework and the myth of ‘order’ and ‘perfection’, space, place and landscape temporarily form an illusionary coherent whole in Equinor’s photograph; by blurring the position or location of the place, the photograph abstracts Melkøya into an ‘identity-less space’ (Vik, 2017, p. 54). This space represents the permanence of global capitalist practices, and represses all the heterogeneous, dialectical, and dynamic elements involved in this process. In Bellona’s photograph, on the other hand, the physical reality has also been twisted into an anti-landscape of environmental damage and sea pollution, projected with a counter-narrative emphasizing the environment–industry duality. In this anti-landscape image, the sea or nature is imagined as a passive object that does not participate in an interactive relationship with human activity, but rather as an objectified presence. Through these two photographs, we can at least see the anti-landscape narrative: the Arctic was once depicted as pristine, tranquil and underdeveloped space for those who have never been in the Arctic circle; the industrial development has not only destroyed the exotic imagery of the Arctic but has also put the fragile ecology of this region in crisis. The

distinction of landscape representations has been produced because of the projection of different cultural meanings, rather than the altered materiality of place.

In September 2020, a fire broke out in a turbine at the Hammerfest liquefied natural gas plant, caused by an oil leak brought about by prolonged maintenance backlogs and cost-cutting measures (Digges, 2020). According to Bellona (Berstad, 2020), there would be a profound impact on the environment, ‘comprising massive spills of chemicals and long-term contamination’ (Fig. 3.4).

Figure 3.4 The turbine on fire at the Hammerfest LNG plant in September 2020

Although the direct impact of the contamination was on the Arctic marine environment, due to the invisibility of a three-dimensional ocean space from the land perspective, the seascape is replaced by a landscape to give a straightforward illustration of the pollution. In this image, similar to Figure 3.3, the most dramatic and eye-catching part is the fire and the thick smoke. To create a tense feeling for viewers, the image is shot at a very close range to the subject. The constructions are clearly identifiable. The Hammerfest LNG plant is an icon of industrial development over nature, an icon of globalization and advanced capitalism, and the destruction of this icon leads to the production of a ‘secondary image of defacement or annihilation’ (Mitchell, 2005, p. 18). This image is a typical anti-landscape that attempts to depict trauma, but just like the efforts of museums to reconstruct the history of a place, the anti-landscape image presents a retrospective reconstruction of trauma, an illusion constructed under a specific ideology that remains at the level of Imaginary. The meaning of trauma does not emerge at the original moment of a traumatic event but is constructed retrospectively (Freud, 1966). Furthermore, according to Lacan, although traumatic events can be recollected and represented, they will never be symbolized. The register of the Symbolic always seeks congruence with place – the original space where the historical events occurred. However, this attempt always meets with failure because the materiality of place cannot be fully grasped. Thus, the representational anti-landscape always shifts from one representational order to another, with contradictory ideas and ideologies behind them;

however, these images do not engage with the trauma of a place at the level of the Real. They only operate at the level of the Symbolic and Imaginary, creating prior, imaginary spaces which constantly alienate the experience of places. However, although the seeking for congruence is destined to fail, it is in this space of failure that the existence of matter (or 'Thing'; 'das Ding' in German) is revealed; what we call matter is the residue that escapes from the inconsistency (Freud, 1966). Although the material world is purposeless and unpredictable, it is precisely the emergence of contradictions that provides the impetus for further spatial reorganization.

In summary, both Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4 are anti-landscapes in relation to Equinor's photograph, reflecting the contradiction of ideologies, and a negation of the Symbolic register. Although Figure 3.4 attempts to demonstrate the trauma of place, the representational anti-landscape still operates on the level of Imaginary and further corroborates the impossibility of the Symbolic register to grasp the material reality – the register of the Real. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the shortfall in the importation of gas from Russia is impelling Europe to seek additional sources of gas. This example shows the chain reaction that can be triggered when human control over nature fails in the context of capitalist globalization. Ultimately, places are constituted into networks of organized social relations, institutions, etc., and the geographical landscape is strongly differentiated. This is due to 'the simple logic of uneven capital investment, a proliferating geographical division of labor, an increasing segmentation of reproductive activities and the rise of spatially ordered social distinctions' (Harvey, 1996, p. 295). Once the LNG plant is closed, the overflowing capital will try to find alternative places in the established spatial relations. As a small island of only 0.69 square kilometers, Melkøya is functionally homogeneous, which means that once it is replaced, its existing geographical landscape will become a barrier for redevelopment – in other words, it will become a lost landscape.

Kola Peninsula – The Lost Landscape

The Kola Peninsula is located in the far north-west of Russia. It lies almost completely inside the Arctic Circle, bordered by both the Barents Sea and the White Sea. This peninsula constitutes the bulk of the territory of Murmansk Oblast. A few decades ago, the Kola Peninsula was one of the most heavily militarized regions of the world (Hønneland, 2006). Over the last two decades, the population of Murmansk Oblast has decreased by 30% (Rosstat, 2010), while the peninsula is still the most populated part of the Arctic today. In addition to a plummeting population, most cities on Kola Peninsula exhibit the urban landscape of the 1990s. Many building facades are in disrepair, and industrial plants and facilities occupy a large part of the landscape (Hemmersam, 2018). In addition to the information that identifies the Kola Peninsula with a location or a position on a map, thus giving the place a geographic boundary, descriptions of the Kola Peninsula's current state often cannot avoid addressing the population, the geographic landscape, and the rapid growth and disintegration of industrialization during the past three decades. The data also suggest that the Kola Peninsula did not complete a thriving economic restructuring after the collapse of the Soviet Union, although its mining industry continues to be the mainstay of the national economy.

The planning of the urban fabric on the Kola peninsula was almost entirely completed after the Soviet revolution, especially after the Second World War (Hemmersam, 2018). Apart from Murmansk, the cities on the Kola Peninsula are relatively homogeneous in function; most of them were built to serve a specific productive purpose of supplying mineral resources to national industry and for agricultural production. The residential districts of the cities on the Kola Peninsula tend to show the aesthetics of a collectivist utopia, along with a variety of

large-scale public monuments and war memorials, all of which sustain a utopian vision of a Soviet society projected onto the landscape. The aesthetics formed by this communist vision appeared to be twofold after the collapse of the Soviet Union: on the one hand, in some areas of Murmansk, this aesthetic did not cease, but continued to reappear in the urban landscape. On the other hand, with the loss of population and the decay of the cities, the landscapes of some Kola cities gradually degenerated into lost landscapes.

One example is Garazh Street in Murmansk (Fig. 3.5). This is a typical landscape of the omnipresent garage districts in many Kola towns, almost all of which are from the Soviet era. From the 1950s onwards, garage districts in the Soviet Union started to materialize. Each garage district usually has between 300 and 1000 garages; these districts are normally located on the border between the city and the suburban areas, and often tend to be close to housing areas and work as barriers between the suburbs and the city. During the Khruschev and Brezhnev era, the number of apartment buildings was not sufficient for the needs of Soviet workers, therefore the garage districts, designed for private car owners, became a free zone outside the strictly programmed and crowded ‘Khrushchyovka’ (Fig. 3.6) and served a variety of social functions beyond parking (Hemmersam, 2021). For example, people used to go to their garages for conversations and parties; these areas, as indispensable components of the vernacular landscape, were ‘expressing people’s everyday needs rather than state ideology’ (Tuvikene, 2010, p. 515). Today, due to depopulation, many of these garage districts across the Kola Peninsula have been left empty, and only a few of the garages have been renovated and refurbished for other uses. As a result of rising land prices, in recent years the government has begun to demolish and redevelop the garage districts. However, today, some of the garages, as well as the plot of land, are privately owned. This means that if the developer plans to build something on the current garage area, it ‘has to buy land from numerous individual owners’, which is a long process (p. 523). These districts have become an obstacle to the further development of urban space in the process of rapid capital movement. They may lose their original function and became obsolete, or may be a mismatch with the new needs for land use (Wood & Handley, 2001).

Figure 3.5 Garazh Street, Murmansk

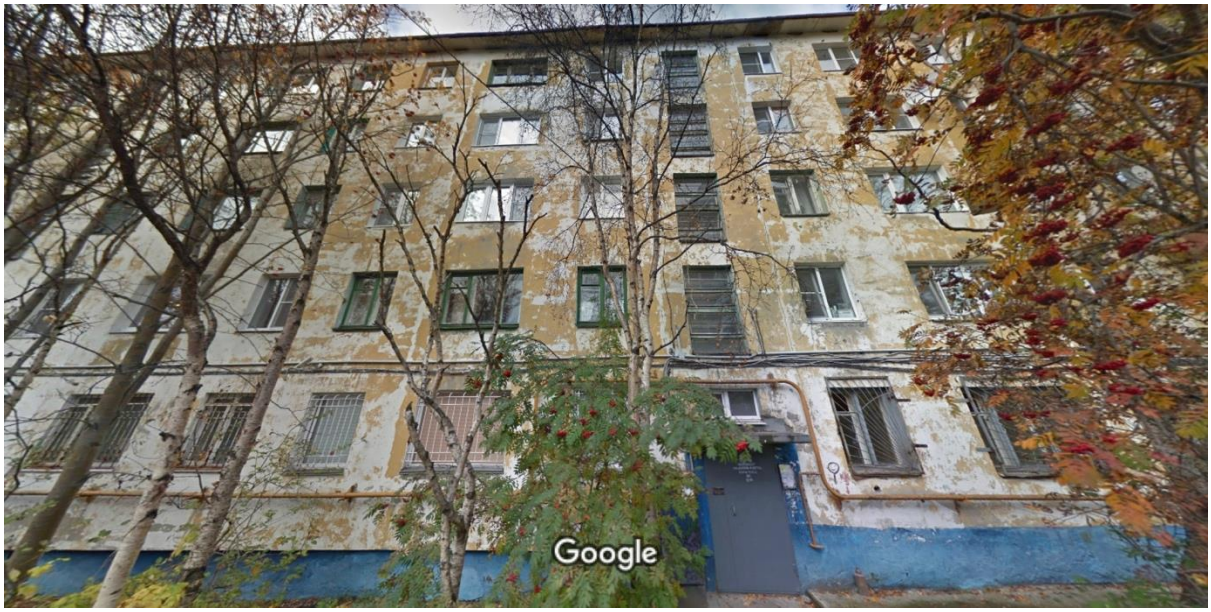

Figure 3.6 Collective housing in Murmansk

The different conditions of the garage districts between the second half of the last century and this century imply two sets of dialectical relationships, suggesting different dimensions of the garage districts as anti-landscapes. In the last century, the garage districts were private spaces, distinguished from collective housing. From a collectivist utopian perspective, the garage districts are projected with the concept of capitalist private property, which transforms these districts into anti-landscapes with a counter-discourse resisting collective common ownership. Currently, the dilapidated sheds and the decaying facades seem to evoke the impression that there is nothing to see here, there is no landscape anymore. As the ideologies projected on collective housing gradually cease to fit the needs of contemporary society, the resistance function performed by the garage districts has dissolved. Consequently, at this point, the garage districts have degenerated into a lost landscape.

Knowledge, as part of the Symbolic order, carries the function of spatial production. As Henri Lefebvre explains, it is 'a mixture of understanding and ideology' (Lefebvre, 1974, p. 41). Disciplines like architecture, urbanism, and social planning project knowledge onto a place. By domesticating and transforming, it represents the place as a landscape which eventually achieves the myth of coherence. The transformation of the tedious lost landscape of the garage districts, the abandonment or demolition of the Khrushchyovka;[3] these seemingly insignificant places are, however, a necessary part of the identity of the Kola Peninsula. In fact, this is where the order of the Real is revealed – during the rapid capitalist accumulation and expansion, these anti-landscapes were often ignored, and only when new knowledge was applied to spatial production did the contradiction emerge. However, once the contradiction is present, it is a reminder that the order of the Real – as well as the physical reality – is right there and always there.

With the downfall of an ideology, the physical reality regains dominance over a place. Anti-landscape retreats into a place (the Real) and interacts with the activity of the practical subjects. Meanwhile, these constructions from the last century suggest a historical dimension of the lost landscape – while the 'history' here does not refer to a linear, descriptive narrative that takes 'place' for granted as a holistic record. On the contrary, place, together with its non-human factors, also defines their own history, confronting humans' spatial practices that serve our cultural and social purposes.

Freud argues that the consistency of memory and perception depends on the qualities and movements of matter ('das Ding'), which is a changing and comprehensible part; meanwhile, the existence of matter also determines the inevitable failure of this consistency, since the matter itself is persistent and incomprehensible (Freud, 1958). Based on this hypothetical premise, Lacan develops the notion of the Real, a sphere in which matter resides. A place, which shares qualities with the Real in the Lacan–Mitchell triad, cannot be entirely symbolized. Nevertheless, it is this residue of the inability to be represented that drives the desire to 'do it again' and makes the lost landscape an object to be re-symbolized by the Symbolic. Therefore, the garage districts need to be redesigned and become a landscape again. However, what is not easily perceived is that the historical narrative of place is also based on this represented consistency. The history of a place is never continuous and coherent. Instead, this assumption of coherence is invented for places to be conceived 'as sites where a host of different social processes are gathered up into an intelligible whole' (Low & Barnett, 2000, p. 58). The three stages of anti-landscape summarized by Nye, therefore, are by no means a coherent and isolated narrative either. When landscapes degenerate into lost landscapes, they necessarily involve a wider range of geopolitical interactions, a process in which histories are intertwined. As Massey noted, a place is never separate from other places and their history. This, of course, also includes the interaction between land and sea.

Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, environmental pollution in Murmansk has begun to attract attention. Sulfur dioxide (SO_2), radioactive waste and nuclear fuel all contribute to varying levels of contamination on the Kola Peninsula and neighboring Nordic countries, and indeed some of the waste was dumped into the Barents and Kara Seas in the 1990s (Hønneland, 2006). Norilsk Nickel, a Russian nickel and palladium mining and smelting company, was responsible for over 80% of the sulfur dioxide emissions and for nearly all the nickel and copper emissions (Rigina, 1998). There is also evidence suggesting this area was impacted by the 1986 Chernobyl accident, with radioactive elements found in the flesh of reindeer and other animals (World Wildlife Fund, 2001). However, today, although the Arctic waters still contain higher quantities of metal compounds and oil products than permitted, according to a report by the Murmansk Regional Ministry of the Environment in 2014, the decreasing population and de-industrialization on the Kola Peninsula have led to a relative reduction in environmental damage during the past three decades (Hemmersam, 2018).

It seems an acceptable local narrative to attribute the mitigation of marine pollution to the declining population and de-industrialization from a reductionist perspective. However, such consistent narratives are based on a false synchronicity, a way of 'thinking conjecturally' that suggests 'a shuttling back and forth between different temporal frames or scales to capture the distinctive character of processes which appear to inhabit the "same" moment in time' (Low & Barnett, 2000, p. 59). The false synchronicity ignores the openness of place – the shaping of a place is always in process. It also ignores the fact that the formation of a place is filled with contradictions and negotiations, which Massey (2005) argues must take place within and between both human and non-human. It is in this synchronic narrative that the lost landscape becomes invisible. The intangible realm of a place – the intertwined and entangled histories, the conflict between material and conceptual projections, the differences beyond consistency – are concealed by narratives that are articulated and representable. These narratives and the related notions of knowledge suppressed the openness of the place, as Massey (ibid., p. 145) noted, the domesticated places 'seem designed to limit their potential character as places as innovation'; while 'the potential event of places remains, the containment is impossible'.

Conclusion

Lacan's three-order theoretical framework can be employed to understand Mitchell's spatial–place–landscape triad. In this Lacan–Mitchell triad, anti-landscape has dual layers: the representational anti-landscape in the order of 'landscape' ('the Imaginary'), as a projection of negative cultural meanings, and the lost landscape in the order of 'place' ('the Real'), which is degraded and has become an obstacle for further capital accumulation.

Due to the special geopolitical features of the Arctic and its significance in global trade, the Arctic anti-landscape often involves complex sea–land relationships. On the one hand, in the context of mining-based industrialization, the representational anti-landscape acts as a weathervane for marine pollution. On the other, the lost landscape relates to the negotiation between the knowledge production of space and the materiality of place. The problem is that the environment is unpredictable, and we need to evaluate the indeterminacy of material reality in its entirety before the innovation of the Arctic land–sea spatiality through scientific knowledge production. The interdisciplinary approach has led us to comprehend Arctic marine issues from a broader standpoint.

It is not hard to discern from the Melkøya case that the anti-landscape in the media reports seems distant from an authentic trauma of a place – or rather, the actual magnitude of the marine pollution we are facing. Once dominated by a particular discourse, the images are exposed to distortion and alienation. Nonetheless, this does not imply that we cannot leap out from the vicious circle of representation and face the Real. This can either be achieved by finding an approach to the Real from the imaginary that is not captured by the Symbolic, from the disturbing, uncanny images that are not coded by given cultural meaning, or by examining the sea–land relationships in a broader sense through a concern with the lost landscape.

The example of the Kola cities gives us an insight into the fact that a degraded landscape holds diverse potential which can be restricted and suppressed by planning, but a place can also be empowered by the interaction with the environment and the contradictions during the re-landscaping process. The Kola cities were historically projections of the state's desire for minerals, due to which they largely ignored the externalities of urbanization, such as the consideration of wicked issues like environmental pollution (Hemmersam, 2018). The urban texture has changed very little since the 1990s, while the cultural meaning of the landscape has diversified. Today, the degradation of the landscape and spatial reconfiguration in the Kola cities show the negotiation process between knowledge of the global capital practice and spatial reconfiguration. They also manifest a lost landscape that is waiting not just to be rebuilt and reconstructed, but also reinterpreted and recontextualized.

Therefore, understanding the contradictory nature of a lost landscape and its potential for diverse development, exploring its changes and interactions with the surrounding environment, rather than projecting imagined spatiality onto places that have seemingly lost their previous cultural significance, is essential to the sustainability of the Arctic coastal regions. The land–sea relation should not simply be discussed from a reductionist perspective. It is only when we look at the intricate and dynamic micro-narratives of places that an open future will naturally emerge.

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1. Borromean knot: the Borromean knot is a knot in the middle of the Borromean rings, which in mathematics are three simple closed curves in three-dimensional space that are topologically connected and cannot be separated from each other, and once any one of them

is severed, all three become separated (Lacan, 1975). Lacan uses the Borromean knot as a way of illustrating the interdependence of the three orders of the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary, as a way of exploring what it is that these three orders have in common.

2. Punctum: a photography-specific concept defined by Roland Barthes, which points to those features of a photograph that seem to produce or convey a meaning without invoking any recognizable symbolic system. It is unique to the individual viewer of the image. To allow the punctum effect, the viewer must repudiate all knowledge.

3. Khrushchyovka: the apartment buildings developed in the Soviet Union from the mid 1950s, which were cheap and easy to build and most have five stories. The residents had to put up with poor housing conditions like low ceilings, terrible sound insulation and so forth. Today, these apartment building blocks are still common in many former Soviet countries.