Landscapes of deliquescence in Michelangelo Antonioni's *Red Desert*

Matthew Gandy

The cinematic landscape provides a rich opportunity to explore cultural representations of place, space and nature. This essay focuses on the depiction of landscape in Michelangelo Antonioni's *Red Desert* (1964). Previous approaches to the critical interpretation of landscape in the cinema of Antonioni have been characterized by three principal weaknesses: a narrow emphasis on formalist and auterist lines of influence between different branches of the visual arts; an attachment to exceptionalist characterizations of the Italian cinematic landscape; and a transhistorical interpretation of existential themes such as alienation. In this essay we shall consider two neglected themes: the significance of the technological sublime for the aesthetic experience of industrial landscapes; and the impact of abstract expressionism on Antonioni's cinematic vision. We will counter simplistic categorizations of Antonioni's work by considering the complexity of the relationship between the cinematic landscape and wider developments in twentieth-century modernism. The essay concludes by locating *Red Desert* at a unique juncture in the development of modernist conceptions of nature and landscape.

key words   landscape   cinema   modernity   Italy   Michelangelo Antonioni

Department of Geography, University College London, London WC1H 0AP
email: m.gandy@ucl.ac.uk

Introduction

Modernism was modernity's official opposition. It was the pessimist to modernity's eternal optimism. (Clark 2002, 173)[1]

Antonioni's films question the visible until there's not enough light to see any more. (Berger 1995, 10)[2]

The German émigré and cultural critic Siegfried Kracauer once remarked how 'the design of nature is the fountainhead of all visions' (1960, 204), yet we know comparatively little of the engagement between filmmaking and cultural responses to landscape.[3] More specifically, the relationship between the cinematic landscape and twentieth-century modernism remains only partially explored. This essay contends that a more nuanced reading of the cinematic landscape avoids the flattening effects of theoretical or metaphysical reductionism and has the potential to move beyond trans-historical phenomenologies of human perception. Before proceeding further, we should pause a moment over the word 'landscape', which has become so critical to recent discussions concerning place, space and cultural representations of nature. A range of scholarship has highlighted how the very idea of landscape implies a process of alienation from nature and is an integral element in the development of modern aesthetics.[4] The depiction of landscape in film takes this process of alienation a stage further by immersing us in a panoramic representation of space that radically extends the possibilities of aesthetic experience. At the outset, therefore, we can argue that the cinematic landscape is a natural focus for any systematic exploration of the depiction of space in modern culture. Yet the core concept of landscape, in all its etymological and historical complexity, is only rarely placed at the forefront of critical writing on cinema.[5]

The cinematic landscape presents a profound challenge to established modes of critical inquiry within architectural theory, geography, sociology

and other disciplines. The classic idea of landscape rests on a cultural mediation between space and the human subject that is facilitated through art or design. In the modern era, however, this emphasis has shifted to encompass new kinds of landscape experience engendered by technological transformations in the use and representation of space. With the development of modern cinema, this technological relation to landscape becomes double-coded so that we experience the movement of the image itself at one further remove from the embodied encounters with space which underpinned traditional conceptions of landscape design. Yet the cinematic frame is also enclosed within its own geometry of perception through the architectural aspects to cinema houses and varying contexts within which film itself is consumed as a cultural product. Though our focus is on the representation of space in film, it is important to recognize that film encodes its own spatialities of production and consumption, which are themselves undergoing a process of displacement through the shift towards digital media and other transformations in contemporary visual culture. Cinema presents us with a matrix of visual codes and symbols that can provide insights into broader historical and political themes within the development of modern culture. Our intellectual task can be likened to the 'appropriation of geography in history' through an interdisciplinary and intertextual exploration of the relationship between cinematic topographies and the evolution of visual cultures.[6] Such a strategy of interpretation is naturally opposed to any normative or narrowly idealist conception of aesthetics and finds a rich intellectual lineage through, for example, the early film theory of Béla Balázs, the 'visual unconscious' of Walter Benjamin, the 'visible hieroglyphs' of Siegfried Kracauer and the exploration of 'iconology' in the writings of Erwin Panofsky.[7]

In this essay we shall examine the significance of landscape in Italian cinema through the work of Michelangelo Antonioni. Antonioni was born in 1912 in Ferrara, northern Italy, and began his early career with a mix of film criticism and documentary production. In the 1950s, Antonioni became closely associated with the development of neorealist Italian cinema and established his reputation through features such as *I vinti* (1953) and *Il grido* (1957).[8] With the release of his critically acclaimed trilogy – *L'avventura* (1960), *La notte* (1961) and *L'eclisse* (1962) – Antonioni established a distinctive cinematic vision with its characteristic emphasis on themes of alienation and spatial disorientation. In this essay we shall focus on Antonioni's first colour feature film – *Red Desert [Il deserto rosso]* (1964) – which proved both a commercial and critical success on its release and remains an important point of departure for critical debates about his work. *Red Desert* was one of a number of films that marked a transition from the predominance of neo-realist approaches in Italian cinema to an emerging engagement with a wider variety of aesthetic and intellectual themes. The period from the late 1950s to the early 1960s was marked by a resurgence of public interest and international acclaim for Italian cinema, which gave Antonioni and his contemporaries a new degree of self-confidence in the cultural status of film and deepened the existing dialogue between cinema and wider developments in art and literature.[9] The combination of enhanced artistic freedom and commercial success facilitated a shift towards more ambitious projects that sought to transcend the more technically rudimentary and small-scale dimensions of earlier productions. The contemporary critic and filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini, for example, claimed that *Red Desert* marked a new level of sophistication in Italian cinema: the film came close to his ideal of 'free indirect subjectivity' through the development of a distinctive poetic or oneiric form of cinematic language (see Pasolini 1965). Although these early attempts to emphasize the semiotic basis for a putative 'cinematic exceptionalism' now appear theoretically anachronistic, there is little doubt that the work of Antonioni helped to raise the status of cinema within the visual arts.

Landscape features prominently in many of the most critically acclaimed examples of Italian cinema. Consider, for example, the Mediterranean *garigue* in Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The gospel according to St Matthew [Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo]* (1964) or the urban vistas in Roberto Rossellini's *Rome, Open City [Roma, Citta Aperta]* (1945). The centrality of landscape to what Noa Steimatsky (1995, 39–40) terms the 'Italian cinematic imagination' has emerged within the context of relatively late processes of industrialization and state formation in modern Italy. 'The primacy of landscape in the Italian cinematic imagination,' argues Steimatsky, 'is grounded in the specific geographical conditions of Italy, its varied and rich conglomerates of landscapes, and the cultural traditions, myths and connotations that invest specific locales with

meaning and value.'[10] The 'authentic' Italian landscape became a powerful cinematic motif during the early decades of the twentieth century and drew support from across the political spectrum. If we survey the history of Italian cinema, we find a degree of aesthetic continuity running through the pre-fascist, fascist and post-fascist phases of Italian filmmaking. The development of neo-realism in the 1940s thus marked a political reappropriation of the cultural depiction of landscape that displaced the nationalist sentiments of the fascist era with a neo-Marxian emphasis on landscape as a focus of social and political struggle (see Steimatsky 1995, 46–8). Yet, in the cinema of Antonioni, the depiction of landscape moves beyond the physicality of space as a locus for action towards an engagement with the aesthetic effects of landscape on the psychological state of his protagonists. The cinematic landscape becomes the dramatic setting for an exploration of the experience of modernity.

Attempts to locate *Red Desert* within a broader terrain of cultural theory have proved elusive. In the 1960s, anti-modern critics were hostile towards the film, which they saw as antithetical to traditional cinema, whilst modernist critics placed the film at the cutting edge of European cinema. Traditionalists such as Henry Hart (1965, 181), for example, dismissed *Red Desert* as 'intellectually bankrupt' and 'culturally reprehensible', whereas more sympathetic voices such as Jean-André Fieschi (1965, 84) were delighted by the panoply of modernist cultural references. More recently, there have been attempts to subsume Antonioni's work within a post-modern cinematic canon simply on the basis of its complexity and concern with questions of identity (see Brunette 1998; Rohdie 1990). Yet none of these simplistic categorizations are satisfactory. In interpreting *Red Desert* it is useful to grasp two shifting dynamics: first, the changing nature of Antonioni's cinematic vision and its articulation with a wider cultural and political field; and second, the radically altered context for film criticism as it has passed through successive waves of theoretical and conceptual transformation. If we survey the existing literature on Antonioni, we find that there are three prominent weaknesses. First, there has been a focus on the influence of twentieth-century art without any consideration of the political and intellectual tensions running through modernist aesthetics. Much of the critical writing that exists on the relationship between film and art appears trapped within a formalist frame of reference that is preoccupied with auterist lines of influence rather than any wider consideration of how different fields of cultural production interact. Angela Dalle Vache (1996), for example, takes at face value Antonioni's attempt to emulate abstract expressionism and never explores the limitations to his neo-romantic conception of creative autonomy in the visual arts. Second, there has been a recurring emphasis on the 'essential' characteristics of the Italian cinematic landscape rooted in a weakly developed contextualization of the history of landscape change. These static perspectives are founded on determinist conceptions of the relationship between landscape and culture which are clearly at odds with the increasingly internationalist scope of Antonioni's cinema. And third, we find that Antonioni's cinema has been read as emblematic of the 'human condition' or some other transhistorical category derived from the legacy of Western humanism. *Red Desert* has, for example, been characterized as a film which is 'almost beyond verbal description or analysis' and which transcends social critique in order to focus on 'more fundamental and permanent metaphysical issues' (Cameron and Wood 1971, 112).

In this essay two themes will be developed. First, we explore the significance of the technological sublime for the cinematic depiction of industrial landscapes. We find that Antonioni combines elements of the Kantian and Burkean sublime into a distinctive synthesis as part of his aesthetic ambivalence towards the technological transformation of modern Italy. Second, we consider the relationship between Antonioni's cinematic iconography and the development of abstract expressionism in the visual arts. We encounter the limitations of a Greenbergian emphasis on the cultural autonomy and teleological progression of twentieth-century modernism. Taken together, these two themes help to illuminate the relationship between Antonioni's cinematic *oeuvre* and the complexities of modernist aesthetics in relation to cultural depictions of landscape.

The technological sublime

In the countryside around Ravenna, the horizon is dominated by factories, smokestacks and refineries. The beauty of that view is much more striking than the anonymous mass of pine trees which you see from afar, all lined up in a row, the same colour. (Antonioni 1964b, 253)

Filmed on location over a period of two months in the autumn of 1963, *Red Desert* is set in and around the city of Ravenna in north-east Italy. Antonioni's vivid depiction of Italy's second largest port presents us with a detailed insight into the changing lives and landscapes of modern Italy. In some ways the film marks a return to the place-based focus of Antonioni's earlier documentary films: the misty landscapes of *Red Desert* recall, for example, his very first film, *Gente del Po* (1943–7), which depicts the people and landscapes of the Po Valley. In *Red Desert* Antonioni ignores the beautiful architecture of mediaeval Ravenna, beloved of Baedeker and countless other tourist guides. Instead, he presents us with what the French critic Michele Manceaux describes as a 'short course in economic geography':

> If the alabaster windows of Galla Placida diffuse the softest light in the world, and if the blue mosaics are like a plunge into the depths of the sea, all this means little to him, all this belongs to the past. He chose Ravenna for its smoky factories, its oil derricks, its steel pylons. After the war, the pinewoods stretched down to the sea and the town had thirty thousand inhabitants. Today the silos and oil refineries have killed off the trees. Oil has been found here, artificial islands have been built; and there are a hundred and forty thousand inhabitants. (Manceaux 1964, 119)

In the opening sequence of *Red Desert*, we observe the main protagonist Giuliana (played by Monica Vitti) walking with her young son across a muddy and desolate landscape. The only bright colours are her full-length green coat, her child's light brown duffel coat and the orange petroleum flares in the background. Lines of workers shuffle past, some of whom are wearing transparent raincoats which resemble space suits or perhaps even special clothing to provide protection from radiation and hazardous chemicals. She looks out across the undulating expanse of oily puddles and refuse. Small swirls of steam emanate from the ground as if she were walking near the crater of a volcano. Beyond the blackened remnants of trees, and half-shrouded in mist, we can discern an array of complex industrial structures ranging from immense gas purification plants to elaborate water towers. Moments later she enters a factory to meet her husband Ugo (played by Carlo Chionetti) and a new factory manager Corrado (played by Richard Harris). The camera tracks between an austere modern control room and a vast hanger filled with pipes and turbines where we can scarcely hear the

human voices above the din of machinery. The sleek modernist decor of the factory offices and control rooms contrasts with the brutal and anarchic characteristics of the surrounding landscape.

At one level *Red Desert* is a lament for what Antonioni describes as the 'violent transformation of the countryside around the city' (1964b, 253), but it is at the same time a multi-faceted immersion in the experience of modernity. The ambivalence of technology is explored in *Red Desert* through themes such as alienation, spatial disorientation and the chromatic dissonance of modern land-scapes. A sense of aesthetic estrangement is signalled from the title sequence of the film, where captions are superimposed on a series of deliberately blurred images accompanied by avant-garde electronic music (composed by Vittorio Gelmetti). The environs of modern Ravenna provide a vivid portrayal of a new and unfamiliar landscape emerging under the post-war *miracolo* of Italian economic prosperity. The political salience of the film is signalled from the outset by a man standing on top of a car outside the perimeter fence of a factory shouting through a megaphone. We learn that the pretext for this industrial dispute is a somewhat incongruous plan to relocate workers to Patagonia, yet class antagonisms play only a minor role in the film. Maps of Patagonia appear in several scenes in order to allude to the emerging international division of labour. The abstract dynamics of industrial change are emphasized by the detached and technical terms used to explain the future of the factory. We observe the pensive faces of workers gathered to hear details of their reloca-tion, but their experience does not become the focal point for the film. Antonioni's exploration of social change develops not from the vantage point of the industrial workers, but through an intense exploration of the alienation felt by the upwardly mobile workers of the new Italy. This emerging 'techno-cracy' of middle-ranking managers and skilled workers is represented in *Red Desert* as a distinctive social class who enjoy the material prosperity of modern Ravenna, but who are nonetheless ambival-ent about the consequences of this economic trans-formation. 'A new class is coming into existence in this extraordinary landscape', suggests Antonioni, 'and my characters belong to this working-class bourgeoisie' (cited in Manceaux 1964, 119).

Much of the film is focused on the growing sense of anxiety experienced by Giuliana as she wanders between different locations in the city. For Marxist

critics such as Armando Borrelli, this fatalistic disavowal of class conflict marks an abandonment of political commitment, whereas Lino Miccichè suggests that the film presents a radical critique of bourgeois society (Borrelli 1966; Miccichè 1975).[11] The cinema of Antonioni is largely devoid of the tense confrontation between Catholicism and Marxism that marks some of the most self-consciously political films associated with the development of neo-realism such as Roberto Rossellini's *Rome, Open City* (1945) or Vittorio De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief* (1948). The critical distinction between *Red Desert* and most examples of Italian neo-realism lies in Antonioni's emphasis on the effects rather than the causes of social and political change:

> I think filmmakers should always try to reflect the times in which they live – not so much to express and interpret events in their most direct and tragic form, but rather to capture their effect upon us. (Cited in Strick 1963, 8)

By focusing on the 'effects' of modernity, Antonioni develops a cinematic engagement with wider developments in cultural modernism. *Red Desert* does not present an outright rejection of modernity, but rests on a profound ambivalence towards the post-war transformation of modern Italy. On the one hand, Antonioni echoes the technological critique of the Frankfurt School in his concern with 'the gap between moral man and scientific man':[12]

> The myth of the factory conditions the life of everybody here, denudes it of surprise and disembodies it. The synthetic product dominates, and sooner or later it will end up by making trees into obsolete objects, like the horses. (Antonioni 1964c, 83) [13]

On the other hand, however, Antonioni marvels at the scale and dynamism of modern landscapes, noting that 'even factories can be beautiful':

> I don't say that there ought to be a return to nature, that industrialization is wrong. I even find something very beautiful in this mastery of man over matter. To me, these pipes and girders seem just as moving as the trees. Of course it's horrifying to think that birds which fly through these fumes are going to fall dead, that the gas makes it impossible to grow anything for miles around. But every age, after all, has called for its sacrifices, and it's out of these that something else has grown. (Cited in Manceaux 1964, 119)

Antonioni's concern with the effects of modernity is founded on a perception that new technologies have contributed towards a sense of human alienation. This theme is developed by Antonioni in two principal ways: first, with the portrayal of the alienation of people from each other; and second, through the focus on alienation from 'nature' in its broadest sense, which is most strikingly represented in *Red Desert* through the oppressive characteristics of the industrial landscape. Narrowly Weberian conceptions of modern alienation do not capture Antonioni's emphasis on the psychological drama of alienation as a form of social redemption or creative renewal which may expand our imaginative grasp of place and space (see Moore 1995, 23). The sense of alienation developed by Antonioni is phenomenological and psychological at root and is not developed in a neo-Marxian sense except in relation to his critique of consumer capitalism.[14] The existential emptiness which Antonioni associates with many aspects of consumer capitalism is developed in *Red Desert* through his tracking shots of rubbish-strewn waste ground, but for the most part the highly stylized interiors represent the acme of modernist minimalism. In one scene, Giuliana, Ugo and Corrado, walk by a polluted creek on the outskirts of the city. Ugo comments in a matter-of-fact tone that 'effluent must end up somewhere', and adds that 'fishermen have abandoned this spot'. They joke about overhearing a man in a local restaurant complaining that his 'eel tasted of petroleum'. There is an air of resignation that pervades their stroll along the riverbank. This eerie landscape, where there is scarcely a sound of bird song, is a necessary exchange for the technological dynamism and prosperity of modern Italy.

Antonioni's ambivalence towards technology is developed in *Red Desert* through a series of juxtapositions between pollution and wealth, dereliction and construction, and most tellingly, in the tense friendship which develops between Giuliana and Corrado. In one striking sequence, Giuliana and Corrado are seen walking under a series of giant radio masts, which form part of the Medicina radar installation on the outskirts of Ravenna (Plate 1). A site worker explains to Giuliana that these masts are 'a radio-telescope to listen to the stars'. The tiny figures we can see working high up within these complex metal structures appear dwarfed by the vastness of the towers. There is something strange – mythical even – about these new and unfamiliar industrial features in the Italian countryside. But what conceptual vocabulary can we use to critically
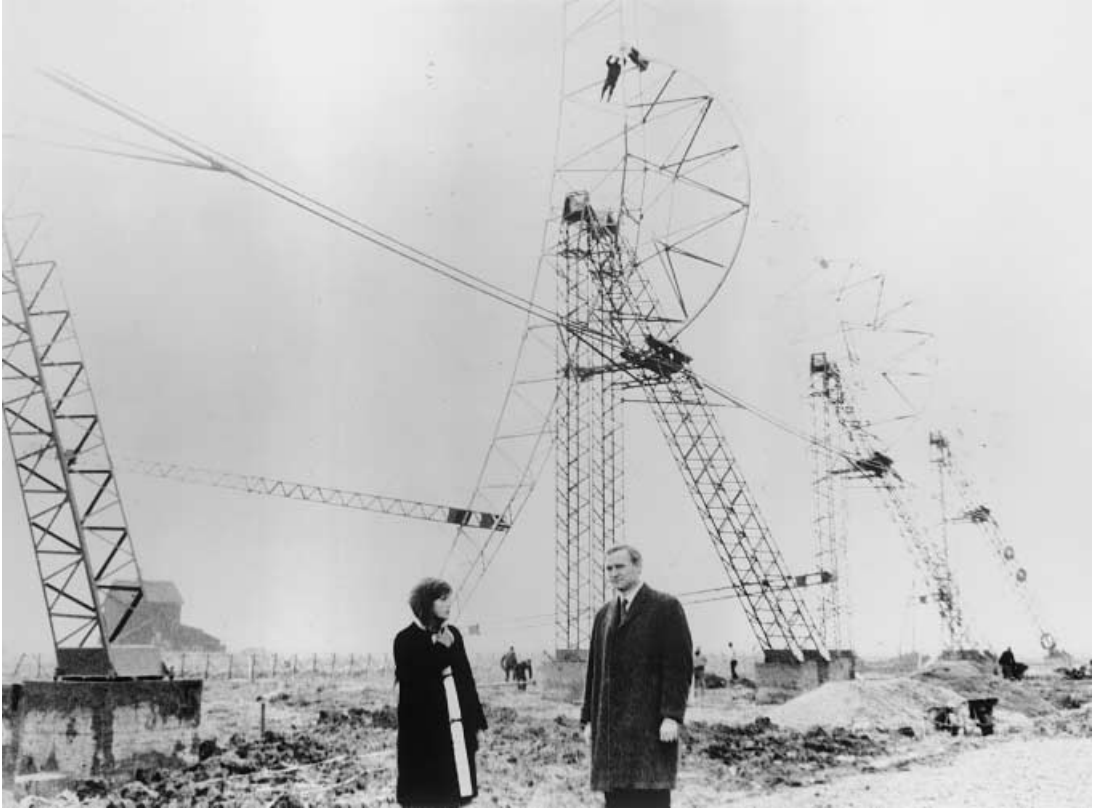
Plate 1   Michelangelo Antonioni (1964) *Red Desert*. **Giuliana (Monica Vitti) and Corrado (Richard Harris) at the Medicina radio installation**
Source: Courtesy of the British Film Institute, London

engage with the industrial aesthetics of *Red Desert*? These human artefacts are not just 'things' in the landscape, but they have been transformed by Antonioni into something far more mysterious and laden with symbolic meaning. The scale and power of these new structures is suggestive of the 'sublime' as a particular category of aesthetic engagement with landscape. In its classic Kantian formulation, the sublime is used primarily in relation to the aesthetic experience of nature, but in the writings of Edmund Burke and in the formulations of more recent scholars, the concept has been extended to encompass the scale of human artefacts in the landscape such as machines, buildings and vast industrial installations. For Kant, the difference between the beautiful and the sublime rests on a distinction between a bounded object of contemplation and 'a formless object' which has the capacity to extend the power of the human

imagination. The ideal of beauty in nature 'carries with it a purposiveness in its form', whereas an object of sublime contemplation may

> appear to be contrapurposive for our power of judgment, unsuitable for our faculty of presentation, and as it were doing violence to our imagination, but is nevertheless judged all the more sublime for that. (Kant 2000, 129; §§ 23–29; see also the 1960 edition)[15]

The Kantian sublime is at root a philosophical state-of-being in the world rather than an identifiable set of objects or sensory stimuli. We might go further and suggest that it is the quality of the sublime as an 'anti-landscape', to use Lyotard's apt term, that places the mysterious qualities of industrial landscapes in the realm of a sublime aesthetic that lies at the boundary of human comprehension. Or to put it in a slightly different way, the Kantian concept of the sublime is rooted

in an aesthetic that is capable of transcending any narrow association with pantheistic impulses in European romanticism (see Lyotard 1994, 54). The aesthetic character of an industrial landscape owes its geometry to a mix of abstract and concrete elements that are combined to produce new spatial formations. The contemporary resonance of the sublime can be attributed to the intellectual disjuncture between our aesthetic and cognitive abilities to read these kinds of modern spaces.

If we develop the idea of the sublime beyond its eighteenth-century roots, we can identify an interconnection between the experience of the sublime and the cinematic landscape. The concept of the sublime helps us to locate Antonioni's handling of the Italian landscape within a historically specific cultural dynamic emerging from the engagement between the visual arts and the experience of modernity. Given the centrality of landscape to Antonioni's cinema, it is surprising that so little attention has been placed on the sublime as a conceptual vantage point from which to evaluate the significance of his work. Discussion of the cinematic sublime has thus far tended to focus on the imaginary vistas of science fiction film. Scott Bukatman (1995, 273), for example, traces the cinematic sublime in science fiction cinema to the vast canvasses of the nineteenth-century Luminists and the Hudson Valley school of painting, where we find a distinctively American fusion of nature and technology.[16] 'The mix of the sublime and the transcendental', notes Bukatman, 'found its clearest expression in the genre of Luminist painting, which emphasized impersonal expression, horizontality, minute tonal gradations, intimate scale, immobility, and silence'. The luminist emphasis on silence and emptiness can be contrasted with the eschatological themes of the Hudson Valley school with their focus on the scale and power of nature. In the paintings of Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Cole and Frederic Edwin Church, for instance, we find immense dioramic depictions of the American landscape which are rooted in powerful myths of divine providence and nation building. For Bukatman, these different aspects of the nineteenth-century sublime are combined in American science fiction cinema to produce a distinctive synthesis where 'our fantasies of superiority emerge from our ambivalence regarding *technological* power, rather than nature's might' (1995, 279). The awe-inspiring landscapes of Stanley Kubrick's *2001* (1968), for instance, can be conceived as typical of this genre

of technological mastery over nature and celestial space. Antonioni's cinematic sublime is not, however, founded on the same mix of nationalist and technocratic fervour, but develops a more melancholic vision closer to the German origins of romanticism and the philosophical elaborations of Immanuel Kant and Arthur Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer, for example, elaborates on Kantian aesthetics to develop a universal ontology of human tragedy, where all happiness and fulfilment are illusory. He introduces a profound sense of pessimism into modern philosophical discourse, which is further developed in the 'resignationism' of Nietzsche and the twentieth-century existentialism of Camus, Heidegger and Sartre. Schopenhauer's emphasis on the non-mimetic arts, particularly music, stems from his belief in the extraordinary power of art that engages with metaphysical themes. It is this sense of a threshold between artistic creation and the recognition of human insignificance that drives Schopenhauer's 'romantic pessimism' and provides an insight into the complex aesthetic vision of Antonioni with its profound sense of loss and alienation.[17] The cinema of Antonioni develops the romantic motif of individual alienation expressed through a heightened sensory experience of the world as an aesthetic resolution or consolation for the emotional privations of a 'technologized' modernity. The concept of the technological sublime, though only partially developed, is relevant to the interpretation of Antonioni's work in three respects: first, it provides an unusual synthesis of the Burkean emphasis on human artifice with the Kantian emphasis on the contemplation of nature; second, it highlights Antonioni's interest in aesthetic experiences associated with spatial disorientation through his exploration of the encounters between the interior psychological landscapes of his cinematic protagonists and their disconcerting experiences of concrete spaces; and third, following revisionist readings of the sublime, we might link Antonioni's pre-occupation with perceptual disorientation to anxieties over the disturbance of a masculinist spatial realm.[18]

Antonioni plays with the idea of the sublime by disrupting the possibilities for any straightforward interpretation of what we see. In an early scene, for example, a fast-moving cloud of steam surges horizontally across the screen like a pyroclastic surge and threatens to engulf everything in its path. The bursts of steam which periodically obscure our view during *Red Desert* can be conceived as a literal

representation of the power of modernity, but at the same time they reflect the processes of 'abstraction, reduction and dematerialization' which contributed towards the implosion of modernism during the 1960s (Clark 2002, 156). The extensive deployment of fog and mist also adds to the aesthetic tensions within the film as the landscape is repeatedly distilled down to an indistinct form in which all traces of human life threaten to disappear completely. In one instance, we see a huge ship, partially obscured by mist, moving behind a row of pine trees as if it were a train on land. In another instance, Giuliana faces four of her friends on a jetty, but a thick fog descends so that the figures momentarily disappear completely from view. In these and other scenes, Antonioni tests the limits of our perception so that there is a continual tension between what we can see and our imaginative grasp of events. In articulating the anxiety that these moments induce for Giuliana, the film also explores the aesthetic dimensions to spatial phobias associated with modernity. At one level, therefore, *Red Desert* is an exploration of 'the landscapes of fear and the topographies of despair created as a result of modern technological and capitalist development' (Vidler 2000, 2). Yet the film is not only a representation of 'spatial psychosis', since we are presented with an ambivalent aesthetic experience of industrial landscapes as a source of visual pleasure as well as fear or dread.[19]

The sublime is not a transhistorical category of aesthetic experience in the cinema of Antonioni, but something far more specific: a powerful perceptual device for the articulation of a particular kind of spatial longing or *Sehnsucht*. Antonioni's concern with the 'horizon of events' is predicated on two rather different but interrelated perspectives: an intense focus on the concrete spaces of human thought and action; and a struggle to articulate an abstract space at the boundary of human cognitive and imaginative possibilities. The pervasive restlessness and narrative irresolution of *Red Desert* is a reflection of the kind of social and cultural tensions engendered by the rapidity and uneven effects of Italian modernity. This is not to suggest that the visual splendour of *Red Desert* is merely a reflection of the particularities of Antonioni's neo-romantic aesthetic sensibility, but rather to emphasize how the film illuminates the limitations of modernist aesthetics. In Kantian terms, the realm of physical objects in *Red Desert* is repeatedly transmuted by the power of the human

imagination into a conceptual form. The cinematic landscape radically extends the conceptual possibilities of the sublime by reworking the visual representation of spatio-temporal transcendence and at the same time blurring the distinctions between different realms of cultural production. Cinema plays a vital role in liberating the experience of the sublime from the realm of social exclusivity. A focus on the cinematic sublime does not necessarily lead, therefore, to critical closure, but has the potential to open the interpretation of film to a multitude of different possibilities. This idea of a threshold between form and concept also provides an important link between the philosophical origins of the sublime and the development of non-figurative art in the twentieth century. Leading figures within the emergence of abstract expressionism such as Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko, for example, perceived clear links between their work and the experience of sublimity. The aesthetic engagement between modernist abstraction and 'sublimation' saw a move away from 'the material, the tactile, the objective' and involved an attempt to articulate metaphysical themes drawn from primordial conceptions of human creativity (see Krauss 1993, 247). It is in the post-war modernist drive towards abstraction that we find the focal point in *Red Desert* for an engagement between cinema and wider developments in the visual arts.

Fulvous modernities

> I want to paint the film as one paints a canvas; I want to invent colour relationships, and not limit myself by photographing only natural colours. (Michelangelo Antonioni, cited in Strick (1963, 7))

The vivid use of colour in *Red Desert* is used to portray not only the iridescent qualities of the industrial landscape, but also to heighten our identification with the visual acuity of the main protagonist Giuliana (Plate 2). At an early stage in the film we learn that Giuliana is convalescing after a car accident which has left her psychologically damaged. One of the consequences of her accident is that she has become much more aware of the aesthetic characteristics of her surroundings: 'What do people expect me to do with my eyes?', implores Giuliana, 'What should I look at?'. In focusing on the altered state of Giuliana, we find that Antonioni has deployed an established romantic trope of illness and suffering as a means towards heightened states of creative insight. 'No two people

Plate 2   Michelangelo Antonioni (1964) *Red Desert*. **Much of the film is focused on the enhanced aesthetic sensibilities of Giuliana (Monica Vitti) towards the places and landscapes of modern Ravenna**
Source: Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, New York

see things in quite the same way', notes Antonioni, 'and what you see is going to depend on your mental condition' (cited in Manceaux 1964, 119).[20]

The vibrant cinematography in *Red Desert* allows Antonioni to develop his earlier explorations of perception in new ways. For eighteenth-century subjectivists such as David Hume, the perception of colour was little more than a 'phantasm of the senses', but subsequent philosophical enquiry from Kant onwards has sought to bring the experience of colour within a workable intellectual framework. For studies of human perception, the sense of colour plays a critical role because this aspect of vision is not reducible to the physiological characteristics of the human eye alone, but involves cognitive dimensions to sensory experience as a structured process of apperception. Colour is, in other words, a complex visual language that com-

bines subjectivist aspects to human experience with a system of shared meaning acquired through language. Yet the human eye can perceive a vast range of colours – ten million by some estimates – which far exceeds our mental schemas for the naming of individual colours.[21] 'The weakness of both empiricism and intellectualism', writes the phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty, 'lies in their refusing to recognize any colours other than those fixed qualities which make their appearance in a reflective attitude, whereas colour in living perception is a way into the thing' (1962, 305). Merleau-Ponty continues:

> We must rid ourselves of the illusion, encouraged by physics, that the perceived world is made up of colour qualities . . . The real colour persists beneath appearances as the background persists beneath the figure, that is, not as a seen or thought-of quality, but through a non-sensory presence. (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 305)

Though phenomenologists such as Merleau-Ponty are right to dismiss mere subjectivism or the positivist trappings of 'scientism' in the realm of colour perception, their framing of the cultural meaning and historical resonance of colour within twentieth-century visual culture remains limited. The shift from black and white to colour cinematography, for example, had important implications for the status of film within the visual arts and raised similar dilemmas to the demise of silent movies in the 1920s. The closer the cinematic medium came to the emulation of physical reality, in a narrowly figurative or representational sense, the less it was considered capable of articulating profound meaning on a par with other forms of artistic or creative expression (see Koch 2000). These tensions between modernist aesthetics, 'realism' and popular culture provide a further context in which to consider how *Red Desert* explores the aesthetic 'unreality' of forms of spatial estrangement associated with modern landscapes.

Colour is used in *Red Desert* to provide a literal representation of the chromatic dissonance of modernity, ranging from the translucent hues of discarded plastic bottles to fluorescent puddles of yellow water. This 'invasion of colour' is for Antonioni (1964b, 253) an integral aspect to modernity. Yet 'natural' variations in colour are not enough: in order to emphasize the intensity of the aesthetic experience in *Red Desert*, Antonioni directly altered colours to achieve his desired effect by painting trees, buildings and other features in the film.[22] The deliberate artificiality of colour in *Red Desert* mimics the technological artifice of the industrial landscape and also emphasizes the complexities of colour perception. Equally, Antonioni's extensive deployment of variations in exposure, depth of field, colour filters and intentionally blurred sequences, underpins the extent to which *Red Desert* is an experimental film where 'the characters are lost in a world of artifice' (Wollen 2001, 4). The repeated use of a narrow focal range, for example, enables Antonioni to emphasize very specific elements in the frame, such as a human face or the surface of a wall. In so doing, our attention is shifted between different elements in the landscape and there is a clear break with any attempt to emulate cinematic realism in its narrow sense.

In *Red Desert* we find a sustained critical engagement with developments in architecture, design and the visual arts. The film makes reference to a myriad of different influences ranging from the deserted agora of Giorgio de Chirico to the scarred and fractured landscapes of Giacomo Balla, Umberto Boccioni and Mario Sironi. Of particular interest, however, is the extensive influence of abstract expressionism in *Red Desert*. The sparse interiors repeatedly allude to the art of Jackson Pollock, Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko, with splashes, stripes and blocks of colour used to transform austere spaces into sites of intense creativity (Plate 3). But what does this mimicry of abstract expressionism reveal about the relationship between film and art? We know, for example, that Pollock and his contemporaries were fearful that their work might be perceived as purely decorative. If their work was seen as '*mere* abstraction' then the serious intellectual basis to their art would be lost (Krauss 1985, 237). For Rosalind Krauss, the driving force behind twentieth-century abstraction has been the dialectical impulse to depict 'Nothing'. 'The second great wave of visual abstractionists,' she writes, 'which is to say postwar painters and most prominently the abstract expressionists, instinctively understood this Nothing, this dialectical signified' (Krauss 1985, 238). The metaphysical void that lies at the heart of Antonioni's cinema is explored through his phenomenological exploration of the limits of human creativity and perception. Antonioni develops an engagement between modern cinema and the visual arts in order to develop 'ways of expression that are absolutely free, as free as painting that has reached abstraction' (cited in Arrowsmith 1995, 2). Yet Antonioni's interpretation of the critical significance of abstract expressionism is rooted in a Greenbergian conception of aesthetic autonomy and the teleological development of modern art. For Clement Greenberg, the roots of abstract expressionism could be identified in relation to a cultural lineage of 'Western civilization' founded in a steady progression of different modes of creative expression towards higher levels of sophistication.[23] The dominance of Greenberg's art criticism in the 1940s and 1950s provided powerful intellectual support to the perceived hegemony of American abstraction as the leading edge of modernist culture. Greenberg provided a 'system through which to think the field of modern art' which conceived 'the field of art as at once timeless and in constant flux' (Krauss 1985, 1). Modernist abstraction became caught up in an impetus towards universal, teleological and

Plate 3   Michelangelo Antonioni (1964) *Red Desert*. **Giuliana (Monica Vitti) and one of the abstract interiors**
Source: Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art, New York

transhistorical modes of critical interpretation that combined the neo-romantic 'mystique of creation' with an emphasis on the intensely individualized psychological drama of modernist expressionism. In this sense *Red Desert* can be interpreted as a self-conscious attempt to articulate 'high modernism' through the medium of film. With these diverse cultural references to abstract art, as well as developments in architecture, design and even avant-garde electronic music, Antonioni presents us with a kind of cinematic *Gesamtwerk* that seeks to provide a synthesis of all the arts into a complete work of modern art.

During the 1950s, the work of American artists such as Jackson Pollock and Robert Motherwell was widely perceived as a continuation and refinement of European modernism. The theme of creative 'freedom' was extensively elaborated through the critical writings of Clement Greenberg, Meyer Schapiro and other leading exponents of American abstraction. American art was perceived as 'the logical culmination of a long-standing and inexorable tendency towards abstraction' in which 'what had been characteristically American now became representative of "Western culture" as a whole' (Guilbaut 1983, 177). We now know, however, that American abstract art received significant logistical and financial support from the US government and was coopted as part of a 'cultural front' during the Cold War. The CIA-backed exhibitions that toured France, Italy and other politically unstable Western democracies during the 1950s had a profound impact on the future development of European art and consolidated the perceived cultural hegemony of New York over Paris. The influential exhibition *New American Painting* (1958–9), for example, travelled to virtually every major European city and the work of Willem de Kooning reached the

Venice Biennale as early as 1948. We know from Antonioni's interviews and writings that these developments had a profound impact: he even made a studio visit to Mark Rothko and commissioned one of his paintings (see Chatman 1985, 54). He would also have been familiar with a variety of European responses to abstract expressionism developed by figures such as Jean Dubuffet, Wols, Alberto Burri and the 'Art Informel'.[24]

In essence, Antonioni adopts a neo-romantic stance in relation to abstract expressionism that focuses on its non-figurative spontaneity and creative freedom without engaging with the wider political and intellectual complexities of post-war modernism. This neo-romantic dimension to *Red Desert* is exemplified by the emphasis on nature as a source of both 'authenticity' and creative renewal. The emphasis on the embodied dimensions to perception underpins the extent to which *Red Desert* presents a phenomenological response to the experience of landscape. It also highlights the degree to which the landscapes of *Red Desert* take on strongly anthropomorphic qualities in order to emphasize the distinctions between 'natural' and 'artificial' modes of perception.[25] This is best illustrated in Giuliana's imaginary landscape sequence, where she relates a story to her young son. We are immersed in a 'natural' experience of colour, which profoundly disturbs the 'industrial' colours used elsewhere in the film. Giuliana describes how 'the sea was transparent and the coral was pink', yet the depiction of gulls, cormorants and even rabbits suggests that this somewhat incongruous mix of elements is closer to a half-remembered Mediterranean scene than any accurate depiction of a tropical atoll (the distinctive pink sand was in fact filmed on Budello Island off the coast of Sardinia). Like the phenomenon of 'condensation' in dreams, we are confronted with various fragments of experience and memory woven into some kind of narrative coherence. A young girl swims in the sea and observes the different features of the landscape as they are related by Giuliana. A strange voice can be heard singing (the same voice that we hear during the title sequence of the film). 'A little cove among the rocks' says Giuliana, 'She had never realized they were like flesh. And the voice . . . at that moment the voice was so sweet'. 'Who was singing?' asks her child. 'Everything was singing. Everything', replies Giuliana. The camera pans slowly across an expanse of flesh-coloured rocks, which resemble the desert landscapes of Georgia O'Keefe. This soft and rounded anthropomorphic landscape contrasts with the poisoned and jagged environs of Ravenna. This is a landscape which for Antonioni 'shows reality as Giuliana wishes it were – that is, different from the world that appears to her as transformed, alienated, obsessive to the point of being monstrously deformed' (1964b, 254). The tropical beach sequence also challenges any simplistic assumption that the entire film is simply a reflection of Giuliana's perspective or even the vision of the director himself: the jarring juxtaposition of different scenographies, whether material or imagined, underlies the fractured and alienated human relationships towards landscape that are depicted in the film.

If we survey critical responses to cinema in the 1960s, we find a tension emerging between those authors who saw purely visual cinematic experimentation of the kind seen in *Red Desert* as a threat to the established narrative conventions of cinema and an alternative perspective, principally developed in Europe, which sought to raise the status of cinema within the visual arts. The ideological dimensions to cinematic representation lie at the heart of this dispute, since the prevalence of auterist modes of critical exposition suppressed the political and historical significance of film as a cultural artefact. With the deepening politicization of cultural discourse in the 1960s, new life was breathed into the earlier critical interventions of Balázs, Benjamin, Kracauer and other radical theorists of visual culture. The innovative structure and scenography of Antonioni's cinema proved pivotal to this new emphasis on the theoretical sophistication and critical significance of film within the visual arts. This shift in the scope and dynamics of film criticism was reflected in leading film journals such as *Cahiers du Cinéma* and *Screen* that enthusiastically embraced new developments in European cinema and provided a forum for film theorists informed by debates in anthropology, linguistics and other disciplines. André Bazin (1967, 168), for example, sensed that film had the potential to offer art 'a new form of existence'. 'The film of a painting', countered Bazin, 'is an aesthetic symbiosis of screen and painting, as is the lichen of the algae and mushroom'. Bazin's emphasis on cinema as cultural synthesis anticipates the interventions of Roland Barthes, Peter Wollen and a wave of critical scholarship emerging during the 1970s which began to articulate a much more sophisticated

account of the iconic significance of cinematic images.[26] Cinema was now conceived as part of a wider field of cultural production that extended from the audience to a nexus of social, economic and also technological structures. Barthes, for example, extended his literary insights to the exploration of visual culture and dispelled notions of unity and consistency in the creation of meaning. Barthes insisted that the subtlety of meaning in the cinema of Antonioni enhanced its political poignancy and at the same time protected his work from becoming a mere 'instrument of power' (cited in Brunette 1998, 13). This emphasis on the complexity of film is also developed in the writing of Wollen, who brought a greater level of sophistication to film criticism commensurate with the newly invigorated status of film within the visual arts and in clear distinction to the naïve theoretical exceptionalism of early contributors to semiological and structuralist analysis. Wollen, for example, suggests that any iconographic analysis of cinema must be sensitive to three interrelated realms of meaning: the symbolic (myth), the iconic (visual pleasure) and the indexical (mimesis of concrete reality) (see Wollen 1972). The lasting value of Wollen's conceptual schema, like that of Kracauer, is to contextualize film as a cultural form embedded in a wider set of social and political dynamics without diminishing the richness of cinema as a focus for critical inquiry. 'The film-maker', notes Wollen (1972, 154), 'is fortunate to be working in the most semiologically complex of all media, the most aesthetically rich.' The cinema of Antonioni was easily assimilated in this critical shift from auterist to more structurally complex modes of critical inquiry during the 1970s and has remained a focal point for intersections between film and philosophy ever since.

The oblique narrative structures employed in the cinema of Antonioni anticipate a shift in critical film discourse from its earlier focus on linguistics to a more multi-faceted conception of cinema as a kind of 'social technology' (see de Lauretis 1984). In *Red Desert*, Antonioni extends modernist aesthetics through a radical industrial synthesis that prefigures the extensive blurring of boundaries that would ultimately contribute towards the demise of modernism as a rarefied cultural realm. Gilles Deleuze (1989, 5–9), for example, chronicles a shift in Antonioni's cinema from the 'disconnected space' of his earlier films to the 'empty or deserted space' of *L'eclisse* (1962) onwards. For Deleuze, these non-Euclidean and amorphous spaces reflect a crucial juncture in visual culture between the 'movement-image' and the 'time-image' that denotes a different kind of historical possibility for the cinematic imagination. The assimilation of Antonioni within a deconstructivist cinematic canon is difficult to reconcile, however, with the self-conscious attachment of cinematic 'high modernism' to well established cultural tenets within Western humanism. Though couched in the visual language of ambiguity, the cinema of Antonioni remains firmly grounded in a dichotomous arrangement of cultural coordinates ranging from gender to technology. The essentialized topography of sexual difference in *Red Desert* is, for example, a corollary of Antonioni's phenomenological search for the 'essence' of aesthetic experience as a metaphysical dimension to nature. And, from a contemporary neo-Marxian perspective, the films of Antonioni play a transitional role within an emerging 'geopolitical aesthetic', to use Frederic Jameson's (1992) term, wherein cinema takes on an increasingly polyvalent and allegorical form. Jameson's (1992, 1) concern with the 'residues of the modern' places European cinema within a global arena of cultural and political transformation in which different conceptions of cinematic modernity vie for historical significance in the face of a threatened cultural erasure. Yet, in adopting the terminology of Jameson and contemporary neo-Marxian film criticism, we should be careful not to substitute the structuralist analysis of the past with a new constellation of deterministic elements. It is the complexity of *Red Desert* that lends the film such rich possibilities for exploring the changing meaning and significance of film in modernist culture.

Conclusions

The representation of industrial landscapes in *Red Desert* provides an insight into the complexities of cultural modernism in Italy during the social and economic transformations of the 1950s and early 1960s. The film reflects a shift in Antonioni's work from his earlier association with Italian neo-realism towards an exploration of the existential dilemmas that lie at the heart of the post-war Fordist model of Italian prosperity. What Antonioni (1964b, 254) refers to as the 'malaise of progress' is most strikingly explored through the fragile mental state of the film's main protagonist as she encounters

different facets to this strange new landscape. The disorientating and unfamiliar locales used in *Red Desert* serve as a powerful motif to raise questions about the effects of modernity that range from the aesthetic characteristics of industrial landscapes to sensations of spatial displacement. These disordered spaces provoke deep ambivalence in their inhabitants as they traverse the remnants of familiar landscapes strewn with the debris of modernity. 'The present is always wanting,' writes Zygmunt Bauman, 'which makes it ugly, abhorrent and unendurable. The present is *obsolete* ... The moment it lands in the present, the coveted future is poisoned by the toxic effluvia of the wasted past' (1991, 11). In many of the critical responses to the cinema of Antonioni, however, these themes are all too often explored, not in relation to the distinctive characteristics of twentieth-century modernity, but rather as ciphers for existential commentaries on fractured human experience. Much of the existing literature on Antonioni has tended to interpret his films in terms of a set of putative universal aspects to human experience. We have seen how transcendent perspectives tend towards transhistorical or even neo-romantic conceptions of place and space that obscure the historical and geographical specificity of cinematic landscapes. Antonioni's desire 'to capture a certain truth of the landscape' (cited in Brunette 1998, 97) is predicated on a search for primal aesthetic energies inscribed in the landscape that he uses to reflect the psychological states of his cinematic protagonists.

The cinema of Antonioni reveals much about the contradictory dimensions to what we might term 'high modernism' and its various manifestations in the visual arts during the 1960s. Antonioni's conception of the relationship between the visual arts and wider social and political developments remains trapped in a narrowly Greenbergian interpretation of the development of cultural modernism. In the final analysis, however, Antonioni's search for 'pure cinema' is predicated on a conception of creative autonomy and teleological progression within the visual arts which has now been superseded by more sophisticated bodies of critical analysis. The blurring of perceptual boundaries in *Red Desert* leads us towards the cinematic sublime as a powerful conceptual link between the neo-romantic apprehension of nature and the aesthetic experience of modern cinema. By developing the concept of the sublime in relation to modern landscapes, we can begin to locate cinematic representations of spatio-temporal transcendence within an identifiable genealogy of landscape aesthetics. The experience of the sublime in the cinema of Antonioni takes us beyond the eighteenth-century distinctions between 'beauty' and the 'sublime'. These oppositional categories are no longer adequate to account for the complexity and irrationality of modern space, since the experience of the sublime itself has become fractured into new kinds of spatial disorder (see Nesbitt 1995). The shifting focus from 'natural' or even quasi-natural landscapes to modern landscapes requires a more complex set of analytical tools than the classical trope of aesthetic theory can provide. The discourse is no longer between beauty and the sublime, or even between nature and culture, but between categories of the sublime and different kinds of conceptual configuration. The modern landscape transcends binary conceptualizations of either landscape change or those categories of thought employed to mould complex phenomena into pre-existing analytical forms. In *Red Desert*, modern landscapes become a source of profound mental anguish as if every feature has become transmuted into a threatening presence within Giuliana's fragile psyche. If the landscapes of modern Ravenna and its environs have been anthropomorphized, it is a mechanized embodiment of living machines that forms the dominant visual motif rather than fleeting representations of human form.

The move away from narrative convention in *Red Desert* can be interpreted as a cinematic corollary of the shift towards non-figurative art. It places Antonioni within a cinematic tradition influenced principally by painting in contrast with a more literary cinematic avant-garde.[27] It could be argued that *Red Desert* displays some of the characteristics of avant-garde cinema as set out in Germain Dulac's classic definition with her emphasis on films, 'whose techniques, employed renewed expressiveness of image and sound, break with established tradition to search out, in the strictly visual and auditory realm, new emotional chords', and on filmmakers who, 'detached from motives of profit, march boldly on towards the conquest of the new modes of expression ... to expand cinematic thought' (cited in Hoberman 1984, 59). Yet in many respects *Red Desert* was a mainstream film in its day: it achieved significant commercial success; it was widely distributed; and it paved the way for Antonioni's three-picture deal with Metro Goldwyn Mayer studios. In commercial terms, therefore, we

cannot claim that *Red Desert* is an example of an avant-garde film, but it is undeniable that the film breaks new ground in terms of the aesthetic scope and complexity of modern cinema. For John Hoberman it was only in 'the twilight of modernism', during the late 1960s and early 1970s, that 'an authentically modernist avant-garde came into existence' (1984, 64) through the work of filmmakers such as Stan Brakhage and Michael Snow. In contrast, Antonioni's *Red Desert* leads in a different direction and prefigures a process of institutionalization and coalescence between cinema and the visual arts that would develop into the 'commercial avant-garde' of the 1970s represented by, for example, the New German Cinema and militant Third World cinema.

Over the last 25 years, the European art film has found itself increasingly marginalized in theoretical, political and commercial terms: the *auterist* vision is at odds with much contemporary cultural discourse; many well-established directors have faced difficulties in distributing their work; and the idea of the film director (or artist) as social or political commentator now carries far less credence. This period has seen the decline and decay of European film culture both as a mode of cultural production and as a significant dimension to public life, as countless former art-house cinemas have disappeared or lie in ruins (see Barber 2002). Even the corporate studio system and its vast multiplex distribution networks are struggling to maintain a grip on the consumption of visual culture as new forms of film production and distribution colonize the cultural interstices of the contemporary city. Yet the idea of critical or artistic autonomy remains of vital significance for the visual arts: the fact that Antonioni resisted studio diktat or audience gratification in the development of his work is an important element in its enduring appeal. In 1958, for example, he stated that 'one does not work for the public' (cited in Leprohon 1963, 11) and his work with MGM studios ended in acrimony after the political storm of *Zabriskie Point* (1969) and the commercial disappointment of *The Passenger* (1975). A range of cultural commentators from Pierre Bourdieu to Susan Sontag have sought to promote the idea of an autonomous creative sphere which is not open to political or economic manipulation. The expense and complexity of film production has made it especially vulnerable to these pressures, yet *Red Desert* remains a testament to the creative possibilities of modern cinema. Antonioni's fascina-

tion with the 'deliquescence' of the industrial landscape derives from his exploration of the shifting boundary between cultural and economic production as devalorized fragments of the landscape acquire new meaning as a focus of reverie and contemplation. That Antonioni aspires towards a form of universalist or even metaphysical abstraction in his cinematic landscapes tells us much about the trajectory and limitations of modernist aesthetics and the centrality of cinema to any sustained engagement with the cultural legacy of twentieth-century modernism.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 In Clark's (1999) survey of modernism he places examples of Italian neo-realist cinema at the leading edge of modernist culture just before its implosion and decline in the 1960s.
2 Berger's close engagement with Antonioni's representation of landscape underlies the degree to which his work has been taken seriously by a variety of scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. Roland Barthes, Gilles Deleuze and Frederic Jameson, for example, have all at various times drawn on the cinema of Antonioni in order to develop their theoretical reflections on the development of visual culture.
3 Cited in Steimatsky (1995, 32). Kracauer's observation was made in relation to the films of Roberto Rosselini.
4 Key sources on landscape as a historically specific interplay between social and aesthetic perspectives include Barrell (1980 1993), Cosgrove (1998), Daniels (1989), Schama (1995) and Williams (1973). See also the edited collections by Mitchell (1994) and Wrede and Adams (1991).
5 Recent examples of the study of the cinematic landscape include Barber (2002), Bruno (2002), Clarke (1997), Shiel and Fitzmaurice (2001 2003), Foot (1999),

Gandy (1996a 1996b), Natter (1994) and Rohdie (2001). For the most part, however, these studies have emerged outside of the disciplinary context of film studies and have drawn heavily on other areas of scholarship such as architecture, geography and history.

6 See Bruno (1993, 4). In Bruno's study of Naples in the silent films of Elvira Notari, she interweaves the historical and political context for Italian cinema with a sensitivity towards the corporeality of visual culture and new methodological developments across a range of disciplines.

7 See, for example, Ferretti (1989), Frisby (1986) and Koch (2000).

8 For an overview of Italian neo-realism see, for example, Bazin (1971), Bondanella (1994), Marcus (1986) and Overbey (1979). An alternative genealogy of early neo-realist cinema is provided by Bruno (1993). For further details on the life and work of Antonioni see, for example, Barthes (1988), Bernardini (1967), Brunette (1998), Cowie (1963), del Rio (1996), Fonseca (1985), Goddard (1964), Goldman (1971), Jacobowitz and Lippe (1997), Micheli (1991), Perry and Preito (1986), Reynolds (1996), Rifkin (1982) and Rohdie (1990). Where appropriate I have referred to films in this essay by the names that are best known to English-speaking audiences: unlike *L'eclisse*, for example, *Red Desert* is usually referred to by its translated title in most Anglo-American publications.

9 On literary influences in the cinema of Antonioni see, for example, Aristarco (1961) and Basting (1995).

10 These historical and regional antecedents can be related to an early emphasis on the use of location shooting in Italian filmmaking. See, for example, Bruno (1993), Marcus (1986) and Steimatsky (1995). The role of the human figure in the cinematic landscape is the focal point for Noa Steimatsky's (1995, 276) study of landscape in Italian film. She concludes her analysis by suggesting that the frequent 'emptying out' of Antonioni's landscapes mark an important distinction from the 'figuration of the landscape' in the films of his contemporaries such as Rossellini, Visconti and Pasolini. For greater detail on the political and economic dimensions to modern Italy see, for example, Atkinson and Cosgrove (1998), Forgacs (1986 1990).

11 For an interesting overview of different critical responses to Antonioni's films in the 1960s and 1970s, see Brunette (1998).

12 Antonioni cited in Tinazzi (1974, 9). See also Antonioni (1964a).

13 Author's translation. The original Italian reads: 'Il mito della fabbrica condiziona la vita di tutti, qui, la spoglia d'imprevisti, la scarnifica, il prodotto sintetico domina, prima o poi finirà per rendere gli alberi oggetti antiquati, come I cavalli.'

14 Antonioni's critique of consumer capitalism reaches its apotheosis in the finale to *Zabriskie Point* (1969).

For greater detail on Marx's theory of alienation see, for example, Axelos (1976), Mészáros (1970) and Ollman (1976).

15 For more detail on the concept of the sublime and its applicability to the arts see, for example, Böhme (1989), Crowther (1989 1992), Deleuze (1984), Freyssinet (2001), Gandy (1996a), Lyotard (1982 1984 1989 1991 1994), Monk (1935), Patterson (1999), Pries (1989), Pillow (2000), Riese (1998), Schaper (1992) and Vidler (1987). On Kantian conceptions of space see also Garnett (1965) and Parsons (1992).

16 Bukatman echoes the insights of David Nye on the emergence of the 'American technological sublime' as a distinctively republican aesthetic based on a celebration of vast engineering projects such as bridges, dams and aqueducts (Nye 1994). See also Weiskel (1976), MacDonald (2001), Marx (1964 1991) and Wilton and Barringer (2002).

17 For greater detail on Schopenhauer's 'romantic pessimism' see Foster (1999), Magee (1983), Janaway (1999), Simmel (1986), Soll (1998) and Tanner (1992). A range of authors have drawn attention to the philosophical dimensions to Antonioni's cinema. Gilles Deleuze (1989, 95), for example, suggests that Antonioni is the only director 'to have taken up the Nietzschean project of a real critique of morality', whereas Frederic Jameson (1992, 20) draws attention to Antonioni's 'Heideggerian and metaphysical dimension'. See also Elder (1991), Maunier (1995) and Schliesser (1998). We should note, however, that Schopenhauer adds comparatively little to Kant's original reflections on the meaning of the sublime, but is more significant with respect to the role of art in eliciting access to metaphysical sources of meaning. For a critique of the ideological implications of romanticism in art see, for example, Eagleton (1990) and Gandy (1997).

18 On the gendered dimensions to the sublime see, for example, Yaeger (1992).

19 On the aesthetic aspects of modern infrastructure and industrial structures see, for example, Kaïka and Swyngedouw (2000), Seidel (1993), Vidler (1994), Wigley (1993), Williams (1990) and Wollen (1997).

20 Dalle Vache (1996, 47) suggests that Antonioni uses the character of Giuliana in *Red Desert* as a form of 'visual ventriloquism' in order to communicate the 'director's female alter-ego'. In so doing, however, Dalle Vache presents a narrowly dualistic reading of the film based on a gendered differentiation between (male) rationality and (female) creativity that merely replicates Antonioni's own iconography of sexual difference. In fact, she merely reiterates Pier Paolo Pasolini's interpretation of *Red Desert* in his 1965 essay on 'the cinema of poetry', where he argues that the director 'looks at the world by immersing himself in his neurotic protagonist, reanimating the facts through her eyes . . . *because he has substituted in toto*

for the world view of a neurotic his own delirious view of *aesthetics*' (Pasolini 1965, emphasis in original). If we accept Dalle Vache's contention that *Red Desert* is a 'historical melodrama about the female condition' (p. 61) we effectively ignore feminist insights in film criticism that have developed since the 1960s.

21 On the philosophy of colour see, for example, Hardin (1988), Hume (1965 [1757]), Merleau-Ponty (1962), Raffman (1988) and Sibley (1967).

22 Antonioni even tried to paint a whole stretch of pine forest white but had to abandon the shoot the following day because the bright sunlight left the woods in silhouette thereby destroying the grey *mise en scène* that he was trying to create (see Antonioni 1964c). Further debate over the significance of landscape in Antonioni's cinema can be found in, for example, Benayoun (1965), Bou (1995), Forgacs (2000), Scemama-Heard (1998) and Tomasulo (1993).

23 On the significance of Clement Greenberg's writings see, for example, Bürger (1984), Clark (1982 1999), Foster (1996), Frascina and Harris (1992), Guilbaut (1990), Harris (1993), Krauss (1985 1993) and Wallis (1984).

24 Other likely influences on *Red Desert* include neo-expressionist depictions of the new industrial landscapes of modern Italy by, for example, Fernando Farulli and Arturo Tosi (see Bartoloni and Mennucci 2001).

25 On the 'physiognomy of landscape' in cinema see, for example, Balázs (1972), Koch (1987) and Steimatsky (1995). On the phenomenology of space see, for example, Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Kaelin (1966).

26 Key theoretical advances in film criticism that emerged during this period include, for example, Heath (1981), Metz (1974 1982), Mulvey (1975) and Wollen (1972).

27 On the two cinematic avant-gardes see Wollen (1975).

References

Antonioni M 1994 [1964a] Il mio deserto in *L'Europeo* (16 August 1964) reprinted in **di Carlo C and Tinazzi G** eds *Fare un film è per me vivere: scritti sul cinema* Marsilio, Venice 78–9

Antonioni M 1994 [1964b] Il deserto rosso. Interview with François Maurin in *Humanité dimanche* (23 September 1964) reprinted in **di Carlo C and Tinazzi G** eds *Fare un film è per me vivere: scritti sul cinema* Marsilio, Venice 251–4

Antonioni M 1978 [1964c] Il bosco bianco in **di Carlo C** ed *Il deserto rosso* 2nd edn Cappelli, Bologna 80–4

Aristarco G 1961 Literary cinema *Cinema Nuovo* (January–February 1961) reprinted and translated in **Leprohon P** 1963 [1961] *Michelangelo Antonioni: an introduction* trans Scott Sullivan Simon and Schuster, New York 160–2

Arrowsmith W 1995 *Antonioni: poet of images* Oxford University Press, New York

Atkinson D and Cosgrove D 1998 Urban rhetoric and embodied identities: city, nation, and empire at the Vittorio Emanuele II Monument in Rome, 1870–1945 *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88 28–49

Axelos K 1976 *Alienation, praxis and techne in the thought of Karl Marx* University of Texas Press, Austin

Balázs B 1972 [1952] *Theory of film* trans E Bone Arno Press, New York

Barber S 2002 *Projected cities: cinema and urban space* Reaktion, London

Barrell J 1980 *The dark side of the landscape: the rural poor in English painting 1730–1840* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Barrell J 1993 The public prospect and the private view: the politics of taste in eighteenth-century Britain in **Kemal S and Gaskell I** eds *Landscape, natural beauty and the arts* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 81–103

Barthes R 1988 *Cher Antonioni: 1988–1989* Ente Autonomo Gestione Cinema, Rome

Bartoloni V and Mennucci A 2001 *L'immagine e la parola': Piero Santi e l'arte a Firenze dal 1950 al 1975* Musei Civici di San Gimignano Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea 'Raffaele de Grada', San Gimignano

Basting B 1995 Im Labyrinth der Leidenschaften in *du: Die Zeitschrift der Kultur* 11 26–7

Bauman Z 1991 *Modernity and ambivalence* Polity, Cambridge

Bazin A 1967 [c. mid-1950s] Cinema and painting in *What is cinema? Volume I* trans Hugh Gray University of California Press, Berkeley CA 164–9

Bazin A 1971 [1948] An aesthetic of reality: neorealism in *What is cinema? Volume 2* University of California Press, Berkeley CA 16–40

Benayoun R 1965 Un cri dans le desert *Positif* 66 43–59

Berger J 1995 Madonna and the fog/Über die Nebel von Ferrara in *du: Die Zeitschrift der Kultur* 11 14–15

Bernardini A 1967 *Michelangelo Antonioni: da Gente del Po a Blow-Up* Edizioni, Rome

Böhme H 1989 Das Steinerne: Anmerkungen zur Theorie des Erhabenen aus dem Blick des 'Menschenfremdeste' in **Pries C** ed *Das Erhabene: Zwischen Grenzerfahrung und Größenwahn* Weinheim

Bondanella P 1994 *Italian cinema: from neorealism to the present* Continuum, New York

Borrelli A 1966 *Neorealismo e marxismo* Edizioni di Cinemasud, Avellino

Bou N 1995 Deserts, deserts urbans in **Balló J** ed *El Segle del Cinema* Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, Barcelona 88–92

Brunette P 1998 *The films of Michelangelo Antonioni* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Bruno G 1993 *Streetwalking on a ruined map: cultural theory and the city films of Elvira Notari* Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ

Bruno G 2002 *Atlas of emotion; journeys in art, architecture and film* Verso, London

Bukatman S 1995 The artificial infinite: on special effects and the sublime in **Cooke L and Wollen P** eds *Visual display: culture beyond appearances* Bay Press, Seattle WA

Bürger P 1984 *Theory of the avante-garde* University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis

Burke E 1958 [1757] *A philosophical inquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and the beautiful* **Boulton J** ed Routledge and Kegan Paul, London

Cameron I and Wood R 1971 *Antonioni* Praeger, New York

Chatman S 1985 *Antonioni, or the surface of the world* University of California Press, Berkeley CA

Clark T J 1982 Clement Greenberg's theory of art *Critical Inquiry* 9 11–20

Clark T J 1999 *Farewell to an idea: episodes from a history of modernism* Yale University Press, New Haven CT

Clark T J 2002 Modernism, postmodernism and steam *October* 100 154–74

Clarke D B ed 1997 *The cinematic city* Routledge, London

Cosgrove D 1998 [1984] *Social formation and symbolic landscape* 2nd edn University of Wisconsin Press, Madison

Cowie P 1963 *Antonioni, Bergman, Resnais* Tantivy, London

Crowther P 1989 *The Kantian sublime: from morality to art* Clarendon Press, Oxford

Crowther P 1992 *Les immatériaux* and the postmodern sublime in **Benjamin A** ed *Judging Lyotard* Routledge, London 192–205

Dalle Vache A 1996 Michelangelo Antonioni's *Red Desert*: painting as ventriloquism and color as movement in *Cinema and painting: how art is used in film* University of Texas Press, Austin TX 43–80

Daniels S 1989 Marxism, culture, and the duplicity of landscape in *Peet R and Thrift N* eds *New models in geography* vol 2 Unwin Hyman, London 196–220

de Lauretis T 1984 *Alice doesn't: feminism, semiotics, cinema* Macmillan, London

del Río E 1996 The technological imaginary in the cinema of Antonioni, Godard and Atom Egoyan Unpublished PhD dissertation University of California, Berkeley CA

Deleuze G 1984 [1963] *Kant's critical philosophy: the doctrine of the faculties* trans H Tomlinson and B Habberjam Athlone, London

Deleuze G 1989 [1985] *Cinema 2: the time-image* trans H Tomlinson and R Galeta Athlone, London

Eagleton T 1990 *The ideology of the aesthetic* Blackwell, Oxford

Elder R B 1991 Antonioni's tragic vision *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 1 1–34

Ferretti S 1989 [1984] *Cassirer, Panofsky, and Warburg: symbol, art, and history* trans D Pierce Yale University Press, New Haven CT

Fieschi J-A 1965 Pas de printemps pour la prisonnière du désert *Cahiers du Cinéma* 163 82–3

Fonseca M S ed 1985 *Michelangelo Antonioni* Cinematica Portuguesa, Lisbon

Foot J 1999 Cinema and the city: Milan and Luchino Visconti's *Rocco and his brothers Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 209–35

Forgacs D 1986 *Rethinking Italian fascism* Lawrence and Wishart, London

Forgacs D 1990 *Italian culture in the industrial era 1880–1980: cultural industries, politics and the public* Manchester University Press, Manchester

Forgacs D 2000 Antonioni: space, place, sexuality in **Konstantarakos M** ed *Spaces in European cinema* Intellect, Exeter and Portland 101–11

Foster C 1999 Ideas and imagination: Schopenhauer on the proper foundation of art in **Janaway C** ed *The Cambridge companion to Schopenhauer* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 213–51

Foster H 1996 *The return of the real: the avant-garde at the end of the century* The MIT Press, Cambridge MA

Frascina A and Harris J eds 1992 *Art in modern culture: an anthology of critical texts* Phaidon, London

Freyssinet E 2001 On the sublime *Arq: architectural research quarterly* 5 249–53

Frisby D 1986 *Fragments of modernity* The MIT Press, Cambridge MA

Gandy M 1996a Visions of darkness: the representation of nature in the films of Werner Herzog *Ecumene* 3 1–21

Gandy M 1996b The heretical landscape of the body: Pier Paolo Pasolini and the scopic regime of European cinema *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14 293–310

Gandy M 1997 Contradictory modernities: conceptions of nature in the art of Joseph Beuys and Gerhard Richter *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87 636–59

Gandy M 2001 Paysage, esthétiques et idéologie *Géographie et Cultures* 39 108–15

Garnett C B 1939 *The Kantian philosophy of space* Columbia University Press, New York

Goddard J-L 1964 La nuit, l'éclipse, l'aurore. Entretien avec Michelangelo Antonioni *Cahiers du Cinéma* 160 8–17

Goldmann A 1971 *Cinéma et société moderne. Le cinéma de 1958 à 1968: Godard – Antonioni – Resnais – Robbe-Grillet* Anthropos, Paris

Guilbaut S 1983 *How New York stole the idea of modern art: abstract expressionism, freedom, and the Cold War* trans A Goldhammer University of Chicago Press, Chicago IL

Guilbaut S ed 1990 *Reconstructing modernism: art in New York, Paris and Montreal 1945–1964* The MIT Press, Cambridge MA

Hardin C L 1988 *Color for philosophers* Hackett, Indianapolis

Harris J 1993 Modernism and culture in the USA, 1930–1960 in **Wood J**, **Frascina F**, **Harris J and Harrison C** eds *Modernism in dispute: art since the forties* Yale University Press, New Haven CT 2–76

Hart H 1965 Red Desert *Films in Review* 16 180–1

Heath S 1981 *Questions of cinema* Macmillan, London

Hoberman J 1984 After avant-garde film in **Wallis B** ed *Art after modernism: rethinking representation* New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York 59–73

Hume D 1965 [1757] *Of the standard of taste and other essays* Lenz J W ed Bobbs-Merrill, New York

Jacobowitz F and Lippe R 1997 Michelangelo Antonioni: the late years *CineAction* 42 70–2

Jameson F 1992 *The geopolitical aesthetic: cinema and space in the world system* Indiana University Press, Bloomington IN

Janaway C 1999 Schopenhauer's pessimism in **Janaway C** ed *The Cambridge companion to Schopenhauer* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 318–43

Kaelin E F 1966 *An existentialist aesthetic* University of Wisconsin Press, Madison NJ

Kaïka M and Swyngedouw E 2000 Fetishising the modern city: the phantasmagoria of urban technological networks *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24 120–38

Kant I 1960 [1764] *Observations on the feeling of the beautiful and the sublime* trans J Goldthwait University of California Press, Berkeley CA

Kant I 2000 [1790] *Critique of the power of judgment* **Guyer P** ed trans P Guyer and E Matthews Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Koch G 1987 Béla Balázs: the physiognomy of things in *New German Critique* 40 167–77

Koch G 2000 *Siegfried Kracauer: an introduction* trans J Gaines Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ

Kracauer S 1960 *Theory of film: the redemption of physical reality* Oxford University Press, New York

Krauss R 1985 *The originality of the avant-garde and other modernist myths* The MIT Press, Cambridge MA

Krauss R 1993 *The optical unconscious* The MIT Press, Cambridge MA

Leprohon P 1963 [1961] *Michelangelo Antonioni: an introduction* trans Scott Sullivan Simon and Schuster, New York

Lyotard J-F 1982 Presenting the unpresentable: the sublime *ArtForum* 20 36–43

Lyotard J-F 1984 The sublime and the avant-garde *ArtForum* 22 64–9

Lyotard J-F 1989 Die Erhabenheit ist das Unkonsumierbare *Kunstforum* 100 365

Lyotard J-F 1991 Complexity and the sublime in **Appignanesi L** ed *Postmodernism: ICA documents* Free Association Books, London 19–26

Lyotard J-F 1994 [1991] *Lessons on the analytic of the sublime* trans E Rottenberg Stanford University Press, Stanford CA

MacDonald S 2001 *The garden in the machine: a field guide to independent films about place* University of California Press, Berkeley CA

Magee B 1983 More arguments for transcendental idealism in **Magee B** *The philosophy of Schopenhauer* Clarendon Press, Oxford 73–104

Manceaux M 1964 In the Red Desert *Sight and Sound* 33 18–19. Article originally published in *L'Express*, Paris

Marcus M 1986 *Italian film in the light of neorealism* Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ

Marx L 1964 *The machine in the garden: technology and the pastoral ideal in America* Oxford University Press, Oxford

Marx L 1991 The American ideology of space in **Wrede S and Adams W H** eds *Denatured visions: landscape and culture in the twentieth century* Museum of Modern Art, New York

Maunier F 1995 La structure mystérieuse de l'architecture antonionienne *CinemAction* 75 161–7

Merleau-Ponty M 1962 [1945] *The phenomenology of perception* trans C Smith Routledge and Kegan Paul, London

Mészáros I 1970 *Marx's theory of alienation* Merlin, London

Metz C 1974 *Film language* trans M Taylor Oxford University Press, Oxford

Metz C 1982 *The imaginary signifier: psychoanalysis and the cinema* Indiana University Press, Bloomington IN

Miccichè L 1975 *Il cinema italiano degli anni '60* Marsilo Editore, Venice

Micheli S 1991 *Il film struttura, lingua, stile. Analisi su alcuni campioni di cinema italiano: Antonioni, Scola, Visconti, Taviani* Bulzoni, Rome

Mitchell W J T ed 1994 *Landscape and power* University of Chicago Press, Chicago IL

Monk S H 1935 *The sublime* University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor MI

Moore K Z 1995 Eclipsing the commonplace: the logic of alienation in Antonioni's cinema *Film Quarterly* 48 22–34

Mulvey L 1975 Visual pleasure and narrative cinema *Screen* 16 6–18

Natter W 1994 The city as cinematic space: modernism and place in Berlin, Symphony of a city in **Aitken S C and Zonn L E** eds *Power, place, situation and spectacle: a geography of film* Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham MD 203–28

Nesbitt K 1995 The sublime in modern architecture: unmasking (an aesthetic of) abstraction *New Literary History* 26 95–110

Nye D 1994 *American technological sublime* The MIT Press, Cambridge MA

Ollman B 1976 [1971] *Alienation: Marx's conception of man in capitalist society* 2nd edn Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Overbey D 1979 ed and trans *Springtime in Italy: a reader on neo-Realism* Archon Books, Hamden CT

Parsons C 1992 The transcendental aesthetic in **Guyer P** ed *The Cambridge companion to Kant* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 62–100

Pasolini P P 1965 The cinema of poetry in *Heretical empiricism* 1988 [1972] trans L Barnett and B Lawton Indiana University Press, Bloomington IN

Patterson R 1999 Trauma, modernity, and the sublime *Journal of Architecture* 4 31–8

Perry T and Preito R 1986 *Michelangelo Antonioni: a guide to references and resources* G.K. Hall, Boston MA

Pillow K 2000 *Sublime understanding: aesthetic reflections on Kant and Hegel* The MIT Press, Cambridge MA

Pries C 1989 *Das Erhabne: zwischen Grenzerfahrung und Größenwahn* Acta humaniora, Weinheim

Raffman D 1988 Toward a cognitive theory of musical ineffability *Review of Metaphysics* 41 685–706

Reynolds G H 1996 Michelangelo Antonioni: iconolatry and iconoclasm Unpublished PhD dissertation University of Minnesota

Riese U 1998 Landschaft: Die Spur des Sublimen in **Schmidt H-W and Riese U** eds *Landschaft: die Spur des Sublimen* Kerber Verlag, Bielefeld

Rifkin N 1982 *Antonioni's visual language* UMI Research Press, Ann Arbor MI

Rohdie S 1990 *Antonioni* British Film Institute, London

Rohdie S 2001 *Promised lands: cinema, geography, modernism* British Film Institute, London

Scemama-Heard C 1998 *Antonioni: le désert figuré* Harmattan, Paris

Schama S 1995 *Landscape and memory* Alfred A Knopf, New York

Schaper E 1992 Taste, sublimity, and genius: the aesthetics of nature and art in **Guyers P** ed *The Cambridge companion to Kant* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 367–93

Schliesser J 1998 Antonioni's Heideggerian swerve *Literature/Film Quarterly* October 278–87

Seidel P 1993 *Unterwelten: Orte im Verborgenen/sites of concealment* Texts by Manfred Stack and Klaus Kemp Ernst Wasmuth Verlag, Tübingen

Shiel M and Fitzmaurice T eds 2001 *Cinema and the city* Blackwell, Oxford

Shiel M and Fitzmaurice T eds 2003 *Screening the city* Verso, London

Sibley F N 1967 Colours *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 68 145–66

Simmel G 1986 [1907] *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche* trans H Loiskandl, D Weinstein and M Weinstein University of Illinois Press, Urbana IL

Soll I 1998 Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and the redemption of life through art in **Janaway C** ed *Willing and nothingness: Schopenhauer as Nietzsche's educator* Clarendon Press, Oxford 79–115

Steimatzky N 1995 The earth figured: an exploration of landscapes in Italian cinema Unpublished PhD thesis Department of Cinema Studies, New York University

Strick P 1963 *Michelangelo Antonioni* Motion Publications, London

Tanner M 1992 Arthur Schopenhauer in **Cooper D** ed *The Blackwell companion to aesthetics* Blackwell, Oxford

Tinazzi G 1974 *Antonioni* La Nuova Italia, Florence

Tomasulo F P 1993 The architectonics of alienation: Antonioni's edifice complex *Wide Angle* 15 3–20

Vidler A 1987 The architecture of the uncanny: the unhomely houses of the romantic sublime *Assemblage* 3 6–29

Vidler A 1994 Psychopathologies of modern space: metropolitan fear from agarophobia to estrangement in

Roth M S ed *Rediscovering history: culture, politics, and the psyche* Stanford University Press, Stanford CA 11–29

Vidler A 2000 *Warped space: art, architecture, and anxiety in modern culture* The MIT Press, Cambridge MA

Wallis B ed 1984 *Art after modernism: rethinking representation* The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York

Weiskel T 1976 *The romantic sublime: studies in the structure and psychology of transcendence* Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore MD

Wigley M 1993 *The architecture of deconstruction: Derrida's haunt* The MIT Press, Cambridge MA

Williams R 1973 *The country and the city* Oxford University Press, Oxford

Williams R H 1990 *Notes on the underground: an essay on technology, society, and the imagination* The MIT Press, Cambridge MA

Wilton A and Barringer T 2002 *American sublime: landscape painting in the United States 1820–1880* Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ

Wollen P 1972 [1969] *Signs and meaning in the cinema* 3rd edn Indiana University Press, Bloomington IN

Wollen P 1975 The two avant-gardes *Studio International* 190 171–5

Wollen P 1997 Vectors of melancholy in **Rugoff R with Wollen P and Vidler A** *Scene of the crime* The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA 23–36

Wollen P 2001 Caro Antonioni *After All* St Martin's School of Art, London

Wrede S and Adams W H eds 1991 *Denatured visions: landscape and culture in the twentieth century* The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Yaeger P 1992 The language of blood: toward a maternal sublime *Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture* 25 27–40

Filmography

Michelangelo Antonioni *Gente del Po* (1943/1947)

Michelangelo Antonioni *The vanquished [I vinti]* (1953)

Michelangelo Antonioni *The cry [Il grido]* (1957)

Michelangelo Antonioni *L'avventura* (1959)

Michelangelo Antonioni *La notte* (1960)

Michelangelo Antonioni *L'eclisse* (1962)

Michelangelo Antonioni *Red Desert [Il deserto rosso]* (1963/1964)

Michelangelo Antonioni *Zabriskie Point* (1969)

Michelangelo Antonioni *The Passenger [Professione: Reporter]* (1975)

Vittorio De Sica *The Bicycle Thief [Ladri di Bicicletti]* (1948)

Stanley Kubric *2001* (1968)

Pier Paolo Pasolini *The gospel according to St Matthew [Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo]* (1964)

Roberto Rossellini *Rome, Open City [Roma, Città Aperta]* (1945)