

Spatiality, Place and Territory

An Outline of Landscape and its Experience

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This paper explores the aesthetic experience of landscape through the conceptual triad of space, territory, and Earth. It argues that territory is the semiotic structuration of space, while landscape remains unassimilated, operating as a site of desubjectification and spatial openness. The study examines how deterritorialization and landscapification disrupt dominant spatial regimes, allowing new forms of spatial relation to emerge. The paper contends that access to landscape is essential for the possibility of otherness and spatial transformation, particularly for marginalized groups, and that the experience of landscape grounds the potential for rethinking spatiality beyond institutional constraints. | *Keywords: Space, Territory, Landscape, Aesthetics, Territorialization*

1. Introduction

In this paper I seek to outline the aesthetic experience of the landscape by contending that territory is the act by which the Earth is symbolized in accordance with predisposed spatial structures. Furthermore, while territory is the configuration of a particular spatial practice, insofar as space is subjected to strong semiotization, landscape is what remains unbothered by such structures and thus outside the forces of territorialization. Hence, just as territory is the soil in which, and by which bodies individualize and subjectify by means of semiotic communication and representation, landscape is the Outside where all societal bodies (and their associated milieus) experience the complete abandonment of their territory and desubjectify, favouring new forms of intermingling and becoming that do not conform to the actual, or institutionalized, societal and political structures. Therefore, I wish to explore the aesthetic and philosophical derivations of thinking space as the relational mode of existence within an environment, per the analysis of the landscape. To be able to experience what is beyond the societal milieu, it is crucial to vouchsafe spatial freedom among those who conform it, since otherwise both the peoples whose spatial values are deemed positive (usually considered constituents of the majority) and the subcutaneous groups, which

otherwise are lacking on spatial values (thus being the minorities) either are homogenised or their places (their associated milieus) reject one another and leave no room for otherness, abetting crowding.

To elaborate this thesis, I will focus on the relationship between spatiality, place, territory, landscape, and Earth. Now, since the topic of space and its experience is itself worthy of a singular study, and since it has indeed been the focus of major works on geography, philosophy and psychology, I will not focus on this discussion. Such an enterprise would take up almost the entirety of the article. I will instead frame my understanding of spatiality (which comprehends a definition of space, its relationship to place and spatial experience) by focusing on the reticular character of space, as well as on concepts or ideas that will help better delineate the aesthetical frame of this investigation. Furthermore, regarding the connection between individual -or subjective- experience of space and the landscape, I will draw from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's work the concepts of 'landscape' and 'deterritorialization'. In that regard, my understanding of territory and Earth is based upon deleuze-guattarian philosophy, which stresses the onto-semiotical relationship between territory and the experience of space and time by underpinning the metaphysical and practical stakes of thinking the Earth as presence of virtual and chaotic forces.

In sum, this paper explores the possibility of experiencing space as 'lived Earth', that is, as the excess of all semiotic comprehensions of space as an assemblage of discrete, knowable places. When territorialised, bodies experience space in conformity with the linguistic (that are in essence political) structures that hold territory together; then the upsurge of new bodies is also the emergence of new spatialities. This means that new spatial enunciations, that is, new incarnated space experiences, must somehow appear from within territory while remaining outside of it. I suggest that this is what the experience of the landscape entails, for landscape is only lived by the evasive act of meandering, of becoming astray and devious. To witness the landscape is to witness the outsideness of the territory; hence it is also to fathom new spatialities and possible ways to structure the Earth.

2. Space, spatiality and togetherness

During his courses on perception at Sorbonne philosopher Gilbert Simondon tackled the subject of space, its definition and experience. There, Simondon (2006, p. 285) suggests that space is the primary dimension of the "milieu" and that it should not be considered as an object in itself, nor as the physical continent of things, but rather as a mode of existence. This interesting approach serves well to understand how can space perception relate to becoming and remain cohesive with Simondon's theory of individuation.¹ In essence, Simondon commits to an ontology of the pre-individual being and its process of individuation, where Being is a reticular substance that constantly becomes, or individuates. Now, for Simondon, individuation

¹ Other instances of this approach to Space, its experience and definition, can be found in Naess (1989), Relph (1976, pp. 8–9), Buttner (1980, pp. 21–55) and Bonnemaison (2005, p. 83).

is always, at minimum, twofold, for the individual undergoes a reciprocal process of both psychic and collective individuation, which are poles of a single constitutive relation between the individual and its associated milieu. Psychic individuation is of an internal character, whereas collective individuation is external. For this reason, by externalising and moving towards the other (which can be a human or not) individuals generate a disparity within the environment that manifests spatially.

One example of this is perception, for to perceive is nothing other than to resolve a problematic, or difference that has invaded the milieu inhabited by the percipient. This unknown element represents an individuating problem: if it is a threat, for instance, the subject must respond in flight, attack, or any form of retaliation, thus individuating. The individual then individuates insofar as it perceives, because perception is itself an action that requires a subject already individuated, capable of acting upon objects, that is also part of a system that includes its individual reality and the objects it perceives or constructs. Consequently, space is primarily the physical manifestation of the reticulated existence, or interrelated persistence of things within a specific medium per the association of their respective milieus. Accordingly, space is experienced intensively, since the exterior is perceived as distance, given that the richness of received information and the amplitude of contrasts in quality and intensity gradually increase in terms of proximity. Therefore, contrast is “the most fundamental aspect of external perception and provides the basis for the perception of proximity [...], since, for the living being, for the organism in the milieu, what is positive is proximity, which corresponds to alarm, an involvement of responses” (Simondon, 2006, p. 288).² Distance is then primarily a gradient of proximity in respect to the perceiving organism. Indeed, it is per the perception of distance that an organism lives and interacts with a portion of space, which is its associated milieu. Apart from this, distance is also what intervenes in the perception of the relative and different planes that compose the expanse, for the subject rests situated in relation to the different spatial planes where external objects and entities carry their activities.

Hence, per the analysis of Simondon, space is an intensive magnitude. However, this is only insofar as space is defined as a distance, a definition that in turn rests upon the sensorial and perceptive fact that, to humans, space is perceived as proximity. Indeed, human space is defined by two ways of understanding distance, or rather by two modes of spatial existence. On the one hand, space is the perceived proximity of a certain source of stimulation. On the other hand, space is the distance that can be travelled per the motor activity of a given organism within and beyond its associated milieu. Both perceptions derive from the fact that, to the percipient, their own body is the degree 0° of all spatial intercourse. Anchored by its incarnated constitution, all human perceptions presuppose that things are either close or far away. Thus, human space is the reticular existence of things in terms

² I want to thank Taylor Adkins for providing the translation of Simondon’s *Course on Perception*, forthcoming 2026, University of Minnesota Press.

of distance, this includes actions that assert proximity, or any reactions to the upsurge of spatial intervals within a given environment. Either because we perceive that things are closer, farther, approximating, leaving and meandering along the expanse, or because things themselves showcase different attitudes, predispositions or motivations that are inherently spatial, all things (be them living or not) exist ‘in space’. Thus, Simondon offers a rich ontogenetic account of space as the intensive and reticulated existence of things within the milieu. A definition that remains hesitant regarding more formalized models of spatiality. One such model, which Simondon is cautious about in *Individuation in light of notions of form and imagination* (2020), is Kurt Lewin’s psychological theory of space as a field of forces (*Feldtheorie*), where the environment is structured not merely by geometric extension, but by vectors of tension, directionality, and motivational charge that organize behavior within a given life space (*Lebensraum*):

However, what seems to be lacking in the topological and hodological theory is a representation of the being as capable of operating successive individuations within it; for the topology of force fields to be modified, a principle must be discovered, and the old configurations must be incorporated into this system; the discovery of significations is necessary for the given to be modified. Space isn’t just a force field, and it isn’t merely hodological. For the integration of elements into a new system to be possible, there must be a condition of disparation in the mutual relation of these elements; if elements are as heterogeneous as Kurt Lewin supposes, if they were opposites like a barrier that repulses and a goal that attracts, the disparation would be too great for a mutual signification to be discovered. [...] Action isn’t just a topological modification of the milieu; it modifies the very weft of objects and subject much more finely and delicately; what is modified is not the abstract topological distribution of the object and the forces: in both a global but more intimate and less radical way, the incompatibilities of disparation are overcome and integrated due to the discovery of a new dimension; the world before actions isn’t just a world where there is a barrier between the subject and the goal; it is above all a world that does not coincide with itself, because it cannot be seen from a single point of view. (Simondon, 2020, p. 232)

Nonetheless, Lewin’s insistence that space is defined dynamically as a field structured by the tensions and vectors shaping the subject’s possibilities for action, resonates with Simondon’s emphasis on proximity, contrast, and the organism’s capacity for movement within a milieu and how spatial perception is a form of individuation. In this case, the field should be understood as an intensive map of tensions, affective gradients, and potentialities internal to the individuation process itself. To consolidate this reading and ground an analysis on the experience of landscape, Otto Bollnow’s interpretation and expansion of Lewin’s theory is crucial, as well as Yi-Fu Tuan’s work regarding spatial values, experiences and place, because they drive the discussion onto the terrain of aesthetics of territory, or cultural space.

Hodological space refers to how movement and accessibility within space depends not just on physical distance but also on perceived effort, obstacles, and motivational forces. This distinction brings forward a broader sense of what space is and how spatiality should be defined, because it stresses how

the experienced and structured space through which an individual moves is shaped by psychological and environmental factors.³ On that vein, Otto F. Bollnow proposed to discern between experienced space and mathematical space, arguing that space should be understood in two different ways, just as it happens with time. Just as there is a mathematical time, susceptible to quantification and abstract calculation (for instance, to be extensively measured by clocks) and a time as experienced by the living human being, which is intensive in nature, there is an extensive, and thus quantifiable abstract space, and a lived human space:

If, in everyday life, we speak without further consideration of space, we are usually thinking of mathematical space - space that can be measured in three dimensions, in metres and centimetres - as we have come to know it at school and which provides the basic system of reference when measuring spatial relationships in everyday life: for example, if we are thinking about how to furnish a new apartment with our old, perhaps generously sized furniture. Rarely, on the other hand, do we become aware that this is only a certain aspect of space, and that concrete space, directly experienced in life, by no means coincides with this abstract mathematical space. We live so naturally in this environment that its singularity does not surprise us, and we give it no further thought. (Bollnow, 2011, p. 18)

In short, mathematical space is completely smooth, disjointed, and quantifiable in nature; it has no singular values, and it is a purely quantifiable space. Mathematical space is experienced as the empty form of spatiality, where all things can be measured according to formal dimensionalities. In mathematical space things relate to one another strictly per geometrical relationships, which can in turn be designated freely, as long as an overall structure is maintained. Therefore, all meaningful reticulation of this space surges from a trivial codification. No point is distinguished above one another: point A from B have no distinctive qualities other than structural ones, for both their coordinates (the point they represent within a given structure) and valence can be stripped and changed according to conventions with no natural origin. Likewise, no direction is distinguished above one another. Space is then unstructured and regular throughout and thus susceptible to all means of codification, axiomatization and structuration.

Lived space, on the other hand, has a distinct centre, linked to human experience of topology, it has ways, paths, restrictions based upon semiotic values and incorporated practices. Human spatial experience cannot exist as if entirely stripped from social norms and institutions. All human motions, particularly those of travelling, presuppose affective and geographical axis that allow paths to exist. I leave my house expecting to follow a returnable trail. Nevertheless, since driven by intensity and not mere abstract thinking, lived space manifests a certain plasticity, since paths can be created, shortcut, or altered by external forces in such ways that they cannot be backtracked. Yet all these spatial altercations are somewhat not trivial, insofar they respond

³ It is worth mentioning Eugène Minkowski's seminal text *Verse une cosmologie* (1967), which in turn expands on his earlier text *Le Temps vécu* (2013), where he established a distinction between experienced time and abstract time, by establishing the difference between space as what is experienced psychologically, and space as a smooth extension that can be abstractly numbered and quantified.

either to external forceful encounters that reshape space and my experience of it, or sedimented motivations and incarnated attitudes that are societally institutionalised (for example, jaywalking is baleful for certain societies and thus condemned).⁴ Thus, lived space is anchored by something else than abstract spatiality. We cannot experience space as entirely smooth and ‘mathematically susceptible’; instead, our experience of space is highly topological, plastic and haptic. While it is by convention that lived space acquires its structure and formal axis, these are much harder to erase and reinvent. Lived space is held together by human institutions, practices and collective experience (a form of spatial coexistence) that shape the environment and help the persistence of homogeneity. In short, experienced space manifests pronounced instabilities, as there is no area of neutral values, since it is inherently related to human being by vital relationships. Thus, all lived space presupposes a territory, which is the fixed set of coordinates that stems from an intense point zero, constructed by the shared space of a society. In a way, lived space is a consequence of how and why the expanse is structured, because it follows the already codified path that allows humans to live and interact with the territory. To better understand this, two concepts are key: hodological space and ergological space.

Our experience of space is not neutral, but rather ‘valenced’, it is shaped by the different paths or objects which hold positive or negative psychological value depending on a person’s goals. Hodological space bridges the gap between ‘extensive space’ (measurable and geometric) and ‘intensive’ or ‘lived space’ (shaped by perception and experience); human movement is not dictated by pure distance but by the psychological and social structure of the environment. In effect, Bollnow argues that hodological space is primarily a way to comprehend distance:

Every map-user, such as the wanderer in the mountains, soon experiences the limits of such a geometric representation of space; for the distances experienced in real life when one traverses space do not coincide with the distance as the crow flies, or with carefully measured road distances, or, more generally, they do not coincide at all with the distance between two points expressed in metres, but in addition to this they depend very strongly on the accessibility of the destination in question, on the greater or lesser difficulties to be overcome if one wishes to reach it, and on the energy to be expended in doing so. (Bollnow, 2011, p. 181)

Experienced space is fluid, it is a way of decoding the mapping of extensive space according to intent and livelihood, for the interval between bodies is not codified according to fixed places and archetypical harmonic equations but rather paths taken by the wanderer that are easily tracked, communicable and representative of social (territorial) values. This is because hodological direction does not necessarily coincide with the direction determined by the geometrical connecting line that is imposed on me; it is rather linked to the direction that I must take with my first step according to what I esteem more efficient. I can detour from a faster but more intricate path so that

⁴ On the topic of society and culture’s role of praxis and experience institutionalisation see Searle (1995).

my travel is easier and more tranquil. There is a conflicting appreciation of distance and intervals of space: one that is imposed onto me, and one which I use to transform the mapped-out milieu that is readily available. Essentially, mathematical space looks to resolve this tension by applying a principle of economy that structures all extremes and smoothens them: movements and actions based on the experiencing of space present anomalies that strife from any centre, something that makes them irrepresentable and incommunicable.

Therefore, it is per society's ability to institutionalise spatial practices and construe territory, which is an oriented and shaped land (thus, a landscape), that I am expected to, for example, only travel in forward motion: I cannot wander off the highway as I wish and expect to reach my destination just as quickly.⁵ In essence, territory is the space where every path is towards something allocated and deemed important by a society. Along the way I may find establishments or allotments that are interesting only in this respect, only because they are part of this path. In essence, hodological path is the way territory is 'understood' and experienced. Territory, in this sense, is the semiotic structure that relates portions of space with one another, making the expanse 'understandable' and 'communicable'. Therefore, any-space occupied by a human implies a virtual extension or length where they can act. This is addressed by Bollnow as simply 'space of action' [*Tätigkeitsraum*], or ergological/active space:

Thus we define the space of action as the totality of places which include the objects of use around the working individual. Here no object stands alone, but the individual places are ordered into a significant whole, in which each individual object is related to other things with which it belongs. [...] Each individual thing is in a spatial proximity to other things, with which it is linked by a meaningful connection. [...] Thus space is structured as a totality of places and areas that belong together. (Bollnow, 2011, p. 195)

Hence, the concrete space of human life is organized by purposeful activity so that everything has an assigned place. This is the territory that is experienced and lived: an already present supra-individual order into which we are born, the place of human operation where all actions are spatially cohesive and comprehensive. Territory is human coexistence, which Bollnow defines succinctly per an example:

When one unscrupulously extends his space, it is at the expense of the other. The one can gain space only by taking away from the other. In the context of general struggle for existence a struggle for living space takes place, in which one can win only at the expense of the other. (Bollnow, 2011, p. 240)

Consequently, because free space is needed by any human, a spatiality of 'loving togetherness' is formed. In broad terms, we inhabit territory by marrying language and land, by crafting a unity of the world through meaningful intervals or spacings. Culture dwells its territory, for the structuring of all land is based upon having a home, of claiming 'this

⁵ The theme of geographical and cultural space as the basis of movement orientation and spatial experience has been extensively studied, both in unison with human incarnated condition, as well as society's semiotic being. See Sennett (1994), Hall (1990), Eco (1980, p. 219) and Bachelard (2014).

is my space'. Brief, territory is when a group of individuals 'has' space. Free space, or 'room' is the condition for all human space experience. A spatialized being is that which requires a sphere of potential places to live and individualise. Because we live ingrained in a society, and because society has its own spatiality as well (which does not necessarily correspond to the individual's) our experience of space is not just the perception of the spatial relationships between things within our associated milieu, but rather the gridded togetherness that the amalgam of various milieus conforms. The spatiality of a human being presupposes the existence of culture and territory. We cannot live space as vast and incoherent expanse where nothing is designated, and all orientations are random: we want to be places, we want to have places, indeed, we are born into a certain parcel of soil that forever remains ours (our neighbourhood, our motherland, our home). Therefore, the 'room' I experience to have is conditioned by the social value of my associated milieu, since what is spatially attributable derivates from how territory is conformed. Then, space is always experienced either as completely susceptible to semiotic structures, or as a piece of Earth already semiotized, a place of inherited coexistence:

Space means here, quite directly, space to live and space to dwell: that space which is already expressed as a linguistic concept as being carved out like a hollow space for dwelling, out of surroundings no longer perceived as space. [...] This is the place where in the most original sense space is created. (Bollnow, 2011, p. 249)

Indeed, wherever human being is present, they impose a schema of space. Such is the structural presentability of the human individual. In effect, when there is no place, human beings sense that they are lost. Everything in space has for the human being somatic values or is at least susceptible to them: "Rooms at one end of the scale and cities at the end of the other often show front and back sides. In large and stratified societies spatial hierarchies can be vividly articulated by architectural means such as plan, design, and type of decoration" (Tuan, 2011, p. 41). To sum up, through encounters and experiences, human individuals differentiate and structure perceptual space into places, or centres of special personal significance and meaning. Indeed, what the human being perceives is distances, intervals between diverse individuals and associated milieus that interact with their environment: these distances are in turn translated to degrees of accessibility, concern and proximity: "Human beings are interested in other people and in objects of importance to their livelihood. They want to know whether the significant others are far or near with respect themselves and to each other." (Tuan, 2011, p. 46). Thus, the individual both recognises that there is a certain milieu associated to their livelihood as well as to foreign spatial spheres that perform their own spatial activities, that often denote themselves as associated milieus, with their perceptual spaces and places. This constitutes the environment, the expanse, the shape of the Earth, or simply the vast abstract spatial relations that living beings and their milieus instantiate with their presence. Thus, human beings not only experience space as interrelated places, but alter the expanse accordingly. We designate space by contraption of new

relationships that enable our activities to take place. Nevertheless, all differentiations are not done merely on the abstract space, which is but a form of existence and relationship of life. Space is manifest through the material universe.

3. Territory and its forces

Territory is the place where things become fixed, thus constituting the structural basis for every implementation of representations. In other words, within the territory, everything is meaningful and signifying, susceptible to semiotic double articulation through which the various elements of the world can be informed and communicated with ease, insofar as they are representable. This allows the world to be physically transversed, because per signs we represent the Earth as an amalgam of infinite places where we can project different and coexisting bodily instances. We can trace paths because we exercise over the physical world a semiotic articulation that enables mathematical space to co-exist, at least intentionally, with lived space. Places then populate the expanse by designating the Earth, or the land. This allows us to foresee where our bodies might be, because the chaotic world of unexpected physical encounters is acquired and retained per spatial representations, thus the experience of what is beyond our associated milieu is somewhat predictable. Nevertheless, this can only be done if the land has been somehow already articulated, that is, territorialized, for I necessitate previous sedimented spatial experiences to avoid having to trailblaze and expose my body into the wild, chaotic forces that otherwise remain unbeknownst. If I need to go across the city I live in, I dispose of innumerable resources to know exactly how I can do such a thing and preconceive the spatial relationships my body will need to overcome. This is what territory does: it sediments and institutionalizes collective spatiality.

In *A Thousand Plateaus* (2002), Deleuze and Guattari define territory as the act that affects the various distances between the bodies that populate a given spatial extension. The way in which territory affects these distances is by gridding and structuring them, so that individuated and temporally sustained entities can exist. Territory allows me to establish coordinates and axes through which bodies and events can be identified: 'Where is my backpack?', 'Excuse me, do you know how to get to Boulevard Cnel. Vicente Dupuy?', and 'The shoebill (*Balaeniceps rex*) primarily inhabits tropical African wetlands, particularly in countries such as Uganda, Sudan, and Zambia' are all phrases that refer to a territory, because they presuppose a structure that allows things to consistently sustain their identity and be thereby identifiable, representable, and, consequently, communicable as individuals with their associated milieus. In a territory, individuals and the spatial relationships they sustain with others are referenceable and semiotically representable. Territory is thus a point in the world susceptible to reference. As part of a territory, then, individuals become structural components of a whole. In spatial terms, they represent a certain longitude, whether their own extension or the amount of space they occupy through living and acting; as well as a certain latitude – that is, the degree of power with which a body affects space.

Society, then, is founded on territory, since it is the process through which any parcel of land acquires reasonable structure and meaning. Without coding, without a geographical axiom that allows understanding and communication, there can be no society. Thus, territory is the act that “affects milieus and rhythms, that ‘territorializes’ them” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2002, p. 314). If the distances between individuals in a society have meaning, it is because they are part of a Same – that is, of a structure that grids them, for example through a language. Given that territorial distances are often managed by individuals according to the sensed, or simply felt, degrees of proximity, the interval between one body and another in the territory conveys and represents a regulated but overall fluid meaning. That is, every body inscribed in a territory manages its distances, which are in turn qualitatively intensive: closer or farther signifies, in a Western society, a higher or lower degree of privacy with respect to the body I approach or distance myself from. Yet this fluidity is often regulated, for society is always spatially linked according to how it lives space, how it signifies it, and how it represents it. Consequently, territory is not merely a geographic structure but also a political and social one:

The territory is first of all the critical distance between two beings of the same species: Mark your distance. What is mine is first of all my distance; I possess only distances. Don't anybody touch me, I growl if anyone enters my territory, I put up placards. Critical distance is a relation based on mat ters of expression. It is a question of keeping at a distance the forces of chaos knocking at the door. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2002, pp. 319–320)

Each individual maintains a specific distance from the various things surrounding them, for territorialised bodies possess vibratory zones that reorganise with their movement: as an individual approaches something, the rhythm of that approach varies depending on whether the thing is dangerous or not, familiar or not, considered safe or not. Consequently, to navigate space consciously and intentionally, space must be in some way structured and gridded: such basic notions as ‘threat’, ‘harmless’, or ‘suspicious’ must somehow be coded into the traversed geography for a clear route to be followed, with its divergent paths (which give meaning to wandering) and its points of return. Territory is the process that allows heterogeneity to emerge by striating and coding a homogeneous land, because if multiple individuals gather and compose a *socius*, their differentiating distances will be combined to form a medium that comprehends them all. Nevertheless, within the territory each individual also loses part of their vibratory capacities: their potential for action is affected by the permeability of the space of the other. This is because territory is primarily an amalgam of distances, rhythms, and milieus corresponding to the institution of a semiotic axiom: “Critical distance is not a meter, it is a rhythm. But the rhythm, precisely, is caught up in a becoming that sweeps up the distances between characters, making them rhythmic characters that are themselves more or less distant, more or less combinable (intervals)” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2002, p. 320). Ultimately, territories are composed of milieus and rhythms, which are in turn constituted from the forces of chaos. Indeed, as a permeable block of space-time, every territory has an excluding outside. Hence, territory is bounded by impassable thresholds, beyond which the world is nothing but pure chaos.

Chaos is the plane where all determinations arise and vanish; it is the impossibility of connection between them, for one does not appear without the other already having disappeared, and one appears as disappearance when the other disappears as contour. Chaos is nowhere – it is a non-place of disordered forces infinitely acting upon one another, the relation of the unrelated, the connection among what is not connected at all. Everything constructed from chaos, then, remains immanent to it, since, as Kleinherenbrink (2015, p. 211) argues, “chaos refers to the fact that, since reality lacks a general organizing principle, nothing has a natural place. Every territory is founded upon a kind of unground over which it is distributed and differentiated, because every territory, insofar as it is spatial dynamism and process, articulates things doubly: it constitutes them (while simultaneously constituting itself) and dissolves them (while simultaneously undoing itself)”. Territory structures the matters composing it, turning them into its own elements by means of territorialization; at the same time, territory is composed of membranes through which these elements may escape, just as new entities may manifest. For this reason, with territory lies also the act of ‘deterritorialization’, that is, a loss of territory, or an escape from it. One may also reconfigure the lost territory, resulting in a reterritorialization—as can be seen, for instance, in the dialect formations of certain regions, where dominant languages, structured by a majority political power, are combined with minoritized and native languages. This means that reterritorialization is not the same as mere territorialization, because it presupposes a prior deterritorialization.

When discussing territory, then, the forces of chaos become the forces of the Earth. These are not, however, experienced directly as forces, but as relations between matter and form: what is perceived is the already constituted rhythmic existence of an individual and its associated milieu. This is because chaos is an infinite speed of birth and disappearance that cannot simply be retained. Something must be configured to contain these disruptive forces. In other words, chaos must be forced to sustain an intense rhythm even before attempting to structure it through representation and signification. Thus, all territories are formed by the assemblage of environments or milieux. A milieu is a semi-stable selection from chaos, a synthetic unification. Milieux “imply the creation of a certain measure of unity that is by no means necessary” (Kleinherenbrink, 2015, p. 212), because territory itself is not something given, but rather constantly unfolds and persists, introducing a degree of sameness “by gathering heterogeneous components” (*Ibid.*).

In sum, milieus and rhythms are born from the Earth, and all individuals are elemental to the formation of a territory, as they are integral parts of the social structure. Nevertheless, all milieus are susceptible to chaotic disintegration and total dissolution: their membranes and intermediate thresholds are constantly harassed by forces that emerge from chaos. To sustain themselves, milieus establish rhythms that force chaos to be territorialized. How? By cutting into the flow of chaos, coding it, consigning or axiomatizing it in some way. This coding must also be communicable: one must be able to inform others that a territory has been established. Thus, a territory is, above all, a semiotic domain. The way

the structure captures the milieus and rhythms of individuals is through the consolidation of a stratum—that is, a complete system of codification that links signs to things through representation. What remains ‘outside’ it is what remains absolutely deterritorialized, where forces interact unrestrictedly with each other: the Earth.

4. The Landscape and its Dynamics: to Experience the Earth from within

Land is the territorialized expanse; it is the first degree of territory and the first instance of Earth’s semiotization. It is where the first social assemblage of forces and signs happens. Land is where the hearth is placed, it is the point amidst the world where the *socius* gathers and rests, to where it returns and from where it launches onto the unknown. Now, this implies that Earth is forever to be outside our spatial experience of the world, while, at the same time we are, in broad terms, incarnated subjectivities ‘of’ the Earth. In fact, our body is the main earthly thing that forever remains accessible intrinsically to us, and yet somehow Earth remains aloof no matter how intricate our knowledge and sense of this incarnated constitution is. No matter how much our feet tremble, how much our ears pain at the encounter of acoustic blasts, how heat escapes in our breath, the Earth is unreachable by our bodily experiences. It indeed seems that Earth rests outside our spatial experience because we are primarily territorialised things; and, if Earth is what is ‘outside’ territory, then to experience it we should first deterritorialise, which has as a consequence the absolute loss of spatial coordinates, of individual constitution and overall vital organisation:

The earth is certainly not the same thing as the territory. The earth is the intense point at the deepest level of the territory or is projected outside it like a focal point, where all the forces draw together in close embrace. The earth is no longer one force among others, nor is it a substance endowed with form or a coded milieu, with bounds and an apportioned share. The earth has become that close embrace of all forces, those of the earth as well as of other substances. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2002, pp. 338–339)

This explains why the experienced dimensions of space do not always coincide with the structured territory, since, when lived, space becomes smooth and unmoored, a place of intensities, of winds and noises. Thus, a distinction exists between two spatialities: one structured, controlled, and organised; and another open, fluid, deterritorialised, and infinite. A smooth space where one acts freely; a striated space where Earth is worked; a fluid nomadic landscape that does not take labour into account; a striated space corresponding to a state apparatus of capture, where things are valued according to a system of exchange and political bias, and where space-time is fixed through coordinates and axes that render the world legible. Therefore, to experience the Earth in a way means to dissolve our humanity in favour of new vital connections. In a sense, to experience the Earth we must become ‘it’ by disrupting our territory. Only do we get a glimpse of Earth as a body and a-subjective, a-signifying existence when we become landscape with it:⁶

⁶ Another way of thinking Landscape and a-subjective experience is Berque’s definition of ‘milieu’ as the relationship society has with its environment, insofar as milieux are relational entities construed per diverse ‘mediations’ (individual relationships). ‘Médiance’, then, is this liaison that shapes the land, which is in turn neither objective nor subjective but ‘trajective’, insofar as it is the conjugation of subjective and objective factors that configure the milieu (Berque, 1994, pp. 13–29).

Although in extension the territory separates the interior forces of the earth from the exterior forces of chaos, the same does not occur in 'intension', in the dimension of depth, where the two types of force clasp and are wed in a battle whose only criterion and stakes is the earth. There is always a place, a tree or grove, in the territory where all the forces come together in a hand-to-hand combat of energies. The earth is this close embrace. This intense center is simultaneously inside the territory, and outside several territories that converge on it at the end of an immense pilgrimage (hence the ambiguities of the 'natal'). Inside or out, the territory is linked to this intense center, which is like the unknown homeland, terrestrial source of all forces friendly and hostile, where everything is decided. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2002, p. 321)

Thus, leaving the territory and interacting with the chaotic forces of the Earth removes the body from the stratum of the organism, human or animal, and connects it to other strata that remain outside all the prevalent territorial codes. The individual no longer pertains to their territory; they gain the complete vastness of the world. However, this completely deterritorialised world lacks orientation: no more coordinates, no more placed milieus compose the environment, the body becomes an earthly force among others that can only interact with territories as shapes of a smooth world. This is the landscape: it is rather the act by which corporeal and territorial coordiantes completely collapse of and the shape and outline of one's own territory is brought forth. Space then is experienced as the pure relationship of coexistence between worlds and territories, between environments and associated milieux. All landscape experience, then, implies the constitution of a landscape. Therefore, landscape is rather a vivid and dynamic process, *landscapification*:

A concerted effort is made to do away with the body and corporeal coordinates through which the multidimensional or polyvocal semiotics operated. Bodies are disciplined, corporeality dismantled, becomings-animal hounded out, deterritorialization pushed to a new threshold—a jump is made from the organic strata to the strata of signifiance and subjectification. A single substance of expression is produced. The white wall/black hole system is constructed, or rather the abstract machine is triggered that must allow and ensure the almighty of the signifier as well as the autonomy of the subject. You will be pinned to the white wall and stuffed in the black hole. This machine is called the faciality machine because it is the social production efface, because it performs the facialization of the entire body and all its surroundings and objects, and the *landscapification* of all worlds and milieus. The deterritorialization of the body implies a reterritorialization on the face; the decoding of the body implies an overcoding by the face; the collapse of corporeal coordinates or milieus implies the constitution of a landscape. (Deleuze and Guattari, 2002, p. 181)

Space is always encountered through a specific situation that affects human perception, infusing it with qualities such as depth, density, symbolism, and affect. This bloc of space-time that conforms the spatial dimension of our land we call it territory, where our associated milieux coexist dynamically as places. Territory, then, consists of places one alongside another and the distances, or intervals, between them. This is not something to be passively observed or arbitrarily arranged, but what is embedded in human purposes, intentions, and lived experiences: place is not a fixed or uniform

category of experience; rather, it is diverse and shaped by varying human intentions and circumstances. When the bond between self and place is broken, place becomes alien, and what is experienced is how our territoriality shapes the land, how it striates the Earth. While territory is the array of definite intervals that grid individual bodies according to imposed structures, landscape is what remains perpetually ‘outside’ territory. Nevertheless, landscape is experienced territorially. Insofar as the Earth is the ground for all territories, landscape is where the Earth is lived as the impervious reconfiguring agent presupposed by all territorial upsurges. Therefore, landscape can be thought as the aesthetic experience of what lies beyond the territories, the brute reality that Earth’s affective resonance is not constant but intermittently apprehensible, and that such intermittence is foundational to our experience of space as what is to come.

Landscape is where the subjective and the terrestrial meet, where the institutions of place, of memory, emotion, and orientation are delineated and experienced whole. Territory then, is not purely objective: it is qualified, shaped by human perception, imagination, and dwelling. Thus, landscape is the revelation of Earth’s a-significance. Through the landscape we realise the superabundance of sense that the Earth harbours. Earth is not neutral, neither it is riddled with significance. Earth is the complete susceptibility of symbols, the true expanse where human spaces may become. However, the aesthetic experience of the world, the fleshly substrate that sustains and binds phenomena, is, by nature, an infrequent event. This event is given the name ‘landscape’. Landscape is the encounter with a mode of existence that is at once incorporated in things and yet remains aloof, inhabited yet barren, populated yet desertic, striated yet smooth. It is through landscape that the dissolved, time-afflicted subjectivity gains aesthetic access to Earth, which otherwise remains stratified and semiotically articulated. Landscape thus not only functions as the sensible opening toward what lies beyond territorial conceptualizations of space, governed as these are by intervals, distances, geo-symbols, and emplacement; landscape is also only accessible per the dissolution of the self, which in turn means to become intrinsically related to the eventfulness of being.

5. Conclusion: to be Outside

In conclusion, we usually experience the Earth as an immense, symbolic and structured place, where time is grounded by movement and spatial axis that travers the expanse. The territorialized body is thus subject to relentless axial mutation, moving across a grid where time is quantified as the cost of spatial displacement. The journey is reduced to its metrics (how far is a point from another, how long does it take to go across certain areas) while the experiencing subject is assumed to remain identical to itself, barely unchanged. Only by sensing beyond the territorial can one apprehend the semiotic system that regulates spatial and temporal experience. From a Deleuzeo-Guattarian perspective, landscape appears not as a static formation but as a force of ‘landscapification’, the no-place in which dissolved subjectivities encounter the forces that generate new configurations of bodily

and affective existence. Thus, since space is always indexed to a body-image, whenever bodies are occluded, crowded, or stratified in accordance with the social values they instantiate, no landscape can be entirely experienced. Indeed, all landscapes presuppose the detachment from territory and the acquisition of a placelessness and timelessness that goes beyond territorial temporo-spatial structures. New people emerge only through new spatial dispositions, through the actualisation of new bodily configurations that exceed prior stratifications. Therefore, domination over bodies entails the control of landscape not as object, but as experience.

Landscape is indeed the experience of an Outside that is not exteriority, because deterritorialization rests on the rupture of the sensori-motor scheme, on the loss of connection with the world, on the loss of coordinates. What exteriority is there if the coordinates that lock our ground are lost? None. But there is, in any case, that inalterable existence that ground that is not the surface, but rather the depth upon which we mount our organism, where places emerge and bodies articulate per the institution of spatiality and social striations of the world. Landscape determines the shape of our territory just as it defines the out-of-place, that structuring Outside of pure sense upon which we articulate our words and actions:

So, this outside, [50:00] it is not at all the external world, it is not at all the exteriority of the world. On the contrary, we have every reason to believe that this outside might be capable, perhaps, of giving us back a connection with the external world. But this outside can only emerge against the backdrop of a rupture with the external world. [Pause] This outside cannot emerge, it cannot seize us—since it is a matter of being seized by the outside—it can only seize us insofar as we have lost our relationship with the external world. (Deleuze, 1984)

Indeed, to deterritorialise is to be dragged toward a space so disconnected, so inescapable, that it forever remains outside any territory, outside any stratification. It is none other than the unthought, the unthinkable and forever unbeknownst force that will forever remain out-of-bounds of our spatial experience. Time, the constant and invisible force, the immanent and eternal caesura, resides in the deepest recess of thought and spatiality. The force of the Outside, that is Time. To see Time is to see life, to see the unshakable condition of all existence. It is to witness the innocence with which Being unfolds, with which it forms both a surface and a depth, where it treasures the virulent conjunction of its power. That is why the landscape is the fundamental condition of all action, because only in this way is it possible to generate the interval, the rupture of the sensori-motor scheme.

In effect, finding oneself in a situation where the structuring of the world crumbles implies a certain cut, a certain interstice that presents itself as the Outside of every territory, of every ground, whose existence provokes the greatest insecurity; such that the actual and the virtual are the same thing, all possible connections coalesce. And so unbearable is this situation that it becomes necessary to act, necessary to survive this irrationality. How? What to do? Populate the desert, reconnect multiplicities, establish intense and

affective connections between bodies. Ultimately, Landscape is the call for new peoples, new spatialities, new territories. The desert is inhospitable; it is undeniable unbearable. The new territory that comes to inhabit this interstice does indeed exist, however outside of history, outside of narration, outside of strata; it exists insofar as it must be invented, insofar as it is both things at once.

When spatial values become rigid and otherwise non-interchangeable, there is no possibility of experiencing space and time outside given strict paradigms, which are imposed primarily by force. The upsurge of new peoples requires new spatial dispositions that correspond to the new incarnated experiences of space. Now, if the vast Earth, if our experience of Earth as such and ourselves as earthly beings is the experience of the landscape, then the domination on bodies is, partly, in the control of the landscape itself: how can you control and grid what is not an object? By controlling the experience of it, by suppressing all forms of disjointed and dissolved subjectivities that may be voiced by peoples to come.

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