

## **The dramaturgy and the history of the landscape and development processes**

PAPER in Stockholm, SADA, 2016

(Short Version)

**“Between time and space: how landscape and performance may produce a new sense of reality.”**

*Author – António Salgado, ESMAE, Porto, Portugal*

**Theme:** Exploring and discussing the dramaturgy and the history of the landscape and how this can be used in a performance and an artistically activity in the landscape, and how landscape architects, planners and performing artists can collaborate on this issue.

\*\*\*\*\*

This paper explores the issue that environment is rich in information about its own structure and dynamics, and its main theoretical proposal is that this information is directly available to the perceiver. And, that performance and artistic activity in the landscape may contribute to create and enable awareness of what is specified in the environment without recourse to a series of constructive stages.

Gibson (1960, 1979) suggests that, to perceive a stable environment, one must be able to detect constant and invariant elements in the visual and acoustical array. Performance and musical performance, in this case, may assume and embody the role of a messenger of the landscape history and information, or may use the landscape<sup>1</sup> and the landscape theory and architecture to be a part of a new sense of reality created through the dramaturgy process of meaning production. Both ways, the intersection of these fields, Landscape Theory and Architecture and Performing and Cultural Arts, will have most profit by using reciprocally their knowledge, especially in

---

<sup>1</sup> All the perceptible features of an area of countryside or land, often considered in terms of their aesthetic appeal.

the sense of creation of new artistic and landscape realities that may politically involve local communities in the discussion of the reality of their own time and space of existence and of their development processes.

Schechner (2002), author of the first *"Introduction of Performance studies"*, states that Performance studies examine performances in two categories: A. Artistic, and B. Cultural Performances.

A. Artistic Performance. If we ponder This first category – Artistic Performance – we see that it considers performance as an art form: Solo-performance, performance art, music performance, performance of literature, theatrical storytelling and plays, and performance poetry.

B. Cultural Performance. The second category – Cultural Performance - includes events that occur in everyday life in which culture values are displayed for their perpetuation: rituals such as parades, religious ceremonies, community festivals, controversial storytelling, and performances of social and professional roles, and individual performances of race, gender, sexuality and class.

Schechner (2002) refers to Performance Studies as an "inter discipline" or a "post discipline", but in the sense I will try to use it today, I would like to see Performance Studies more like a "poly-discipline" or a "multi-discipline", in the sense that the multiplicity of its disciplines, methods and fields of study that are at use within the performance creative research will purchase and purpose the appearance and the emergence of new realities and entities which may be the result of a *becoming process* of the *multi-disciplinary event* of the different involved fields. By drawing from theories of the performing arts, Music Performance Studies included, and from Landscape Theory, Architecture and Studies all together, the theoretical process embraced by all those involved in the development of a project named *Meeting Places*, over the last few years, rises now a bridge over these two categories, and brings a new exciting and thrilling field of research, which has already created some worthy reflections, new important essays, and excellent performance practice results.

After all this jointed work, within the project of *Meeting Places*, developing

Experiences, Knowledge, Methods and Models in the borderland between Landscape Theory/Architecture and Performing Arts, we all became certainly aware, how Landscape (Nature- or Urban-) affects and is affected by life and by every day's human life in which culture and artistic values are displayed for their perpetuation and pleasure.

In what it concerns sound, (human sound or from other nature, being it musical or from other source or quality), it has, also, always affected and has always been affected by Space. The History, being it mythological or factological, tells us that from the wild and rough to the organized and well-structured Nature Landscape, and from the unplanned to the well-ordered and planned Urban Space and projected City Architecture, the structure and dynamics of the Landscape has always affected (and being affected by) the production of sound, of human sound, as well as music sound and musical performance. It is well known how Landscape has inspired the manufacturing of musical instruments and of human singing to overcome the imposed natural obstacles, as it is the case of the alphorn, or the inspired herders singing to call their stock or to communicate between distant neighbors, as it is the case of the Alpine Yodel (a vocal technique also used in many cultures worldwide, sometimes with other purposes too).

Since ancient times, Landscape (Nature- and Urban-) has always be present, influenced and affected the production of human myths and the music performed within mythological and religious ceremonies. On one side, *Amphion* raises the ramparts of Thebes with the musical chords of his lyre; on the other side, the walls of Jericho crumbled at the sound of the seven Horns (trumpets) and Joshua's people clamors (despite the archaeological evidence that Joshua did not fight in the Battle of Jericho and that there were no walls being pulled down). As the Cave resounds the ancestral human terror for Darkness, the primitive men got the intuition to use the power of Sound reverberating on the walls to invoke the Gods in their religious ceremonies. These myths and stories, as naïf as they may be, report, nevertheless, the significance that human kind attributes since ancient times to the rapport between sound and space, music and landscape, and how one affected and is affected by the

other.

Myth has flourished in the confusion that reigns between these two elements of composition: the *eye* and the *ear*.<sup>2</sup> *The eye* holds, separates, confines, delineates, establishes the orthodoxy of the Reason; *the ear* flows, brings together, marks continuity, plays an anaphoric function<sup>3</sup>, and inspires the heterodoxy of the Life. These two notions of space/time are diametrically opposed: one is centripetal, the other centrifugal. Of course, there have always been mimetic relationships between the two of them. The composition of Sound (Music) has brought into its domain, apparently, the orthodoxy of the Reason and Space. And the composition of Space (Architecture) has brought into its domain apparently, as well, the heterodoxy of Life and Sound.<sup>4</sup>

Pythagorean universal harmony, for instance, used a mimetic rapport to the celestial harmony. And, also, a large amount of doctrines of music harmony used the divine and the human proportion within their compositional art explanations. So, it seems that the mimetic processes between the two arts of composition are and have been endless. Nevertheless, and despite the radical differences between them, these mimetic processes allow to suggest that there must be, also, exit-points enabling lines of flight which allow the expressive communication process and the creative production to flow between the two time/spaces.

In order to enlighten a new sense of reality flowing through the performance process of meaning production in the Borderland of Landscape Theory and Architecture and Performing and Cultural Arts, a thrilling challenge would, then, be: to find, for each space/time, the lines of flight - the Land-scape-lines - that would be useful to pursue in order to enable creative communication and expressive freedom within the artistically, cultural and musical performance activity, within the Landscape

---

<sup>2</sup> See M. Dufrenne. (1987). *L'oeil et L'oreille*, Éditions de l'Hexagone et Mikel Dufrenne. ISBN 2-89006-258-9. And Bruno Saner. *La ville comme scène* / Bruno Saner, Valeur(s) 2014.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGn7nTFE0j0> 5 9 2016 21.12.

<sup>3</sup> See Kristeva, J. (1979:75, 76). *Le Geste, pratique ou communication*. In *Pratiques et Langues Gestuels*. Ed. Librairie Didier et Larousse. Trad: Manuela Torres. Editorial Vega, Lisboa, 1979.

<sup>4</sup> Examples are multiple: from the talking statues and acoustic ducts of Father Athanasius Kircher (XVII century) up to the more contemporary Xenakis' Musical Architectures

Artistic and Cultural Performative process of meaning production.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, *Landscape* has often been considered to have, and often has had, a background role, like a staged 'scenery' where music and theatre were performed and played. And, if it is true that *landscape* has many times played historically this background role, to consider it, nowadays, just as a Scenario, is to tell very little of what it has been, what it is, or what it may be in a near future its main role and *significance*.

The challenge of leading this new *significance* up to a borderline between Artistic/Cultural Performing Practices and Landscape Theory and Architecture has been the driving force of a long-term development project named *Meeting Places -Music Theatre and Landscape*<sup>6</sup>, and shared by the Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts, SLU (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences), the University of Winchester, England, Malmö Academy of Music, and the Superior School of Music, Drama and Performing Arts (ESMAE), in Porto, Portugal.

One main idea of this research project is to use the *landscape* as a part of the artistic and cultural performance practice process, as a part of the communities' history and as a part of the audiences' development. The landscape shall not be seen only as a view or scenery, but as a *receptacle* for artistic and cultural happenings, once it is also formed by the people who has lived, is living and will live there in community, through history, in the present and in the future. In this sense, one of the project aims is to explore how the audiences can become participants and co-creators in the artistic

---

<sup>5</sup> Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1980:161) explain: "*This is how it should be done. Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continua of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. It is through a meticulous relation with the strata that one succeeds in freeing lines of flight, causing conjugated flows to pass and escape and bringing forth continuous intensities for a B(ody)w(ithout)O(rgans).*"

<sup>6</sup> Erlingsdotter, S. (2013). Statement in Purcells' Fairy Queen Opera Brochure of the Post-Graduated Opera Course of the ESMAE: "*The project focus on how an artistic experience can face an experience of a landscape, develop new cultural and nature experiences and create new stage room and meeting places. The terms of the interaction between the audience and the actors change radically when one stops to consider the landscape as background/scenography for a stage event or performance and instead using the landscape's characteristics and historical layers involving the location with people, resources, history, heritage, and gives the audience /participants relationship and status as co-creators. Can visitors and audience transform into participants and co-creators? And what does this change mean for the artists and the participants? The focus of the project is the meeting between music, theatre and landscape where actual, concrete experiences/events used as a crystallization point for the development of knowledge, experiences and development models in the borderland between performing arts and landscape architecture.*"

and cultural happening rather than just spectators. It will also explore how the different historical layers of the landscape may build a new context for the artistic and cultural performance, and how it may bring the audience a new significance of the full-happening and a thrilling experience of the performative deliverance of the semiotic process.<sup>7</sup>

Structured by mankind or running naturally wild, the *Landscape* may always be seen, and may always potentially work, as an important *Matricial Khôra*, i.e., a location, or a spot, where events may take place and may be generated, and where artistic and cultural performative events may be provided to happen.

Originally used to refer the territory outside the Ancient Greek Polis, the Greek word *Khôra* evolved posteriorly within the platonic philosophy to a concept designating a receptacle, a material substratum, an interval of existence.

For Plato, *Khôra* is neither being or non-being, not sensible nor intelligible, it rests between the two realms and it is like a substructure, a substratum, a sieve, a riddled path through which everything passes but in which nothing is retained.<sup>8</sup> Building on this Platonic Conception, Martin Heidegger (1959) refers also to *Khôra* as a "clearing" in which being happens or takes place. Inspired on Heidegger philosophical differences between the concepts of *Sein* and *Da-sein*, Nader El-Bizri (2004) employs *khôra* to name the radical happening of an ontological difference between being and beings.<sup>9</sup> Building on all these conceptions, *landscape* could be considered as a

---

<sup>7</sup> See note on pg. 7

<sup>8</sup> Derrida's collaborative project with architect Peter Eisenmann, in *Chora L Works*: Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman (1997) proposed the construction of a garden in the Parc de la Villette in Paris, which included a sieve, or harp-like structure that Derrida envisaged as a physical metaphor for the receptacle-like properties of the Khora. The concept of the Khora, distinguished by its elusive properties, would have become a physical reality had the project been realized.

<sup>9</sup> El-Bizri's (2004) reflections on "*khôra*" are taken as a basis for tackling the meditations on *dwelling* and on *being and space* in Heidegger's thought and the critical conceptions of space and place as they evolved in architectural theory and in history of philosophy and science, with a focus on geometry and optics.

*receptacle* for Artistic and Cultural performances.

Inspired in Derrida's (1993) text – *Khora* – it would be possible to go further and suggest that Landscape, as we conceive it - in the borderland approach between Performative Arts and Landscape Theory/Architecture – could also be seen as something beyond a neutral space or a conceptual framing, as something like a radical *otherness* that “gives place” for being, providing a “space/time” where new artistic and cultural existences may take place, where new artistic/cultural performances may happen, where the artistic meaning may be primordially produced, anticipating what Julia Kristeva exposes as the emancipatory activity of the semiotic process (Kristeva, 1984).<sup>10</sup>

*Landscape*, in this sense, is less a physically demarcated domain working like an ornamental ‘scenery’, but appears as the space/time of a complex relationship between performer and audience and the artistic, cultural and political awareness and expectations they might share.

On the other hand, Gibson (1960, 1979) suggests, as it has been already referred above, that to perceive a stable environment, one must be able to detect constant, invariant elements in the visual and acoustical array. According to this theory, the environment is rich in information about its own structure and dynamics, and this information is directly available to the perceiver.

Despite the availability of the information that environment may provide about its own structure and dynamics, the information “captured” depends not only on the

---

<sup>10</sup> As explained in *The History of Women in Philosophy* by Augustine Perumalil (2009), Kristeva's “semiotic is closely related to the infantile pre-Oedipal referred to in the works of Freud, Otto Rank, Melanie Klein, British Object Relation psychoanalysis, and Lacan's pre-mirror stage. It is an emotional field, tied to the instincts, which dwells in the fissures and prosody of language rather than in the denotative meanings of words.” Furthermore, according to Birgit Schippers' (2011) book on *Julia Kristeva and Feminist Thought*, the semiotic is a realm associated with the musical, the poetic, the rhythmic, and that which lacks structure and meaning. It is closely tied to the “feminine”, and represents the undifferentiated state of the pre-Mirror Stage infant.

awareness of the perceiver but also on the *substrate* that the perceiver has at its disposal. Substrate by definition is a substance or layer that underlies something, or on which some process occurs, in particular.

Borrowing the concept from Antonin Artaud (1932, 1946, 1947), Derrida (1998) argues that the Artaud's *Subjectile* (French word for substrate) works like Plato's *Khôra*, it is both ground and a support: "*it has two situations (...) and can take the place of the subject or of the object – being neither one nor the other*".

Derrida (1998) holds that the *subjectile* functions as a hypothesis concerning the relationship between the subject and the object of art, and is a 'subjectile' itself.<sup>11</sup> Derrida (1998) holds that the *subjectile* functions as a hypothesis, and is a 'subjectile' itself:

*"Subjectile, the word or the thing, can take the place of the subject or of the object – being neither one nor the other."*

Taking into consideration this interpretation of *substrate*, and bearing in mind the explanation that considers *substrate* a layer on which some process may occur in particular, we may believe, on that ground, that *landscape*, as a borderland between Performative Arts and Landscape Theory/Architecture, has not always provided the same kind of information to the perceiver. This information lies *in-between* the subject and the object, *in-between* the perceiver and the process perceived, and it has not always enabled the same meaning production, and has not always had the same conjunctions of flow production, not even the same emancipatory activity of the semiotic process. It *changes*, it is nomadic, it changes ways, it changes paths, it changes *lines of flight*, it changes borderlines, it changes through the evolution of times and according to the cartography of its occurrence.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Derrida J., and Thévenin, P. (1998). *The Secret Art of Antonin Artaud*. Caws, Mary Ann, The MIT Press.

<sup>12</sup> There is a deep resonance in Brook's (1968) words and explanation of which categories do the performances fall. Sometimes It is *happening*, and aims to break all the barriers of reason, sometimes It is *Verfremdung* and aims to bring a state of full awareness; or It is *Holly*, and makes perceptible the imperceptible, deals with hidden impulses and It is an act of communication between actor and audience produced out of the need to impart some emotion; or It may be *Rough* and deals with real events and actions that affect the audience; or It is *Immediate* and asserts itself in the present, and occurs when the



Thus, it may be assumed that *landscape*, because of the different mapping processes throughout the ages, and over the multiple and diverse time/space rapports, has given place in accordance to this changing evolution to the occurrence of distinct and various *substratual processes*. Consequently, the constant and invariant elements in the visual and acoustical array available for the perceiver have also changed, evolved, and became differently perceived in accordance to the specific *landscape substrate* occurred, and to the singular process of meaning and semiotic production engaged by each particular landscaping development.

In this sense, I would like to propose the term *Land-Scape-Substratum*<sup>13</sup> for what has been suggested as *Matricial-Khôra-Landscape* (or *Subjectile-Landscape*) within the borderland approach between Performative and Cultural Arts and Landscape Theory and Architecture.

In this new *borderline* performative context of the above proposed term, *Landscape* becomes more than just a physically domain, a view, or a 'scenery' where artistic and cultural performances are played or re-presented to audiences, but it becomes a *meeting-place* where the interaction between the performer and the audience is radically altered, a *semiotic process* in which all participants become expressively engaged in an act of deliverance and mindfulness, politically interventive and capable to enable radical transformations of the communities' life, of the space/time of their existence and, not less essential, of their development processes.

\*\*\*\*\*

---

audience is reacting to the happening on the stage, and allows for that transition between what is happening on stage and what is happening in their hearts at that precise moment.

<sup>13</sup> For further information on Stratification and processes of stratification see: Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1980/1987. They conceive ontology as geological: instead of using the concept of 'Being', they experiment the *land* with their physicochemical strata, organic, and anthropomorphic.

## Bibliography

Artaud, A. (1932, 1946, 1947). *Selected Writings* (ed.) Susan Sontag (1988), Berkeley: University of California Press. And see: Paule Thevenin (1986) records the source as 'Text of February 1947, written by Artaud at Ville-Évrard, p. 25.

Brook, Peter (1968). *The empty space*. London: Penguin. p. 11. ISBN 0141189223. 2008.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1980/1987. Trans. Brian Massumi. London and New York: Continuum, 2004. Vol. 2 of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 2 vols. 1972-1980. Trans. of *Mille Plateaux*. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit. ISBN 0-8264-7694-5. Derrida J. (1993). *Khora*, Paris: Galilee 1993

Derrida, J. & Eisenman, P. (1997). *Chora L Works*. The Monacelli Press. Edited by Jeffrey Kipniss and Thomas Leaser.

Derrida J. & Thévenin, P. (1998). *The Secret Art of Antonin Artaud*, Caws, Mary Ann, The MIT Press, 1998.

Dufrenne, M. (1987). *L'oeil et L'oreille*, Éditions de l'Hexagone et M. Dufrenne. ISBN 2-89006-258-9

El-Bizri, N. (2004). "*ON KAI KHORA: Situating Heidegger between the Sophist and the Timaeus*" *Studia Phaenomenologica*, Vol. IV, Issue 1-2 (2004), pp. 73–98. \*Nader

Gibson, J.J. (1960). *The Concept of the Stimulus in Psychology*. *The American Psychologist* 15/1960, 694–703.

Gibson, J.J. (1979). *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. [ISBN 0898599598](#) (1986)

Heidegger, M. (1959). *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Trans. R. Manheim. New Haven: Yale University

Press, 66.

Kristeva, J. (1979). *Le Geste, pratique ou communication*. In *Pratiques et Langues Gestuels*. P. 75/76.  
Ed. Librairie Didier et Larousse. Trad: Manuela Torres. Editorial Vega, Lisboa, 1979.

Kristeva, J. (1984) *Revolution in Poetic Language*. New York, Columbia University Press. p. 26.

Perumalil, A. (2009) *The History of Women in Philosophy*. Global Vision Publishing House. Publication  
City/Country New Delhi, India. ISBN10 8182202744. ISBN13 9788182202740.

Plato. (1925). *Timaeus*, 48e4. *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 9 translated by W.R.M. Lamb. Cambridge,  
MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd. 1925.

Schechner, R. (2002). *"Foreword: Fundamentals of Performance Studies"* Nathan Stucky and Cynthia  
Wimmer, eds., *Teaching Performance Studies*, Southern Illinois University Press, 2002.

Schippers, B. (2011). *Julia Kristeva and Feminist Thought*. Publisher: Edinburgh University Press; 1  
edition (April 15, 2011). ISBN-10: 0748640894. ISBN-13: 978-0748640898.

Thevenin, P. (1986). *Derrida, Jacques, Antonin Artaud, Dessins et Portraits*. Gallimard, p. 25.