

Without the Privileged Point
Kristijan Radakovic
DOGtime Expanded Painting
Gerrit Rietveld Academy
Amsterdam, April 2023
Tutor: Q.S. Serafijn

*“Qu’est-ce que le Tiers-État ? Tout.
Qu’a-t-il été? - Rien.
Que demande-t-il? - Quelque chose.”¹*

This entirely anthropocentric work is about the possibility to reconfigure, redefine, reshape a human invention - a landscape, configuration, definition, shape. How one landscape is, we can see by observing the subjects it produces and the relations between them.

As another artistic practice, rooted in the concept coined by Gilles Clement, the following pages are suggesting a life in the Third Landscape. While Gilles Clement is discovering the Third Landscape, relying on its biological characteristics and seeing it as a possible fugitive space for plants, animals and maybe humans, in my work I am possibly doing the same. For this work I’ve asked myself what would life be like if we were in the Third Landscape?

Being aware of the limits of my own lines, once imagining life in the Third Landscape, the different theories which I picked up along the way connected perfectly in my head, giving me the answer to the questions of its metaphysics, its logics, its participants and their politics, their paradigms, & their feminism.

With the redefined ‘we’, the Third Landscape is a place where ‘we’ is made of bodies of water, whose logic is hydrologic and the bodies are connected through the oceanic feeling. It is a place where the answers to the questions of *who are we* and *who are we to each other* are to be found in the low waters of the theories where the solid structure is not a *conditio sine qua non* and the best way to go, is to go with the flow and cruise, as “the best kind of prize is a surprise.”²

Before I continue with the subject, I would like to remind you how this text is solely based on my own metaphysical assumptions; the assumptions which are marked by the different aspects such as economical, sociological, philosophical, personal, material etc. So, ‘the truth’ is as always subjective, it is produced, confirmed and executed by the space, within the space and for the space.

*What is the Third State? - Everything.
What has it done so far? - Nothing.
What does it aspire to be? - Something.

¹ Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès, *Qu’est-ce que le Tiers-Etat*, 1789.

² Roald Dahl, *Charlie and the chocolate factory*, London: Allen&Unwin, 1964, p. 146.

For David Harvey, mapping space is “a fundamental prerequisite to the structuring of any kind of knowledge...no matter whether the space being mapped is metaphorical or real.”³

In one of his presentations, the Swedish geographer Gunnar Olson explains the mapping process quite clearly: “What is geography if it is not the drawing and interpretation of the line? And what is the drawing of a line if it is not also the creation of new objects? Which lines we draw, how we draw them, the effects they have, and how they change are the crucial questions.”⁴

Sonenberg wrote in his *Cartographies*: “It has always been this way with the mapmakers: from their first scratches on the cave wall to show the migration patterns of the herds, they have traced lines and lived inside them.”⁵

Spaces, whether we are talking about the mental ones or the physical ones (they are interconnected), are defined by using the principal of mapping. Once mapped, space shapes the structures and the practices of knowledge production- the knowledge on which we will later understand and act upon the world. This process of creating the lines, a process which is used to create maps. Despite how innocent it could seem (even on the verge of entertainment), it is the process which, at the end of the day, creates the way of living (division of power) and who gets to live (creation of subjects). Subjects and their power positions are the two most important (if not the only important) elements within the landscape.

In his talk before the Architectural Association, a gardener from the city of Versailles, Gilles Clement proposed three types of landscapes:

1. Forest, the darkness, buildings, shadows
2. Public spaces, lightness, clearness, lights
3. The Third Landscape - places where humans do nothing

On the concept of the Third Landscape, Gilles Clement elaborated in his *Manifesto of the Third Landscape*, published in 2019. The Third Landscape is the sum of neglected areas and, as an actual physical land, can be found in-different set ups, from urban environments to agricultural lands, next to the big roads, train railways, or between two spaces which have given function within the system they operate.

³ David Harvey, *Spaces of Capital: Towards a critical geography*, New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 111.

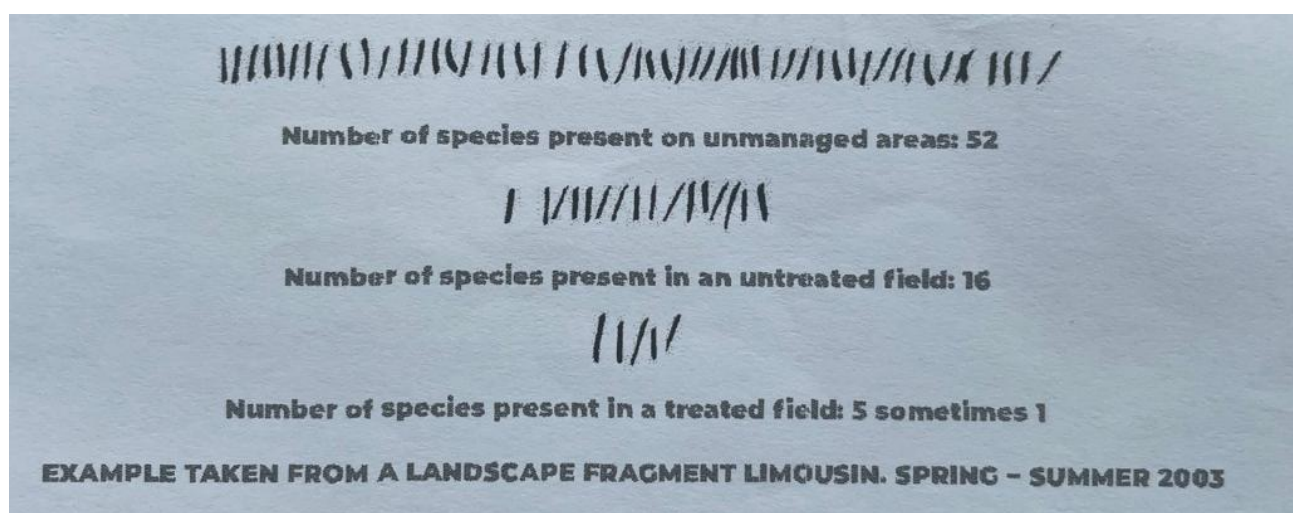
⁴ G. Olsson, “Heretic Cartography”, in *Fennia - International Journal of Geography*, Vol,172 No.2 (1994), Helsinki, Geographical Society of Finland p. 172.

⁵ Maya Sonenberg, *Cartographies*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989, p. 14.

The name itself refers to the Third Estate mentioned in the political pamphlet written by the French clergyman and politician Sieyès. During the turbulent political period, just before the French Revolution 1789, in his pamphlet published under the title *What is the Third Estate*, Sieyès suggests that beside the First and the Second Estates (clergy and aristocracy), there is the Third Estate (common French people). He encourages their recognition and suggests their active participation in the political life of France up until that moment, their position and their potential was neglected, ignored.

Gilles Clement noticed this position of being neglected and ignored when he was observing landscapes in the Limousin region in France, that was the reason to name it the Third Landscape. "If we stop looking at the landscape as the object of the industry, we suddenly discover...a quantity of undecided spaces, devoid of function, that are difficult to name...Third Landscape refers to the Third State (not Third World)- space expressing neither power nor submission to power."⁶

Comparing different neglected parts of the landscape, Clement noticed how there is no similarity in forms, but there is one thing in common: they are all refuge areas for diversity. Diversity is no longer present in the lands which are either purely- natural or purely-human--organised (no matter their nature and their purpose). "Diversity refers to the number of distinct living species among animals, plants and simple beings (bacteria, viruses, etc.); the human number is included in a single species whose diversity is expressed by ethnic and cultural varieties...It is located on the margins...These margins bring together a biological diversity that had not yet been classified as richness. The Third Landscape is a connective fabric composed of residual spaces that tend to take a liquid state, never preserving shape and resisting governance. All the diversity comes here."⁷



⁶ Gilles Clement, *Manifesto of the Third Landscape*, Halles: Trans Europe Halles, 2004, p. 5.

⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

With its constant changes in shapes and contents, with the knowledge production as a result of its fluidity, the Third Landscape reveals itself as the landscape which overcomes the systems we were used to so far: the binary systems or “a social constructs composed of two parts that are framed as absolute and unchanging opposites.”⁸

For Clement, the reality of the Third Landscape is a reality of the mind and its possibility doesn't depend on wiseness as much as on a collective consciousness. Recognising the richness of its subjects by acknowledging that there are more parts than we believed to be in the binary systems, by listening, seeing, taking into consideration the infinite possibilities of communications between them, Gilles Clement invites us to “protect the moral, social, and political deregulation of the Third Landscape.”⁹

Mapping is a process, an act, a move of observing and translating the three-dimensional space (physical landscape) into a two-dimensional system of thoughts and beliefs (metaphysics). Without searching for any other benefit, beside the one of orientation, we can notice how the Third Landscape, such as suggested by Gilles Clement, and with the characteristics it has imagined by myself-could offer us a landscape where the method of exploitation, which undeniably happens in every map, could be more based on 'living with' and less on 'living against'.

What would life be like if we would go with the flow of the Third Landscape? What if we give to the *not doing* the same value as to the *doing*? What if we could be more relaxed when it comes to the need to control, as nothing is really under control. How can we rid ourselves of the imposed two opposites?

In the deepest part of the water
In the darkest part of the light
In the hidden part where the daylight never reaches
In the darkness without its lightness
In the darkness we did not embrace
When the darkness means nothing
In the darkness where there was always something, us.

⁸ Milian Kang, Donovan Lessard, Laura Heston, Sonny Nordmarken, *Introduction to women, gender, sexuality studies*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, 2017, p. 34.

⁹ Clement, op.cit., p. 19.

September 2014, rainy Paris.

Still, it never rains enough for me to use an umbrella. When I crossed the street, not far away from where I was living, Sabina was already waiting on the terrace of the bar Au Metro, next to the metro station Jacques Bonsergent, with the glass of the white wine. Sabina was a friend of a friend, a Paris based scientist, who just came back to Paris after working in New York for some years.

We hit it off from the start, clicked really well, and the conversation was fluid, like we knew each other far beyond 20 minutes. Sabina was a scientist, to be more precise, she was a scientist in genetics.

I knew nothing about science, despite my limited knowledge, I was curious to know what she was doing, hoping to understand at least a bit of it.

At first, Sabina did try to explain what she does, but soon realising I didn't understand, Sabina simply explained how she found something in the part of the human genome, a part which (at the time of her discovery) was known as Junk. Junk or Trash part of the human genome considered a genetic desert.

In the meantime, Sabina and I became great friends and never talked about the genetics again. For years to come, the only thing that stayed in my memory concerning the part where she talked about her work on that very first meeting of ours, was the junk or 'genetic nothing.'

"Dear all! Here is the introduction to *The Queer art of Failure* by Jack Halberstam that forms an essential part in how I look at education in Queer creativity. Please read it for next week. Happy to share it with you." Robert (2020)

The Queer art of Failure by Jack Halberstam gives insight to the low-theory. In the introduction to the book, Halberstam presents the low theory as a way to deconstruct the normative modes of thought that have established uniform societal definitions of success and failure. To elaborate the low-theory, Halberstam found answers in children's literature; to demonstrate Halberstam used comparative analysis between the dominant world we live today and the one of-kids (the world we lived before).

The analysis was conducted around the question of togetherness. As children we were taught how sticking together, taking care of each other, and caring for those weaker than us, are the desired qualities, but once we grow up we find ourselves in the landscapes where these qualities are seen as the complete opposites.

Society, seen as both, a body of its own and as a group composed of numerous individual entities, tends to see the weak ones as losers, and to believe that the opposite of success is failure. The Third Landscape, in its core, doesn't manifest itself in this way of setting up the system. However, in order to better understand how the system of the Third Landscape functions it is good to remind ourselves of the dominant system today. What the low-theory suggests is if we give up the inherited drive of wanting to always be the best, always needing to win and always yearning to succeed and if we give a more positive space to not doing so, there is possibly a chance to live a better life. At the same time, to possibly live a better life is not comparable to the pure utopia we lived when we were kids. The idea of giving 'losers' a chance reminded me of the talk I long ago had with Sabina and her research of the Junk on her way to find some answers.

In so-called Junk, Sabina Benko discovered an important regulatory region which is responsible for the activation of the gene SOX9, a gene responsible for human gender. Nature showed us how there were, still are and possibly will always be penis-bearing men with the chromosomes of women and how, so far, those men can not realise themselves as fathers. The human genome showed us how there are women in this world with vaginas and the chromosomes of men, therefore their bodies are not made for reproduction.

While obviously these outcomes exhibit possibilities just like many others that the human body is capable of realising, they do remain unconfirmed and in most cases are regarded as 'failures'. This Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* mentally processed by the dominant binary way of seeing the world, becomes a fatal combination. They feel like failures, losers. By not being able to fulfil their purpose, those who found themselves in such a state of being, not rarely it is a position "that leads the subject to commit the suicide."¹⁰

What makes this example more interesting is its double contribution to the argument of trying to see the world differently. First, it is marking something unchangeable and human as a failure. Second, the discovery of Sabina Benko was placed in the area of the human genome, the dominant western way of thinking, was considered-Junk. But, we could also embrace those 'failures', skip the binary idea of it being good or it being bad and rather "...dismantle the logic of success and failure with which we currently live...Under certain circumstances failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world."¹¹

**Human, All Too Human*

¹⁰ Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, New York: Columbia UP, 1989, p. 73.

¹¹ Jack Halberstam, *The Queer art of Failure*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2011, p. 2.

The outcome of this collaboration between Sabina Benko and myself was the work *Techno Gender Fluid*. It is a work dedicated to a landscape, an ecotone* which is unpredictable and unknown- a human genome. Human genome functions within its own system and in a way we could say it functions as the Third Landscape. It is a system full of possibilities, it is a landscape humans are aware of but never hundred percent sure of. In order to avoid the traps, such as all sorts of dualisms, and to exclude yourself from the world stretched between good and bad, white and black, man and woman, winner and loser, Jack Halberstam invites us to check out the in-between space, which is, in the words of Gilles Clement, "a genetic reservoir."¹² They suggest it as a mode of thinking, writing, being, communicating and seeing. It is a landscape where nobody is left behind.

In comparing the developments of the three different systems, those of nature, culture and the mixture of the two, Gilles Clement noticed how the latter offers the largest number of species, hence concepts. "...the Third Landscape is made up of all of the places neglected by human beings."¹³

What for Gilles Clement would be a physical space, for Jack Halberstam is the mental space. If Gilles Clement talks about the spaces which are neglected, Jack Halberstam is talking about the ideas which are coming from those neglected spaces. If we give the chance to the Third Landscape, meaning giving the chance to the low-theories, the question arises: what would be our feminism if feminism is where we are to search for the answers pertaining to the questions of the bodies, their positions, roles and necessities in the landscape?

Women replaced rocks who replaced plants

who replaced waters

who replaced men and so on and so on...

to the point when

everything becomes something- nothing.

*ecotone is an area that acts as a boundary or a transition between two ecosystems.

¹² Clement, op.cit., p. 15.

¹³ Ibid, p. 2.

Once started as a fight for the fundamental human rights, feminism became an integrative part of human nature which as a result gives the answer to the question: what do we mean when we say 'we'? Further, once we define 'we', equally important becomes the question of who are we to each other?

By becoming an integrative part, feminism also became a tool for re-shaping the strong borders of the way we think we are and it opens the door to new concepts, new bodies and new subjectivities, leaving us with numerous possibilities.

Feminism, in a way, became a landscape which invites all the possible forms of existence or to use the words of Gilles Clement while describing the Third Landscape, feminism became "a diversity that has not yet been classified as richness."¹⁴

The Third Landscape leaves no space for the subject creation and the power division. Its non-surveillant and the fluid nature doesn't recognise these categories. Once becoming the Third Landscape we construct fluidly.

While being a pioneer in recognising the richness, different feminism offers different concepts on how to connect in order to live in the world. Its richness was greatly explained by Astrida Neimanis: "Watershed pollution, a theory of embodiment, amniotic becomings, disaster, environmental colonialism, how to write, global capital, nutrition, philosophy, birth, rain, animal ethics, evolutionary biology, death, storytelling, bottled water, multinational pharmaceutical corporations, drowning, poetry...these are all feminist questions."¹⁵

"The reality of the Third Landscape is a reality of the mind...The maintenance of its existence does not depend on wise people but on collective consciousness. A shared fragment of a collective consciousness."¹⁶

If the Third Landscape is the fugitive space of the future for animals, plants and humans, we might as well try to figure out what the one thing connecting the aforementioned, might be. If we are to live together in the world based on trust, in the space in perpetual motion, we have to find the thread which connects and archive all of us, a thread which allows us to feel a collective consciousness.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁵ Neimanis A., "Hydrofeminism: Or, On Becoming a Body of Water", in *Undutiful Daughters: Mobilising Future Concepts, Bodies and Subjectivities in Feminist Thought and Practice*, des. Henriette Gunkel, Chrysanthi Nigianni and Fanny Soderback, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 110-111.

¹⁶ Clement, op.cit., p. 13.

“The water understands
Civilisation well;
It wets my foot, but prettily,
It chills my life, but wittily,
It is not disconcerted,
It is not broken-hearted:
Well used, it decketh joy,
Adorneth, doubleth joy:
Ill used, it will destroy,
In perfect time and measure
With a face of golden pleasure
Elegantly destroy.”¹⁷

Depending on the size, human body contains 55-78% of the water. A watermelon is 85% water. All forms of life depend on water. The first human collectives were organised by and around the water.

¹⁷ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Water*, 1909.

In her searching for a world as a better place, Neimanis was looking at our embodiments which are positioning us to divide, hence to gain or to lose power. We all agree that the embodiments in the forms of gender, race, class, species are the premises on which we are claiming our own power position or disclaiming someone else's.

And what was the common thing connecting and/or separating all of us? Neimanis realises it is a water. She invites us to take that fact as our starting point or to be more precise, she invites us to become a body of water. To become a body of water means to realise how no matter what differences there are between our selves and others we will all easily see how the water is the thing which connects us.

If we would place water as a starting point of our logic we will more easily realise the connections between us, such as species, genders, races etc.

Putting water as a principal on which we will construct our relations and build our knowledge is called hydro-logic and the system which is built based on that way of thinking is called hydrofeminism.

“We are all bodies of water. To think embodiment as watery belies the understanding of bodies that we have inherited from the dominant Western metaphysical tradition. As watery, we experience ourselves less as isolated entities, and more as oceanic eddies: I am a singular, dynamic whorl dissolving in a complex, fluid circulation. The space between our selves and our others is at once as”¹⁸

Or more simple: imagine if the next time you would see a ‘black’ guy in front of you, your brain would produce: oh look, another body of water! (‘black’ is nothing but of the “chlorine”¹⁹)

In her vision of who we are to each other and who we are in a relation to more-than-human, Neiman reminds us of the fact that we are all from water, of water and finally are water, at the same time she is trying to realise what this becoming a body of water (ex. fluvial, dripping) could possibly mean for us. More, what could it possibly mean for us becoming a body of water “as both - matter and meaning.”²⁰

Being a body of matter is answering the question who are we to ourselves? (no matter who is ‘I’ in the ‘we’)

Becoming a ‘body of water as a matter’ would allow us to question and to reconfigure the social architecture, it would allow us to re-think ‘we’, the same ‘we’ based upon we will draw the lines.

Becoming a ‘body of water as a meaning’ would allow us to reconfigure our way of thinking and our way of constructing social architecture.

¹⁸ Neimanis, op.cit., p. 19.

¹⁹ Kayne West, *Water*, 2020.

²⁰ Neimanis, op.cit., p. 19.

There's another good point in realising water as the intelligence which connects us all and it is the one of shifting the focus or "if we are all bodies of water, then we are differentiated not so much by the 'what' as by the 'how'."²¹

This shift is a good premise for the Third Landscape society. By living this watery method of thinking and seeing, we live the society of the constant moving and this constant moving consequently allows each of us to breathe more freely. When I say more freely, I mean how the fluidity prevents unnecessary stops that we were using so far when we were not bodies of water. Every time we would stop, it would be because of the differences between us, the unknown about each other which makes us create paradigmatic moments expressed in terms such as 'oh look, a black body!'

These paradigmatic moments are crucial for the knowledge production which later is the starting point when members of the 'we' decide what will be the nature of the relationships between them or how we treat each other. On the other hand, a watery body would let us be free without being judged by others or judging others and it would lead to the reaction such as: 'oh look, me!'

While we believe that living with differences or to say the otherness enriches us, it does seem that these differences bring us more into conflicts than into the 'living with' state of mind. At the same time, fluidity doesn't erase those differences, it only puts them into a secondary position. And that's what I mean when I say living freely.

Watery method of thinking would change our relation to inclusivity and exclusivity. By thinking watery, we would create a predisposition for the landscape where the body of other or the otherness wouldn't be added to an already existing landscape but it would be present within the system from the very beginning.

The only differences between the watery bodies in the 'we' community are the ones of membranes. "Attention to the mechanics of watery embodiment reveals that in order to connect bodies, water must travel across only partially permeable membranes. In an ocular-centric culture, some of these membranes, like our human skin, give the illusion of impermeability. Still, we perspire, urinate, ingest, ejaculate, menstruate, lactate, breathe, cry. We take in the world, selectively, and send it flooding back out again. This selection is not a "choice" made by our subjective, human selves; it is rather..an impersonal expression of *phusis**."²²

**phusis* (/ˈfɑːstɪs/; Ancient Greek: φύσις [pʰýsis]) is a Greek philosophical, theological, and scientific term, usually translated into English—according to its Latin translation "natura"—as "nature"

²¹ Ibid., p. 103.

²² Ibid., p. 104.

In a way a membrane of an embodiment can be seen as a pre-drawn line where “despite the fact that we are all watery bodies, leaking into and sponging off of one another, we resist total dissolution, material annihilation. Or more aptly, we postpone it: ashes to ashes, water to water...The precise...differentiation is only a matter of convenience, but any body still requires membranes to keep from being swept out to sea altogether. “There is always a risk of flooding.”²³

So, while there is a transcorporeal thread there are also transcorporeal threats.

“What marks the definitive shift from one species to a new one? Where does the host body end and the amniotic body begin?...

In acknowledging this corporeally connected aqueous community, distinctions between human and nonhuman start to blur...But when and how does gift becomes theft, and sustainability usurpation?”²⁴

“For example, antigens derived from eleven pounds of sea squirts can supply enough anticancer drugs to satisfy the world’s demand for a year. Flows of power are inaugurated between marine life, human bodies in pain, and Big Pharma.”²⁵

While flowing on the waves of the hydrofeminism, realising the need for the new ethic, Neimanis found herself diving in the depths of the ecotones. Ecotones would be a zone of junction between two biomes or two ecosystems.

“But more than just a marker of separation or even a marker of connection (although importantly both of these things), an ecotone is also a zone of fecundity, creativity, transformation...In Gilles Deleuze’s terms, this event-full zone could be called “inorganic life”²⁶

Deleuze and Guattari are crossing Astrida Neimanis’ mind while Neimanis is in the deep waters of ecotones searching for the new ethics and that is no surprise.

The philosophical duo was interested in the question of what would life be if not constrained within the organic sphere and that is why they used the oxymoron of ‘inorganic life’, to challenge the contemporary biological idea of life where inorganic life stays out of the system.

In their work *A Thousand Plateaus* they argue how “the organism is that which life sets against itself in order to limit itself, there is a life all the more intense, all the more powerful for being inorganic”²⁷ where the attempt is not to diminish the aliveness of the organisms, yet to draw attention to the frightful power of the inorganic life which is oblivious to the organisms’ wisdom and limits.

²³ Ibid., p. 105.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 105.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 106.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 107.

²⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 503.

"If everything is alive, it is not because everything is organic or organised, but, on the contrary, because the organism is a diversion of life. In short the life in question is inorganic, germinal, and intensive, a powerful life without organs, a body that is all the more alive for having no organs."²⁸

Just like Deleuze and Guattari suggested 'inorganic life' as 'inorganic, yet alive, Neimanis invites us to be open to the unknown. According to Neimanis "we must learn to be at home in the quivering tension of the in-between. No other home is available, in-between nature and culture, in-between biology and philosophy, in-between the human and everything we ram ourselves up against, everything we desperately shield ourselves from, everything we throw ourselves into, wrecked and recklessly, watching, amazed, as our skins become thinner."²⁹

The idea of 'our skins becoming thinner' can be seen as a symbol of giving up the idea of the strong borders between us and other-than-us during the everlasting process of 'exchanging the energies'.

The thinner our skin gets, the greater the risk of flooding, one never knows. "There are things we do know...but at what point do the sharp edges of our certainty begin to blur? As Stacy Alaimo notes, transcorporeal threats are often invisible, and risk is incalculable. The future is always an open question, and our bodies must be understood as flowing beyond the bounds of what is knowable."³⁰ "On this "ever-changing landscape of continuous interplay, intra-action, emergence, and risk,"³¹ even as we insist upon accountability, we must also make decisions that eschew certainty and necessary courses of action. This is an ethics of *unknowability*."³²

Now, imagine a huge ecotone, an in-between space full of inorganic, yet organic life, a space where the water is everywhere and in everything; sometimes as matter, sometimes as meaning, sometimes as both. An in-between space where water never preserves its shape but it shapes our logic towards the hydro-logic and where our membranes are partially permeable ones. That is the Third Landscape.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 499.

²⁹ Neimanis, op.cit., p. 108.

³⁰ Neimanis, op.cit., p. 109.

³¹ Stacy Alaimo, *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010, p. 20.

³² Neimanis, op.cit., p. 110.

Once becoming a body of water or I would say once finding ourselves living in the Third Landscape, we could wonder what would be 'the feeling' connecting all of us in 'we'? The question of feeling requires a different way of thinking which inspires a different understanding and treatment of the world around us.

"Clean us like the rain in spring
Take the chlorine out our conversation
Let Your light reflect on me
I promise I'm not hiding anything
It's water
We are water
Pure as water
Like a newborn daughter
The storm may come
But we'll get through it because of Your love
Either way, we crash like water
Your love's water
Pure as water
We are water"³³

What are feelings and what kind of behaviours can they cause? What can they tell us about the life of/in the community? What type of bodies they can create and what might these bodies bespeak in the context of the ethical framework and the way we live together, the way we live with?

A mystic Romain Rolland on December 5th 1927 in his letter to Sigmund Freud wrote: "Your analysis of religions is a just one. But I would have liked to see you do an analysis of spontaneous religious sentiment or, more exactly, of religious feeling, which is wholly different from religions in the strict sense of the word...What I mean is, a feeling totally

³³ Kanye West feat. Ant Clemons, "Water", in *Jesus is King*, 2019

independent of all dogma, all credo, all Church organisation, all Sacred Books, all hope for personal salvation, etc., the simple and direct reality of the feeling of the 'eternal' (which might very well not be eternal, but simply without perceptible limits. Oceanic, as it were)."³⁴

Nineteen months later, Freud wrote back to Roland: "Your remark about a feeling you describe as 'oceanic' has left me no peace."³⁵

In his letter to Freud, Rolland is using 'oceanic' to describe a sensation of eternity, a feeling of being one with the external world as a whole and to express a sensation of being embedded in eternity. Freud writes about the 'oceanic feeling' in his book *Civilisation and its Discontents* (1930) whose primary theme, according to its editor is "the irremediable antagonism between the demands of instinct and the restrictions of civilisation."³⁶

While Romain Rolland sees the oceanic feeling as a religious feeling of oneness with the entire universe, Freud sees it as a feeling of limitlessness where one is going back to the infantile mode of being here a child cannot distinguish itself from its mother. For Freud it is a state without the ego, where one has not developed 'I', a position-less state of the constant moving, a state of not belonging.

Beside Freud and his view on 'oceanic feeling' presented in *Civilisation and its Discontents*, Julia Kristeva writes on 'oceanic feeling' in her book *Black Sun*. In *Black Sun* she expresses her view on the oceanic feeling as "fantasy of untouchable fullness"³⁷ and "a depressive denial that leads the subject to commit suicide."³⁸ Her view on 'oceanic' is similar to the one of Freud where 'oceanic' is seen as an infantile regression.

"In both Kristeva and Freud oceanic feeling is threatening, infantile, and rooted in a pre-Oedipal (or perhaps even pre-natal) experience of non-differentiation. The oceanic is threatening because it has the potential to dissolve the individual's subjective boundaries. In Rolland's terms oceanic feeling is not an infantile defence or regressive return to a pre-Oedipal state, but part of a mature process of becoming; an experience of ego loss that enables one to commune with the "substance" of existence in a way that radically alters one's orientation to the world."³⁹

³⁴ Romain Rolland, Letters, 1927.

³⁵ Sigmund Freud, Letters, 1929.

³⁶ Sigmund Freud, "Civilisation and its Discontents", in *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud. Volume 21*, London: Hogarth, 1911

³⁷ Kristeva, op.cit.

³⁸ Kristeva, op.cit.

³⁹ Jackie Wang, "Oceanic Feeling and Communist Affect", *RIBOCA2*, http://https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ma6y2IFdUY&ab_channel=RIBOCA

When Neimanis invites us to become a 'body of water' she invites us to loosen up to feel the 'oceanic feeling'. Rolland's concept of the oceanic feeling is rooted in the 17th century philosophy of Baruch Spinoza. We can not understate the influence of Spinoza on Rolland's development of the oceanic feeling because of the minimum two reasons: first, Spinoza offered a philosophical frame to understand the oceanic feeling and the second, the oceanic feeling occurred to Roland as a mystical experience while reading Spinoza's most important work *Ethics*, 1677.

In his work *Ethics* Spinoza elaborates the concept of 'Deus sive Natura' which is a slogan of Spinoza's pantheism, a view according to which God or Nature are interchangeable, they are a single infinite substance to which belongs all existence. "Thus, Spinoza's philosophy, which is sometimes called a rational mysticism, reveals a kind of already-existing communism, even while on another level, we inhabit a historical milieu that is considered post-communist (insofar as the major communist political endeavours of the twentieth century have failed). But if we concede that communism failed, perhaps it is not due to a failure to figure out the best possible social and economic modes of organisation, but because we didn't have the affective and imaginative resources to even begin to envision a mode of existence centred on connectedness over differentiation."⁴⁰

Gilles Clement sees the Third Landscape as a place of the future for plants, animals and possibly humans because it is a place of connectedness over differentiation and "the maintenance of its existence does not depend on wise people but on a collective consciousness."⁴¹ A seemingly utopian place, the Third Landscape or the place where the connectedness is coming from the collective consciousness, could possibly find its affective source in the concept of Deus and Natura and its imaginative source in the concept of 'oceanic feeling'. Concepts suggested by Spinoza and Romain demonstrate realistic chances of the possibility for one place like that.

Both of the thinkers were taken seriously by the Western way of living and thinking. While the thinking processes in the minds of Freud and Kristeva are (un)consciously rooted in the Western Christian philosophy, we can notice how Rolland and Spinoza made their trip to the far East, searching for a different mode of existence. The ideas coming from Romain Rolland and Baruch de Spinoza are real, legit and they shouldn't be seen as merely imagination nor seen as another attempt to imagine a better world which will never happen, opposed to realistic ideas coming from minds such as Freud and Kristeva.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Clement, op.cit., p. 13.

Rolland was a lifelong pacifist and vegetarian. To understand the primal source of the idea of 'oceanic feeling' we have to go into Indian philosophy. It was through the works of Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna that Rolland came up with the concept of 'oceanic feeling' as a feeling of being one with the external world as a whole. "The man (Ramakrishna) was the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of the three hundred million people"⁴² said Romain Rolland.

Ramakrishna, an Indian mystic and spiritual leader from the 19th century taught that all living beings are divine and God is present in all men, women and all the other living beings. His cardinal concepts include the oneness of existence, the unity of all religion. "Sometimes I would share my food with a dog. My hair became matted. Birds would perch on my head and peck at the grains of rice which had lodged there during the worship. Snakes would crawl over my motionless body."⁴³

Mother, Nature, Ocean, God, Togetherness, Ecstasy, Gay.

In the philosophical concepts of Baruch de Spinoza we will find some Buddhist and Brahmanical elements. "...metaphysics are similar, too: all things are interconnected for Spinoza, since they are modes of either the attribute of body (if they are material things), or of the attribute of the mind (if they are mental entities). In any case, all are parts of the one substance: God or Nature. We might thus read Spinoza as claiming that things, whether physical or mental, do not possess independent existence in themselves because the only thing that possesses such an existence is God. In Buddhism, rather similarly, things are also interconnected; and though it is well-known that Buddhist philosophy entertains no conception of a personal God, the Buddhist must surely find some comfort in Spinoza's conception."⁴⁴

The basic difference between the human beings of the East and the ones of the West is their attitude towards Nature. How we treat Nature permeates not only everyday life, but upgrades, philosophies, and the arts, as well. Western human beings are trying to conquer and control Nature, to force nature to work for them.

"So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth
and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living
creature that moves on the ground.'"⁴⁵

⁴² Romain Rolland, *The Life of Ramakrishna*, Hollywood: Vedanta Press, 1929, p. 142.

⁴³ Swami Chetanananda, *Ramakrishna As We Saw Him*, Saint Louis: Vedanta Society, 1990, p. 14.

⁴⁴ Soraj Hongladarom, *Spinoza & Buddhism on the Self*, Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2015

⁴⁵ Geneis I 27, 28

Human beings of the East want to live with nature, in nature and feeling it inside themselves.

“Just as a mother would protect her only child with her life, even so let one cultivate a boundless love towards all beings.”⁴⁶

As already mentioned, how we see, live and treat our surroundings is noticeable in all of the aspects of our existence regardless of who we are. The artists of the West loved to depict ‘natura morte’ while the artists of the East preferred to depict the big nature, high mountains, endless fields of trees with the human beings in it, depicted as beings living with nature and in nature.

Humans depicted so small, one could barely find them in the paintings of the East. Furthermore, the idea of perspective in the visual arts. The artists of the west discovered perspective not because of their better sight, but because of the way they see nature. The artists of the East didn’t have the need to look for the perspective while depicting nature as they were part of it. Seemingly benign, on a deeper level this mode of functioning is how the West (dominant) eye, hand, brain sees, organise and lives life.

The Third Landscape reveals itself as a physical place which could allow us a different point of view, a different point of departure for a different mode of existence. A mode of existence where becoming a body of water will activate the oceanic feeling and lead us to the point where we can understand Spinoza when he equalled God and Nature. All these ideas joined together could possibly give us a political, social and economical platform for its realisation as “by its content, by the stakes that diversity carries, by the need to preserve it or to maintain its dynamics the Third Landscape acquires a political dimension.”⁴⁷

Becoming a body of water or to feel the oceanic or to see that all that is Nature will evoke a different thinking which inspires a different understanding and a different relation with everything that surrounds us. By becoming a body of water, a body *living in and coming from Nature*, a body with an *oceanic feeling*, we are becoming what Brandon LaBelle calls “a relational body.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Buddha

⁴⁷ Clement, op.cit., p. 13.

⁴⁸ Brandon Labelle, *Listening: A Relational Body*, Bergen: Social Acoustics, 2018, p. 2.

The ideas or even conclusions that Brandon LaBelle offers while thinking bodies which are connected over listening and through sounds, would be similar to the ideas of bodies which are connected through the water and its oceanic feeling. Furthermore, both of the speculations, sand one of the bodies which listens and the other body of water, are connected and connecting through-waves. What is sound to the body that listens, the oceanic feeling is to the body of water. In the third landscape it is the oceanic feeling which creates a relational body. The oceanic feeling is defined as oceanic "because it gives animation or expression to this ambiguous event of things meeting"⁴⁹, it is a result of "the body contacting the material world around; the force of so many elements meeting, displacing and replacing particular assemblies, to circulate, to travel away, and quite possibly, to function as a meta-materiality."⁵⁰

Meta-materiality, as described by Brandon LaBelle in his text about-sound, is the most important characteristic of the oceanic feeling, it's what makes it exist. The only constant in the Third Landscape is the oceanic feeling. It is present in everything that is, in every being. Its source is undefinable and in its being the oceanic feeling is "a type of composite- might I even say: *mutant*? - expressed as the intensity of togetherness: interruptive, resonant, vibratory."⁵¹

Oceanic feeling is a "collection of so many frictions and contacts."⁵²

We could say that the oceanic feeling is operating like a sound wave. The oceanic feeling "can have such a forceful presence- it breaks into us, it ruptures the surface; it is immediately a transgression of borders, a trespass: it doesn't stay put, rather, it springs upon us; I am *pressed*...washed over by its movements- there is nowhere to hide."⁵³

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 1.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 2.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

What consequences does this relational body have for us?

As the direct result of the oceanic feeling, a relational body “upsets a notion of subjectivity as pre-existing others, as sovereign; rather, subjectivity is elaborated as relational intensity: that which is always incomplete, interdependent.”⁵⁴ A relational body feeling oceanic is “a form of generosity by which we band ourselves to meet each other.”⁵⁵ The self defined like this is a self “imagined not as a point, but as a membrane; not as a picture, but as a channel through which voices, noises and music travel.”⁵⁶ If the oceanic feeling “exposes us, if it passes through us, to bring us into relation with others, it must be understood to create not only the conditions for empathy and intimacy, of deep attention, but also that of interruption and interference, threat and danger...may work to integrate us within a space of things that are absolutely foreign to us; it may, in fact, challenge the familiarity of oneself”⁵⁷ or to remind ourselves on the words of Neimanis: “there is always the risk of flooding.”⁵⁸

A landscape without the surveillance, ‘a genetic reservoir’ and the refuge space of the future, a space where the bodies of water are relational, their brains think hydro-logic and their oceanic feelings are the bodies of the Third Landscape. The body of the Third Landscape “is more than its visual or physical outline; it is more than the shape of my corporeal objectness, or even the identities we sometimes work so hard to foster. Rather, the body is flexed and pressed by an array of intensities...which opens up possibilities for relating to or confronting others, especially that which is farthest from myself. The mutant.”⁵⁹

A relational body which thinks hydrologic and feels oceanic “is fundamentally the beginning of a possible community; a way of thinking or orienting an approach to community, as being constituted by the incomplete, interruption, and the fragment. If speaking and hearing each other are fundamental to shaping community, to working through the concerns we hold in common, then engaging an acoustical paradigm might assist in fostering conditions of trust, responsibility, care, without corralling a life of togetherness into a shape of the familiar and the agreeable. Here, we might arrive at an emergent ethics of community, as the working through of the noise of sociality: which must also include that which I have nothing in common with. In other words, recognition beyond recognition.”⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Neimanis, op.cit., p. 105.

⁵⁹ Labelle, op.cit., p. 2.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

Bodies of water are in constant, uncontrollable movement, in the non-stop receiving/emission of the oceanic feeling waves because their bodies are fluid and relational. All of these bodies, as both 'bodies of matter' and 'bodies of meaning', would allow us to explore another way of thinking, understanding, inspiring and relating with what Brendon LaBelle refers to as "community life."⁶¹

The way we think and the way we understand will determine the performative pedagogy which we need to produce knowledge,-knowledge as a tool we use to be from nature and before nature.

With this text I am suggesting that despite everything we humans can change, we can change our habits, the way we think and the way we know. Just like Gilles Clement discovered a piece of land where everything is in harmony and it is so by undoing. Everything is in balance and the landscape offers numerous possibilities, species develop freely and by doing so, they create an impressive safe zone for everyone, humans and non-humans.

You can read ideas from scholars and wise humans who proposed something real and possible, we just have to figure out if we really want harmony or, despite all these ideas, we prefer to stay in a landscape ruled by inequality and unfair games.

If we stop for a moment and if we look wide, I am sure we could draw the lines differently, we could become bodies of water and find the oceanic feeling where we understand that our bodies are relational. These relations are not here to be created only between humans, relational bodies are between all of us. When I say us, I mean all of us. It's up to you to open your eyes wider and see other-than-humans, that they are equally part of "us". The only thing we have to do is to realise how there are so many ways and low theories that could lead us towards that. Again, we just need to want that. And the only question is: are we ready as humans to give up part of our power and recognise the power of others around us, because as we see in this text, they are us. Are we ready for a place without the privileged point?

"Freedom, 'I'dom, 'Me'dom
Where's your 'We'dom?
This world needs a brand new 'Re'dom
We'dom - the key
We'dom the key'dom to life!
Let's be 'dem
We'dom smart phones

Don't be dumb!"⁶²

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 1.

⁶² M.I.A., "Borders", in *A/M*, 2015

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALAIMO, Stacy. *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010, 210 p.

BIBLE, Geneis I 27, 28

BUDHHA

CHEGANANANDA, Swami. *Ramakrishna As We Saw Him*, Saint Louis: Vedanta Society, 1990, 572 p.

CLEMENT, Gilles. *Manifesto of the Third Landscape*, Halles: Trans Europe Halles, 2004, 35 p.

DAHL, Roald. *Charlie and the chocolate factory*, London: Allen&Unwin, 1964, 192 p.

DELEUZE, Gilles. and GUATTARI, Félix. *A Thousand Plateaus*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, 632 p.

EMERSON, R. Valdo. *The Poems of Ralph Valdo Emerson*, Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2007, p. 256

FREUD, Sigmund. *Civilisation and its Discontents*, London: Penguin Group, 2014, p. 151.

FREUD, Sigmund., J. Strachey (ed.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XXI (1927-1931)*

HALBERSTAM, Jack. *The Queer art of Failure*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2011, 224 p.

HARVEY, David. *Spaces of Capital: Towards a critical geography*, New York: Routledge, 2000, 320 p.

HONGLADAROM, Soraj. *Spinoza and Buddhism on the Self*, Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 2015

KANG M., LESSARD D., HESTON L., NORDMARKEN S., *Introduction to women, gender, sexuality studies*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2017, 135 p.

KRISTEVA, Julia. *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, New York: Columbia UP, 1989, 300 p.

LABELLE, Brandon. *Listening: A Relational Body*, Bergen: Social Acoustics, 2018, 5 p.

M.I.A., "Borders", in *AIM*, 2015

NEIMANIS, Astrida. "Hydrofeminism: Or, On Becoming a Body of Water", in *Undutiful Daughters: Mobilising Future Concepts, Bodies and Subjectivities in Feminist Thought and Practice*, des. Henriette Gunkel, Chrysanthi Nigianni and Fanny Soderback, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 96-115.

OLSSON, G. "Heretic Cartography", in *Fennia - International Journal of Geography*, Vol,172 No.2 (1994), Helsinki, Geographical Society of Finland pp. 115-130.

ROLLAND, Romain. *Letters*, 1927.

ROLLAND, Romain. *The Life of Ramakrishna*, Hollywood: Vedanta Press, 1929, 224 p.

SIEYES, Emmanuel. *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-Etat*, 1789.

SONENBERG, Maya. *Cartographies*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1989, 176 p.

WANG, J. *Oceanic Feeling and Communist Affect*. From https://youtube.com/watch?v=ma6y2IFDfUY&ab_channel=RIBOCA

WEST, Kanye. "Water", in *Jesus is King*, 2019