

In-Between Time and Space:

A Research on the Performative Process of Meaning Production

Landscape as a *potential receptacle – a meeting-place* – for artistic actions and cultural happenings

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Theme: Exploring and discussing the dramaturgy and the history of the landscape and how from these reflexions a cultural or artistic activity may emerge, and how landscape architects, planners and performing artists can collaborate on this issue, becoming 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.

This paper explores the issue of how the 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, at the same time, it will investigate artistic performance and musical activity in the landscape as a contribution to the awareness and mindfulness of what is specified in the environment as well as in the musical/performance structure without resorting to a series of constructive mind stages.

Gibson (1960, 1979) suggests that in order to perceive a stable environment, one must be able to detect constant, 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 or may use the landscape² and the landscape theory and architecture as part of a new sense of reality created through the musical and dramaturgical process of meaning production and where artistic and cultural performative events may be provided to happen.

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² All the perceptible features of an area of countryside or land often considered in terms of their aesthetic appeal.

In this sense, the intersection of the fields - Landscape Theory/Architecture and Performing/Cultural Arts - will have most profit by using reciprocally their knowledge, especially in the sense of creating new artistic and landscape realities which 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 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 used in the actual context - *Performance Studies* - become a "multi-discipline" in the sense that the multiplicity of its disciplines, methods and fields of study, which are at use within the performance creative research, will purchase and purpose the appearance of new realities and entities which may be the result of the *becoming process of a multi-disciplinary event*.

By drawing from theories of the Performing Arts, Music Performance studies and Landscape Theory/Architecture all together, the theoretical process subjacent to the different involved artistic and scientific fields rose a new bridge between them and disclosed a new exciting and thrilling field of research which has already given birth to some worthy reflections, new important essays, and excellent performance practice results.³

³ See in Research Catalogue the investigation and the discussions resulting from *Meeting(s)-place(s) research project(s): Meeting Places - Music Theatre and Landscape*, an Erasmus+ project with European Funding shared by the SADA (Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts), SLU (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences), the University of Winchester, England, Malmö Academy of Music, and the ESMAE (Superior School of Music, Drama and Performing Arts), in Porto, Portugal.

In fact, one of the great achievements of the *Meeting-place(s) project(s)* was to raise an awareness on how Landscape, as a borderland in-between artistic and scientific research fields, affects and is affected by tradition, customs and daily life; it has also clarified the basis of the multidisciplinary investigation of *Landscape* – a unique and singular *substratual layer*⁴ - where the referred processes of meaning production may happen and emerge.

The way the structure and the dynamics of Landscape has affected (and has been affected by) the production of sound is well documented in the history of mankind,⁵ including in the mythological stories.⁶ Since ancient times Landscape (nature- and urban-) has always been present and affected the production of human myths, arts and music within mythological and religious ceremonies. These myths and stories report the significance that human kind attributes since ancient times to the rapport between sound and space, between music and landscape. Since ancient times myth has flourished in the confusion that reigns between these two elements of composition: the *eye* and the *ear*.⁷ *The eye* holds, separates, confines, delineates, establishes the orthodoxy of Reason; *the ear* flows, brings together, develops continuity, inspires the heterodoxy of Body and Life. These two notions of space and time are diametrically opposed: “*one is centripetal, the other centrifugal*” (Suner, 2014).

Nevertheless, the composition of sound has often brought into its domain the

⁴ Substrate, by definition, is a substance or layer that underlies something, or on which some process emerges, in particular.

⁵ It is well known how Landscape has inspired the manufacturing of musical instruments to overcome the imposed natural obstacles, as it is the case of the alphorn; also, how it has inspired the herders to sing in order 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).

⁶ The Mythology is full of such narratives. The walls of Jericho crumbled at the sound of the Seven Trumpets and Joshua’s people clamors; Amphion, son of Zeus and Antiope, raised the ramparts of Thebes with the magic musical chords of his lyre.

⁷ For further information see M. Dufrenne. (1987). *L’oeil et L’oreille*, Éditions de l’Hexagone et Mikel Dufrenne. ISBN 2-89006-258-9. See also Bruno Suner. *La ville comme scène*/Bruno Suner, Valeur(s) 2014. Available in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGn7nTFE0j0_5_9_2016_21.12> Retrieved: 1st of April of 2019.

orthodoxy of the *eye*.⁸ Likewise, the composition of space has brought into its domain the heterodoxy of the *ear*.⁹ Thus, the large number of mimetic processes observed between the two realms show enough evidence to suggest the existence of exit-points, land-scape-lines, lines-of-flight¹⁰ promoting singular events in a recurrent way which enable the creative artistic and cultural production of meaning to *flow* freely between these two referred domains.

It is true that *Landscape* has often played, historically, the background role of a staged ‘scenery’; but to consider it just as a ‘scenario’ is to tell very little of about its main *significance*.

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

Based on the experience of *Meeting-places project*, the main goal of this singular new specific research carried out within the larger EOA_LAB project¹¹ is to experiment this new

⁸ Pythagorean universal harmony, for example, uses a mimetic relationship with a supposed rational celestial harmony. Iannis Xenakis' "Symbolic Music" explores computer-aided compositional processes in order to research new formal and creative aspects in music composition (Georgaki, A. 2005)

⁹ The work of Bruno Suner and the work of Iannis Xenakis seem to bring to life an endless play of mimetic games between the music and the architecture. Music for a building, or building for the Music? The mimetic game between music and architecture is settled as a constant element of both architectures.

¹⁰ Deleuze, G.& Guattari, F. (1980, p. 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(od)yW(ithout)O(rgans).*”

¹¹ European Opera Academy – Competence Center for Shared Education in Opera Training (EOA_LAB_WG2)

significance of Landscape as an ‘operatunity’ to produce flow conjunctions between the artistic and cultural performance practice processes and the communities’ history and the audiences’ development. In this sense, Landscape should not be seen just as a view or a scenery, but mainly as a potential receptacle for artistic, cultural and political happenings, once it is also formed by the customs, the tradition and the communities’ life who have inhabit it throughout history. Therefore, Landscape could also be seen as a common virtual time/space substratum for communicational actions of meaning production.

One of the main goals of this new project is also to explore how audiences can become participants and co-creators in the artistic and cultural happening rather than just spectators. It aims also to explore how from the different historical layers of the landscape one may build a new context for artistic and cultural actions, and how it may disclose in the people of the ‘audience’ a new significance of ‘full-happening’ and ‘thrilling moment’ by becoming participants and action co-creators, while the artistic performative deliverance and the semiotic process flow emerge as a freeing emancipatory experience.¹²

In this sense, whether structured by mankind or running naturally wild, *Landscape* may always be seen, and potentially work, as an ‘in-between’ *Matricial Khôra*, i.e., a virtual location or a potential spot where cultural events may take place and where artistic

¹² Erlingsdotter, Sara (2013) seems to corroborate this vision of the new significance of Landscape, in her statement in *Purcells’ Fairy Queen Opera Brochure of the Post-Graduated Opera Course of the ESMAE* (a collaboration project between SADA – *Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts* and ESMAE – *Superior School of Music and Dramatic Arts*, under Sara’s staging direction and Salgado’s artistic and musical direction): “*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.*” Another good example of the so-called ‘operatunities’ happened in Finland promoted by a WG2 participant, Anna Kirse, under the name of Tree Opera. According to Kirse (2019): “*Tree Opera is an open-air high-quality interart piece that is based on recent scientific research, highlighting the ecological and cultural significance of forests. It took place on 17.-18.08.2019 in an old-growth forests in the area of Hyrynsalmi, Finland. The starting point for the contemporary opera piece is the entwined relationship of humans and forests and the conscious and unconscious communication that is based on it. The opera’s libretto is inspired by forester and author Peter Wohlleben’s book The Hidden Life of Trees, in which he asks if the trees are, in fact, social beings. He draws on scientific findings to describe trees’ similarities with humans.*”

performative events may 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 virtual receptacle, a potential material substratum, or even an interval of existence. For Plato, *Khôra*, is neither being or non-being, not sensible nor intelligible, but it rests between the two realms and it is like a virtual substructure or substratum, a potential sieve or riddled path through which everything passes, but in which nothing is retained.¹³

Building on this Platonic conception, Martin Heidegger (1959) refers also to *Khôra* as a "clearing" in which 'being' happens or takes place. Taking in consideration these conceptions, one can think, on a first stage, of *Landscape* as an available *khôra-receptacle* for Artistic and Cultural performances. But, inspired in Derrida's (1993) text – *Khôra* – it would be possible to go even further and suggest that *Landscape*, as we conceive it, borderland in-between time and space, 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, and where the artistic meaning may be primordially produced, echoing what Julia Kristeva claimed as the "emancipatory activity of

¹³ 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 *Khôra*. The concept of the *Khôra*, distinguished by its elusive properties, would have become then a physical reality, had the project been realized... but, as the project evolved in de-construction of itself... the *Khôra* became its original fate: *a radical otherness, a non-place, something beyond a neutral space or a conceptual framing.*

the semiotic process” (Kristeva, 1984).¹⁴

Landscape, in this sense, is less a physical demarcated domain working like an ornamental ‘scenery’, but appears, invigorating, as the in-between time and space of a complex relationship between artists and cultural agents and the audience, and the artistic, cultural, social and political awareness, and expectations, that they may, or may not, share.

On the other hand, Gibson (1960, 1979) suggests, as referred, that in order 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 “captured” information depends not only on the awareness of the perceiver but also on the *substrate* that one has at its own disposal. *Substrate*, by definition, is *a substance or layer that underlies something, or on which some process emerges, in particular*.

Borrowing the concept of *Subjectile*¹⁵ from Antonin Artaud (1988), Derrida (1998) argues that this Artaud’s concept works like Plato’s conception of *Khôra*: it is both *ground* and *support*. According to him, the *substrate* may have two *situations*, and can take the place of the subject or of the object – being neither one, nor the other. Finally, he holds that the *Subjectile* functions as a hypothesis concerning the relationship between the subject and the object of art and is a ‘*subjectile*’ itself.¹⁶

¹⁴ Maria Margaroni (2005) argues that the Semiotic Chora constitutes an attempt on Kristeva's part to explore a third space of ambiguous relationality in the context of which our transcendence to the "demonic" lies less "beyond us" than "in-between." According to Augustine Perumalil (2009), in *The History of Women in Philosophy*, Kristeva's ‘semiotic’ is closely related to the infantile pre-Oedipal referred to in the works of Freud, Melanie Klein, 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 and symbolic 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 all ‘that’ lacks structure and structured meaning.

¹⁵ French word for *Substrate*.

¹⁶ Derrida J., & Thévenin, P., *The Secret Art of Antonin Artaud*, Caws, Mary Ann, The MIT Press, 1998.

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, one can believe, on that ground, that *Landscape*, as a borderland in-between time and space, 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 perceived, *in-between* time and space 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.¹⁷

So, it may be assumed that *Landscape*, according to the different mapping processes throughout the ages, and over the multiple and diverse time/space rapports, has given place in accordance with 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 become differently perceived according to the emergent landscape-substrate within the process of meaning production and of semiotic flow engaged by the singular 'in-between land-scapes' connections, developments and becoming. In this sense, and in what regards the landscape performative (artistic and/or cultural) context, it is here proposed now the term *Land-Scape-Substratum* for what has been suggested, before, as *Matricial-Khôra* or *Subjectile*.

In this new *borderline* performative context, *Landscape* becomes more than just a physical domain, a view, or a 'scenery' where artistic and cultural performances are played or

¹⁷ A deep resonance with this can be heard in Brook's (1968) words and explanation of which categories do the *performances* fall, and from which the following brief resumé may be presented: 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 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.

re-presented to audiences. It becomes a *meeting-place* where the interaction between the performer, the audience and the structure of the work being performed 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 and emancipatory processes. It is, subsequently, a new significance process where music and musical structure, written and/or improvised, may be engaged within a completely new relationship between performer, dramaturgy, audience and *Land-Scape-Substratum*.

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New musical reality and contemporary education: curricular development and methodological strategies at European conservatories (focus on Music Theater, Interdisciplinary art, Vocal studies and Opera)

In this article I explore the needs and challenges for music education in relation to the changing reality of the music world with particular focus on opera, music theatre and interdisciplinary art. I give an overview of several innovative curricular development strategies at different European schools.

The music reality which underpins the classical musical education differs greatly from the contemporary situation. The differences are apparent in the musical expression, not only in the great variety of styles and genres, but also in the variety of conceptual approaches, technologies and forms of production. Hence, a wider range of musical specialisations are required in the creation and production of music theatre. Composers, singers, instrumentalists, directors, actors, visual artists and computer programmers need to be primed with a thorough understanding of current and innovative practices.

When we compare music from the XIX and beginning of the XX centuries to the post war era (ca. from 1950), the most significant change is the democratisation of the music scene. This entails: new ways of expressions, alternative forms of production, broad access to financial support. All this today results in a cultural landscape in Europe that is marked by a pluralism of expression, musical means and institutions. Parallel to the traditional orchestras, opera and concert houses, a growing number of contemporary ensembles, independent music /dance / theatre groups, interdisciplinary art platforms, each with very different artistic and economic strategies are influencing the production of music. This scene operates with its own set of dynamics - often more personal and swift - compared to the traditional formations - and this too requires new competences from the musicians in terms of communication and networking.

The task of the educational institutions today is to respond to all these changes and support students with adequate strategies. Next to the traditional competences such as mastering voice/instrument techniques, which are covered by the classical education or classical theoretical subjects, the new musical reality requires mastering extended vocal and instrumental techniques, a solid understanding of modern musical notation, a developed confidence in the creativity of the performer, the ability to understand / use technology, a broad cultural awareness, a willingness to collaborate, an aptitude to communicate and manage one's own career.

The traditional music education is based on the clear objectives: mastering the traditional repertoire. Crucially important are: a readiness to perform specific roles in an opera for the singers, well prepared orchestral parts for instrumentalists, classical orchestration skills for composers, etc. The efficiency of this type of education is based on a specific functionality which is best achieved in a linear progression throughout the academic studies. This process methodology based on repetition is not the best suited however to prepare students for contemporary music reality. The new methodologies (such as project related education, creative incubators, etc.) and new subjects (such as notation of contemporary music, new media skills) are often missing in the curricula of today's music education institutions.