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► **To cite this version:**

Didier Lassalle, Dirk Weissmann. Ex(tra)territorial: from Law to Literature, Languages and Culture. Didier Lassalle; Dirk Weissmann. Ex(tra)territorial : les territoires littéraires, culturels et linguistiques en question/reassessing territory in literature, culture and language, , 2014. hal-01634659

**HAL Id: hal-01634659**

**<https://hal.science/hal-01634659>**

Submitted on 17 Nov 2017

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## Ex(tra)territorial: from Law to Literature, Languages and Culture Didier Lassalle / Dirk Weissmann\*

This introduction will retrace the history of the concept of extraterritoriality from its distant origins in the legal sphere to its current issues in cultural studies. This genealogy first requires a return to the concept of territory, from which extraterritoriality was derived. We will then explore some ways of conceptualising territoriality and extraterritoriality in the realm of literature, language and culture. In doing so, we will situate the concept of extraterritoriality in relation to certain theoretical approaches stemming from postmodernity and post-colonialism.

As a judicial concept, based on international public law and dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>1</sup> the term *extraterritoriality* (or *exterritoriality*)<sup>2</sup> has long excited interest in the fields of humanities and literature, fields which have, since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, not hesitated to appropriate the term, widening and transforming it in the process. This fact is supported by its use, in a figurative sense, by authors such as Georg Simmel, Franz Kafka, Sigmund Freud, Robert Musil, Joseph Roth, Siegfried Kracauer, Georges Steiner and others.

According to its most common present definition, legal extraterritoriality means “the state of being exempted from the jurisdiction of local law, usually as the result of diplomatic negotiations. Extraterritoriality can also be applied to physical places [...]”<sup>3</sup> The seat of the United Nations in New York and NATO headquarters in Brussels are contemporary examples. From a different perspective, extraterritoriality also defines the principle which permits a country to allow a foreign State to exercise its authority on a part of this country’s own territory.

However, the concept of extraterritoriality nowadays has more and more meanings and uses outside the legal sphere – a trend reinforced by what has been called the *spatial turn*,<sup>4</sup> i.e. the development, at the end of the 1980s, of a theoretical paradigm emphasising the historicity and contingency of the

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<sup>1</sup> It was certainly the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius who was the inventor of the concept, developed in Latin, in 1625. For the origins of the principle of extraterritoriality and its discussion from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, see Alfons Heyking: *L’Exterritorialité* (Berlin: Puttkammer & Mühlbrecht, 1889).

<sup>2</sup> According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the introduction of the term of *extraterritoriality* in English, dating back to 1869, came after that of *exterritoriality*, dating from 1859. In order to do justice to this duplication of terminology, the present work will adopt the practice of using the term *exterritorialité* in French and *extraterritoriality* in all chapters in the English language.

<sup>3</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extraterritoriality>.

<sup>4</sup> Jörg Döring and Tristan Thielmann (ed.), *Spatial turn, Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2008), p. 7.

different schemes of territoriality, in relying on systems of thought developed from postmodernity.<sup>5</sup>

Whereas legal science is based on the principle of a rigorous definition of its concepts, the transfer of extraterritoriality beyond its original realm opens another area of reflection, a space for imagination, thanks largely to a re-reading, both metaphorical and literal, of the term. Indeed, the prefix *ex(tra)-*, designating exit, separation, or displacement, seems to bring the concept of extraterritoriality close to some recent notions formed with the *trans*-prefix, such as *trans-national*, *trans-cultural*, *trans-disciplinary* and *trans-lingual*. These are concepts which feature at the forefront of current debates in the humanities and social sciences, and which share the idea of a movement to the other side of a boundary, beyond a defined area.

Therefore, if the concept of extraterritoriality can refer to a transfer or an abandonment of territorial authority, a specific agreement between two constituent territories, it can also be understood as an (albeit utopian) existence outside territory, an *a*-territorial status, close to the Deleuzian notion of deterritorialisation, to which we will return below. Yet, is it not precisely this relationship of exteriority – or even negativity – that extraterritoriality maintains with the idea of territory, which explains the interest that many writers, intellectuals and academics took in this term? Would the emergence of a (post-)modern paradigm of extraterritoriality, not be the first reaction to a concept of territory which in the 20<sup>th</sup> century could mutate into a bellicose and xenophobic term of combat? Robert Musil's ideas on this concept, recorded in his diary in 1938, seem to confirm this view: "*The extraterritoriality of the intellectual*: this is the right expression in this era of blood, soil, race, mass, dictators and homeland."<sup>6</sup> During the same period as Carl Schmitt developed his theory of the "total state" and the "*Nomos of the Earth*", extraterritoriality is conceived as a way of escaping the entrapment of territory considered to be harmful or even deadly.<sup>7</sup>

### The Invention of Territory

This (post-)modern idea of extraterritoriality has grafted itself, in a critical manner, to the notion of territory. But we can also assert that a certain pre-

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<sup>5</sup> For the link between *spatial turn* and post-modernity, see Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), p. 154.

<sup>6</sup> «*Exterritorialität des geistigen Menschen*, ist der richtige Term in dieser Blut-, Boden-, Rasse-, Masse-, Führer- und Heimatzeit», Robert Musil, *Tagebücher* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1976), p. 905.

<sup>7</sup> Carl Schmitt, *Staat, Großraum, Nomos. Arbeiten aus den Jahren 1916-1969*, ed. by G. Maschke (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot 1995).

territorial regime precedes that of territoriality. This is because, according to the work of historians and geographers, territory would seem in fact to be a relatively recent notion. Thus, in the Middle Ages, despite the emphasis on land ownership, the absolute or exclusive control exercised on a clearly defined area was not yet of crucial importance, since political power was at that time exclusively based on relationships of allegiances between rulers and their subjects.<sup>8</sup>

It was during the Renaissance, with the creation of the Italian city-states, that a new concept of space emerged, based on geometry and cartographic science, but also on a renewed vision of the State, its form and its scope. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe, the political space, now circumscribed, exclusive and three-dimensional, became territory. The era's trend was the measuring of land and the listing of the natural and human resources, all of which became the basis of the constitution of the modern State. The concept of territory was therefore not only a way to define a country, but the political corollary of this new understanding of space. In 1648 the Treaty of Westphalia introduced the notion of territorial sovereignty, forming the basis of international law.<sup>9</sup> In conjunction with this recognition of territory, the first philosophical and legal reflections on the principle of extraterritoriality developed.<sup>10</sup>

This process of transformation of specific territorial identities in collective identities gave rise to the geo-political construction of abstract territorial units. This fact is demonstrated by the frontispiece of the *Atlas of England and Wales*, produced in 1579 by Christopher Saxton (1542-1611). The work shows Queen Elisabeth I enthroned in the centre, surrounded by two male allegories, Geography and Astronomy. In this image, which led the way for future cartographic representations, the body of the Queen merges with the country over which she is Sovereign.<sup>11</sup> The aim was to give a real-life experience and emotional content to an abstract territorial vision that was essentially ideological and political.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Guntram H. Herb, « National Identity and Territory », in *Nested identities, Nationalism, Territory, and Scale*, ed. by Guntram H. Herb and David H. Kaplan (Lanham and others: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), pp. 9-30.

<sup>9</sup> Stuart Elden, « Missing the point: globalization, deterritorialisation and the space of the world », *Transactions of the institute of British Geographers*, New Series, 33:1 (2005), pp. 8-19.

<sup>10</sup> See above, note 1.

<sup>11</sup> Christine Sukic, « Dans les bras de Neptune enlacée »: corps insulaire de l'Angleterre, d'Élisabeth I<sup>re</sup> à Jacques I<sup>er</sup> », *Savoir en Prisme*, 1 (2011), pp. 223-235. Accessible online : [http://www.univ-reims.fr/gallery\\_files/site/1/1697/3184/9681/.30077/35247.pdf](http://www.univ-reims.fr/gallery_files/site/1/1697/3184/9681/.30077/35247.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Guy Di Méo, *Géographie sociale et territoires*, (Paris: Nathan, 2001), p. 182.

### Territory and Nationhood

As mentioned above, the philosophical and literary discourse on extraterritoriality may be conceived of as a reaction to the growth of the idea of nation, having found its cataclysmic climax in the world wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is no coincidence that the first significant account on the part of writers and intellectuals coincided with the disasters of the last century. In fact, the modern concept of territory and that of the nation state are intertwined. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, their gradual integration engendered synergically related processes leading to the development of new ways of collective identification. Many authors have attempted to elucidate the complex relationships between territory, nation, culture and community which emerged during this period.

Thus, Benedict Anderson forged the concept of imagined communities.<sup>13</sup> He showed how the parallel development of capitalism and the printing press allowed the extension of the use of vernacular languages.<sup>14</sup> These common languages used in printing laid the foundations of a national consciousness by creating territories unified by communication – the forerunner of modern nations.<sup>15</sup> For Anderson, the nation was an imagined, limited and sovereign political community:<sup>16</sup> an “imagined” community, for it is impossible for an individual to know all other members of this community, even though it exists as representation in his mind and in those of the other members; a “limited” community, because even the most extensive ones have borders beyond which lie other nations; finally, a “sovereign” community, since the Enlightenment and (American and French) revolutions had toppled the ancient order of the European dynasties. The territorial nation state constituted the guarantee and the emblem of the newly acquired freedom.<sup>17</sup>

As Eric Hobsbawm demonstrated for the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of nation was transformed under pressure from new economic forces. The nation was subsequently thought of as a community of interest linked to a State, drawing on a large enough territory to ensure the nation’s survival and expansion. This unit, in direct economic competition with others, also offered all individuals within the nation, regardless of culture or language, more possibilities of social advancement than belonging to the rigid regional

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<sup>13</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006 [(1983)]).

<sup>14</sup> For the linguistic aspects of national territoriality, see also Daniel Baggioni, *Langues et nations en Europe*, (Paris: Payot et Rivages, 1997).

<sup>15</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

allegiances of previous eras. A sustainable nexus between territory, community of interest and the modern state was thus established.<sup>18</sup>

A further analysis is provided by Ernest Gellner for whom a common culture shared by the largest number of people was a necessary condition for the development of an industrial society. This “high” culture had a complexity and a richness that could only be maintained through the development of literacy – in a single official language – provided within specialised institutions of education, whose role was pivotal. This gargantuan task of cultural and linguistic homogenisation could be accomplished only under the aegis of a strong political infrastructure: the State. For Gellner, the nation was therefore the consequence of this new form of social organisation based on a “high” culture deeply internalised, dependent on an educational system, and protected by its own State. Linguistic homogeneity combined with political weight of State institutions provided a tangible existence to the imagined community of language and strengthened the link between territory, language and political power in the modern States of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Finally, this national cultural entity had to be of a minimum size to be viable because there is only space for a few of these States globally. This constraint could give rise to internal ethno-nationalistic conflicts when a sizeable cultural minority sought to secede from the majority, what could lead to a fierce struggle for the division of the territory and its populations. Conflicts between States could be unleashed, especially when the existing political boundaries did not coincide exactly with those that “high” cultures aspired to when they were in the process of developing.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, it was from 1870 – the beginning of the Franco-Prussian war, whose outcome led to the foundation of the German Empire – that a new era began. The major Western powers were seeking to assert their respective national identities, designing and disseminating distinctive and striking symbols and representations of the nation, in order to encourage people’s strong identification with their national community. Therefore, the modern State, rooted in the idea of political nation, institutionalized nationalism as a widespread attachment of the people to the nation, involving, as by-products, forms of rejection of “the other” such as chauvinism, xenophobia and racism.

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<sup>18</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>19</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca – New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 48-52 and 54-62.

### The Strength of Territory

Territory therefore appears to be essential for the development of a national consciousness. Nationalists have clearly understood this, forcibly attempting to provide symbols, rituals, stories and myths relating to the substance of the imagined link between the people and the country. Territory also has the advantage of clarifying national identity by reducing the relative ambiguity of the ethnic and cultural markers. This clearly demarcated space contributes to hide internal differences and to merge individual and collective experiences into a shared national history. It thus creates a collective consciousness by reinventing itself as a home country and ancestral land.

Over time, a characteristic reversal takes place. It is no longer the group that defines the territory but the opposite process. As a result, nations cannot be established without a territory providing a historical legitimacy, as well as borders. In addition, the territory does not simply represent the harmonious origins written into the significant history of the nation, but also embodies the collective memory of its evolution. It expresses both internal cohesion and external differentiation.<sup>20</sup> Time and space coalesce and are enshrined in strategies for nationalistic representation, giving shape to community feelings and a national identity that relies on a mythologised interpretation of history and territory.

The main idea emerging from these analyses is that the notion of territory is a social construct resulting from both the experience of agents who build it, as well as the unwieldy spatial and social structures which stem from this process. More recent definitions of territory have renewed this historical tradition. According to the geographer Guy Di Méo, a territory is created by the economic, ideological, political and social appropriation of a space by groups possessing a representation of themselves and their history.<sup>21</sup> For Bernard Debarbieux, it is rather a set of material and symbolic resources which are capable of structuring the practical existence of individuals while being the creators of identity.<sup>22</sup>

Territory thus serves both as a tool for political legitimacy and a tool for controlling society through its mimetic ability to reproduce social organization from which it emerged itself. Its continuity is ensured by the fact that the states and nation states remain the dominant forms of politico-territorial

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<sup>20</sup> Guntram H. Herb, "National Identity and Territory", *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>21</sup> Guy Di Méo, *Les territoires du quotidien* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996), p. 40.

<sup>22</sup> Bernard Debarbieux, "Le territoire: Histoires en deux langues. A bilingual (his-)story of territory", in *Discours scientifique et contextes culturels. Géographies françaises à l'épreuve postmoderne*, ed. by C. Chivallon et al. (Bordeaux: Maison des Sciences de l'homme d'Aquitaine, 1999), pp. 36-37.

division and that their disappearance is not the order of the day even in the current context of globalisation.

### Limits on the Concept of Territory

In modern geography (especially in France) the term “territory” is used extensively and is found in a large number of expressions: *identité territoriale* (territorial identity), *politique territoriale* (territorial policy), *ingénierie territoriale* (regional planning) etc. The increasing importance and use of this concept resulted in many reflections around its sometimes excessive use, as well as its relevance. In fact, the *territory = state* correspondence has also been less prevalent than before, since at least the 1960s which witnessed the increasing development of local issues. The concept then extended to integrate diverse realities and processes concerning various spatial scales.

On the other hand, a new coupling emerged with globalisation – that of *territory/network*. For some scholars, globalization even ushered in the end of geography: a world that is perfectly fluid and interconnected, structured around large cities in a network, with more intensive links between them than with their surrounding area. It is true that some major social and economic issues cannot be analysed on the basis of a defined territory any longer, but require a more global approach.<sup>23</sup>

More generally, the crises and the political and economic upheavals typifying the current era have produced mass migratory movements and a series of re-definitions of State and territorial boundaries.<sup>24</sup> The resulting blending process undermines the idea of homogeneous territories in cultural, linguistic or ethnic terms. Furthermore, we are witnessing the proliferation of transnational social spaces, as described by the sociologist Thomas Faist,<sup>25</sup> as well as the introduction of forms of “superdiversity”.<sup>26</sup>

While retaining its prescriptive power, the territorial or “territorialising” vision anchoring identity, languages, cultural and artistic expressions within a specific territory, is therefore increasingly criticised, given the fact that it does not pay attention to the spatial mobility of social relationships, only takes into account the prevailing practices, and it has been progressively abandoned in favour of networks in a context of globalisation. Thus, according to Marie-Christine Jaillet, lifestyles not are organised anymore

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<sup>23</sup> Frédéric Giraut, “Conceptualiser le Territoire”, *Historiens et géographes*, 403 (2008), pp. 57-67 (p. 58).

<sup>24</sup> See Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places* (London: Routledge 1996).

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Faist, *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>26</sup> Steven Vertovec, *Super-diversity* (London & New York: Routledge, 2014).



around proximity, but around mobility; the individual now juggles territories with varying geometries.<sup>27</sup> For Denis Retaillé, this criticism must extend to all these “geographical fictions” which are the borders, territories and cultural areas.<sup>28</sup> Bertrand Badie has even theorised on the disappearance of territories under the combined action of globalisation, the end of the Cold War, and the crisis of governments whose powers are diminishing significantly. He further suggests that the state as a political institution is challenged by non-state organisations which have a major influence on international relations.<sup>29</sup>

However, nowadays a kind of “revenge” is also noticeable from territories as a result of two contradictory forces. On the one hand, there is an inexorable movement towards new forms of supranational links, but on the other hand, there is the rise of sub-national regionalisms based on the rediscovery of former (cultural) identities or on the desire to reach a level of previously unachieved political and cultural autonomy. The increasingly shared desire to return to communities on a human scale results partly from a rejection of increasing cultural uniformity imposed by the construction of such organisations and supranational groupings. This community focus is also linked to the desire to have closer control over the running of one’s own existence.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, globalisation, far from destroying territorial strategies, would tend rather to revitalise them, to put them into competition, but also to empower them to enhance their identity and specificity.

Consequently, it is easy to understand that a concept such as territorial identity, which is based on the idea that the link to places or areas is essential in the formation of individual and group identities, remains very popular among geographers. However, this reasoning, if pushed to the extreme, can have dramatic consequences, on the basis of two diametrically opposed and hardly controllable products of ideology: the overvaluing of identity-territory links on the one hand, and on the other, the negation of territoriality as a necessary attribute of identity.<sup>31</sup> In fact, one can legitimately fear that the

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<sup>27</sup> Marie-Christine Jaillet, “Contre le territoire, la ‘bonne distance’”, in *Territoires, Territorialité, Territorialisation. Controverses et perspectives*, ed. by Martin Vanier (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009), pp. 115-121 (p. 121).

<sup>28</sup> Denis Retaillé, “Malaise dans la géographie: l’espace est mobile” in *Territoires, Territorialité, Territorialisation, op. cit.*, pp. 57-114 (p. 101).

<sup>29</sup> Bertrand Badie, *La Fin des territoires* (Paris: Fayard, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> David B. Knight, “Identity and Territory: Geographical Perspectives on Nationalism and Regionalism”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 72:4 (1982), pp. 514-531.

<sup>31</sup> Yves Guermond, “L’identité territoriale: l’ambiguïté d’un concept géographique”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 72:4 (2006), pp. 291-297.

analysis of certain social phenomena in their relationship to the place where they become obvious will lead to an artificial increase in the characteristic identity of this area and to political exploitation of the feelings to which it gives rise. There are many historical examples of this phenomenon, and certain ancient or recent conflicts (such as in the former Yugoslavia) remain fixed in the memory, as a result of the horrors that they have engendered.

### The Territory of Philology

What about the paradigm of territory and the possibility of leaving it behind when working on literature, foreign languages and cultures? We know that the notion of territory represents a major conceptual tool in these disciplines, especially in France, but more generally throughout the Western world. In this context, a territory can be defined by criteria such as language, culture, religion, political or natural boundaries and so forth. While the limits and the extent of the defined spaces can fluctuate, this definition of territory usually involves the merging of several criteria in order to create supposedly homogeneous areas. In this view, a territory describes a symbolic space defined by the political and cultural relationship of a language group linked to the networks of its physical space. To pursue this approach, German studies, to mention but one example, would thus cover a “Germanic” area incorporating the language, culture and literature which are recognised as “German”. This results in a kind of methodological nationalism which remains discernible in present-day scholarship, in spite of all the subsequent methodological changes.

Yet, while it is indispensable for a certain organisation of space and its cultural productions, the concept of territory may also appear to be a strait-jacket to the point that the philological disciplines, highly territorialised, remain rooted in a spirit of compartmentalisation, going back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the most extensive attempt at such territorialization dates from the Romantic and post-Romantic era when scholars in the fields of philology and history, following a wider political agenda, strove to weld together language, culture, literature, ethnicity, religion, etc., within the nation or people. We know for example how, in Germany, thinkers such as Herder, Fichte and Humboldt turned away from the search for universal truths to insist on “the incommensurability of collective particularisms, lifestyles and forms of thoughts, the concrete achievements of any particular community” in their desire to identify, delineate and consolidate the specific traits of a developing nation.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Philippe Descola, *Par-delà nature et culture*, (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), p. 113.

From the perspective of the social actors, this strong identitarian power of the territory can be conceived and lived as a guarantor of mental stability and social cohesion. But it can also take the form of a burden or a restriction. In fact, while some artists and writers willingly took on the role of representative or spokesman of their people and their nation, others have tried to avoid this by all means, sometimes by deliberately leaving the territory for exile or pressured and constrained to do so. Certainly, extraterritoriality may carry the risk of rootlessness and loss of points of reference, traditions and identities. It may even lead to the creation of “non-places” in the sense defined by Marc Augé.<sup>33</sup> However, it also opens the possibility – or at least the utopian horizon – of a new freedom, another space, new margins, or even the possibility of movement without hindrance or papers, crossing borders of all types without the need to endlessly state one’s identity.

In his essential contribution to the discourse on extraterritoriality, George Steiner evoked the case of “unhoused” writers becoming apparent at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, together with the emergence of literary modernity involving a new relationship with language.<sup>34</sup> According to Steiner, culture, literature and language of modernity are necessarily pluralistic and hybrid, impossible to establish within a circumscribed and unifying territory. These artists from a decentered world – poets, novelists, playwrights, filmmakers, etc. –, these exiled and displaced spirits impossible to contain within fixed and immutable physical and intellectual borders, participate in the great brew of identity and contributed to the creolisation of the modern world.

More generally, history shows that protagonists of intellectual and cultural life were always carried towards the crossing and transgression of boundaries. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, wars, revolutions, colonisation, decolonisation and other recent political, social and economic transformations have triggered series of reconfigurations within the territorial framework. In particular, these events have engendered migratory flows, the phenomena of exile and diaspora which have resulted in a massive displacement of cultural and artistic expressions, with their territorial basis becoming insecure and unstable. If they are often resulting from catastrophes at the source of unspeakable suffering, the cultural confrontations, the forms of hybridisation and/or *métissage* stemming from these movements are also creative of dynamism, innovation and diversification.

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<sup>33</sup> Augé, Marc, *Non-lieux, introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité* (Paris: Seuil, 1992).

<sup>34</sup> George Steiner, *Extraterritorial, Papers on Literature and the Language Revolution* (New York: Atheneum, 1971), p. VIII.

### Aspects of Thoughts on Extraterritoriality

After Steiner and his predecessors, some postmodernist thinkers have developed theories calling into question the concept of territory and leading to its final overthrow. If, unlike Simmel, Kracauer, Musil and Steiner, they did not specifically use the term extraterritoriality, their thinking is a valuable source for furthering the reflections of their predecessors.

In this context, it is certainly necessary to return to Gilles Deleuze and his well-known concept of deterritorialisation, introduced in the early 1970s, in collaboration with Félix Guattari. As eminent readers of writers who favoured wandering, crossing and movement over the idea of rootedness and territory, Deleuze and Guattari apply this concept – close to extraterritoriality but also different – to literature. According to them, literary writing conditions are optimal in situations where the requirement of belonging to a territory does not, or no longer exists.<sup>35</sup>

Deleuze and Guattari analyse the process of deterritorialisation mainly through the prism of the work of Franz Kafka, who appropriates creatively the complex linguistic and cultural situation of Prague under the Habsburg Empire. By rejecting Yiddish as well as Czech, Kafka chooses to express himself in German, a language which had become marginalised, cut off from its centre. His work, described as “minor” literature thus becomes the symbol of deterritorialised literature.<sup>36</sup> Yet, according to Deleuze and Guattari, every single language is open to minor uses and it is not necessary to belong to a minority or a minority culture to gain access to the process of linguistic deterritorialisation. It is enough “to be as a foreigner in one’s own language”.<sup>37</sup>

If the links between deterritorialisation and extraterritoriality are not easy to define, the recourse to Deleuze and Guattari probably remains indispensable because their theory strengthens the essential idea that each territory aims at overstepping its own frontiers and projecting towards the world that surrounds it.<sup>38</sup> Closer to Derridan thought than that of Deleuze and Guattari, the postcolonial theory developed by Homi K. Bhabha also proposes re-thinking the relationship between territory and identity, specifically through the notion of “dissemiNation”.<sup>39</sup> According to Bhabha, the “location of culture” (to quote the title of his main work) does not coincide with

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<sup>35</sup> Arlette Camion, “Deleuze et la question du territoire”, in *Exterritorialité de la littérature allemande*, ed. by Nicole Fernandez-Bravo et al. (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2002), pp. 19-26.

<sup>36</sup> Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, *Kafka. Pour une littérature mineure* (Paris: Minuit, 1975).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>38</sup> Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze’s Way. Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 28.

<sup>39</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London – New York: Routledge, 1994).

the traditional definitions of political territory, but moves towards temporary and fragile, interstitial places. “Dominated” cultures are created and unravel in these places as a result of imitation and hybridisation, and thus escape the territorial logic of nation.

Hybrid identities of a postmodern and postcolonial era may seem to bring grist to the theoretical mill of the extraterritoriality paradigm. The same applies for new information technologies which accentuate the split between the social and the geographical, and seem to herald the arrival of a new age of non-localised human interactions.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, when we separate ourselves from real-world physical limits of cultural and/or linguistic borders to dive into the virtual universe and surf the Internet, use mobile telephones and watch satellite TV, we are witnessing an astonishing process of re-configuration. This transcontinental digital space encourages two contradictory phenomena: homogenisation on the one hand, with the manufacture of a world culture supported and mediated by the vernacularisation of English (in the form of “Globish”), and within which a cosmopolitan elite moves. On the other hand, the assertion of linguistic and cultural particularities which reintroduce a certain entropy as a result of questioning national/territorial structures which were inherited from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and encourage the emergence of ethnocultural enclaves within the large countries of immigration.<sup>41</sup>

However, these theoretical propositions in recent decades in favour of an extraterritoriality paradigm have not found a unanimous welcome. In his book *Eloge des frontières (Praise of borders)*, Régis Debray has recently criticised all of these approaches, while deriding the Deleuzian concept of deterritorialisation as the “mantra which dominates our conferences”. Criticising what he called the “without-frontierism”, he railed against those who “promote wandering and new global mobility, only swearing allegiance to the “trans” and “inter”, idealise the nomad and the pirate”.<sup>42</sup> It is true that, as recalled by Laurent Jeanpierre, a significant part of philosophical discourse and libertarian political philosophy relating to lines of flight, exile, rootlessness, mobility, and wandering, as developed in the aftermath of 1968, accompanied and even strengthened the triumphant rise of neo-liberalism.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Daniela Ahrens, *Grenzen der Enträumlichung, Weltstädte, Cyberspace und die transnationalen Räume in der globalisierten Moderne* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2001).

<sup>41</sup> Jean-Pierre Warnier, *La Mondialisation de la culture* (Paris: La Découverte, 2004).

<sup>42</sup> Régis Debray, *L'Éloge des frontières* (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), p. 19.

<sup>43</sup> Laurent Jeanpierre, “La place de l’exterritorialité”, in *Fresh Théorie*, ed. by Mark Alizart and Christophe Kihm (Paris: Léo Scheer, 2005), pp. 329-349. See also Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2000) and Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiappello, *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999).

Extraterritoriality is thus faced with the danger of its ideological and market manipulation, prompting us not to grant it an intrinsic value, but to consider it as an option among others relating to territoriality, with a critical value, certainly, but not without a certain grey zone. In addition, the concept of extraterritoriality, if it can be a vector for liberation, also features as a leverage mechanism for domination and exclusion, or even imperialist ambitions. However, does this vision of extraterritoriality not only re-connect finally with the legal definition and history of the term “extraterritoriality” in the sense of a relationship between political and economic forces codified by law? From the law to postmodern thought, the reflections of those writers philosophers and intellectuals would thus return to square one...

### Ex(tra)territorial: Literary, Cultural and Linguistic Territories under Scrutiny

While some intellectuals like Régis Debray seem attached to the classical European territorial model, Edward Glissant, for his part, demonstrated that the conceptions of territory need to be translated, compared and relativised. Indeed a release from the European context allows us to see how certain theories of culture and literature are related to specific territorial configurations. In the work of Glissant there is thus a paramount influence of the archipelago form of the Caribbean, a shape which later also inspired the theories of Ottmar Ette.<sup>44</sup> Deeply influenced by this geopolitical and cultural figure, Glissant suggested replacing the thinking about territory with that of area and open space. In his *Introduction à une poétique du divers (Introduction to the Poetics of Variety)* he writes:

The relationship is intense between the need and the inescapable reality of creolisation and the inescapable need for place, i.e. the place where human speech is emitted. Words are not produced in the air, scattered in the air. The place where speech is emitted, where the text is produced, where the voice comes from, or from whence comes the call, this place is immense. But one can become locked into this place. The area from which the voice is emitted, can be construed as a territory, i.e. enclosed by walls, spiritual, ideological barriers, etc. It ceases to be “area”.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ottmar Ette, *TransArea. Eine literarische Globalisierungsgeschichte* (Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012); see also his contribution to this book.

<sup>45</sup> “Le rapport est intense entre la nécessité et la réalité incontournables de la créolisation et la nécessité incontournable du lieu, c’est-à-dire du lieu d’où l’on émet la parole humaine. On n’émet pas de paroles en l’air, en diffusion dans l’air. Le lieu d’où l’on émet la parole, d’où l’on émet le texte, d’où l’on émet la voix, d’où l’on émet le cri, ce lieu-là est immense. Mais ce lieu on peut s’enfermer dedans. L’aire d’où l’on émet le

Glissant acknowledges the need for attachment and rootedness, but rejects the logic of confinement of the European territorial regime inherited from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His *Poétique de la Relation*<sup>46</sup> (*Poetics of Relation*) requires the overspill of thought beyond that of territory toward an extraterritorial concept of the place:

What is important nowadays is precisely to know how to discuss a poetics of Relation, one that is capable to open up the place, without undoing, without diluting it. Do we have the means to do this? Is it achievable by people, mankind, human beings? Or must we consider once and for all that to preserve the place we must preserve the exclusivity of that place?<sup>47</sup>

The European model of the nation-state had managed to export this paradigm of the “exclusivity of the place” around the world, forging and promoting an approach which, far from being universal, marked a certain way of addressing cultural products, including scientific research in the arts, languages and humanities.

Patrick Chamoiseau, born into the same universe created from an archipelago, works towards the same promulgation of thought on space and creation based on the notion of place in opposition to that of territory:

A Place is open and thrives upon this openness; a Territory raises borders. A Place evolves in the consciousness through building relationships. A Territory continues to exist through the projection of its legitimacy. A Place lives out in all possible languages, and tends to organise its ecosystems; a Territory allows only one language and when resistance imposes several of them, it divides them into monolingual systems.<sup>48</sup>

Without intending to establish itself as a unique model, this thought coming from archipelagos allows a new approach to the ex(tra) territorial concept.

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cri, on peut la constituer en territoire, c'est-à-dire la fermer par des murs, des murailles spirituelles, idéologiques, etc. Elle cesse d'être « aire », Édouard Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), p. 30.

<sup>46</sup> “L'important aujourd'hui est précisément de savoir discuter d'une poétique de la Relation telle qu'on puisse, sans défaire le lieu, sans diluer le lieu, l'ouvrir. Est-ce que nous avons les moyens de le faire? Est-ce que c'est réalisable par l'homme, par le genre humain, par l'être humain? Ou est-ce que nous devons considérer une fois pour toutes que pour préserver le lieu il nous faut préserver l'exclusif du lieu?”, Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990).

<sup>47</sup> Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers, op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>48</sup> “Le Lieu est ouvert et vit de cet ouvert; le Territoire dresse frontières. Le Lieu évolue dans la conscience des mises-sous-relations; le Territoire perdure dans la projection de ses légitimités. Le Lieu vit sa parole dans toutes les langues possibles, et tend à l'organisation de leur écosystème; le Territoire n'autorise qu'une langue et quand les résistances lui en imposent plusieurs, il les répartit selon des dispositifs monolingues”, Patrick Chamoiseau, *Écrire en pays dominé* (Paris: Gallimard 1997), pp. 205-206.

“Territory”, “area”, “relationship”, “movement” – it is this complex conceptual constellation offered by postmodernist thinkers such as Chamoiseau, Glissant, Bhabha, Deleuze and others, that the contributions to the current book had the task to confront, analyse and problematise. Perhaps there is a point where the geographers’ and geo-political scientists’ reflexions on territory reaches its limits and where the writers, the specialists of literary and cultural diversity pick up the baton in order to reflect on the constitution of local and family realities, as well as personal subjectivities, marked by *métissage*, hybridity, the switching from one language to another, the ability of each of us to assume different identities in different contexts.

Yet there is no question of declaring an end to territories and cultural and linguistic areas. Moreover, it is essential to question and overstep their boundaries and their exclusivity, by drawing on the thought of extraterritoriality. Without attempting to develop a synthesis or theory of this theme, this book draws upon a significant number of texts, documents and testimonies, to test, validate, or deepen this rich and stimulating concept. In so doing, it offers an interdisciplinary and plurilingual journey through more than four centuries, four continents and a dozen languages, from literature to new media, encompassing philosophy, history, linguistics, the press, the cinema...

Before closing, let us listen to Yoko Tawada, who gives us the honour of opening this work with her essay “An Uninvited Guest”. This nomadic and polyglot writer, coming from yet another archipelago – Japan – has pushed the art of breaking through boundaries and frontiers, whether real or symbolic. The question of literary, linguistic and cultural territories, their identity and limitations is therefore at the heart of her work. In fact, her multilingual and intercultural writing incites a permanent process of deconstruction, reconfiguration and displacement of defined territories. In a series of readings she gave in 2011 in Hamburg, she offered her audience one of the most beautiful contemporary images of extraterritoriality:

If I ever had to write a historical novel on seafaring, I would choose a mermaid as the protagonist. She would travel, boatless, the length of a sea route, staying in the water, without ever settling on terra firma. But, she would also try, not only to sing out of the water or to dance in the water, but to write on the water.<sup>49</sup>

Translated from French by Rosamund Wilson, with the help of the authors.

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<sup>49</sup> « Falls ich einen historischen Roman über die große Seefahrt schreiben sollte, würde ich eine Meerjungfrau als Hauptfigur nehmen. Sie wird ohne Schiff einen Wasserweg entlang reisen. Sie wird im Wasser bleiben und nie auf dem Festland sesshaft werden. Sie wird dennoch versuchen, nicht nur aus dem Wasser zu singen oder im Wasser zu tanzen, sondern ins Wasser zu schreiben », Yoko Tawada, *Fremde Wasser, Vorlesungen und wissenschaftliche Beiträge* (Tübingen: Konkursbuch, 2012), p. 79.



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