

KALEIDOSCOPIC TRANSLATION AMID THE NEW LANDSCAPES OF YAO LU

JEFFNER ALLEN
BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY, SUNY

Green safety net long rolls and pieces of every imaginable size and shape verdant green netting for sale at \$2,300 per ton 98,000,000 square meters of netting monthly supplied by a single factory while at a nearby manufacturing site a ton of the nylon mesh each day passes through the seamstresses' hands

High-density polyethylene strands firm tough durable woven with methods that ensure a strong secure knot a uniform 2000 minute openings dance across each 100 square centimeters in sweaty heat a deafening whirr

Reaching between drifting clouds toward sunbeams moon and stars clinging to skyscrapers that swiftly arise each shield blocks to a degree the release of particulate matter impedes the tumble and fall of bricks metal pipes nails machinery on aerial laborers and earthbound passersby

Sky blue black brightly forest green columns meander the horizon as nets stretch across hillsides and fields cascade over heaps of debris stretch around mounds of garbage that proliferate disappear overnight and as swiftly sprout again

Agape invisible when seen visible when not seen sustained by fusions of human cultures and 21st century technologies of representation entanglements of industrial netting in tension a wild vine

The quasi-fantasy of discordant, simultaneous, ambient images that inhabit Yao Lu's *New Landscapes*, in the artist's carefully selected terms, a series of works that use "the form of traditional Chinese painting to express the face of modern China" (2009), projects a shifting space that enters and exits thresholds of reality, inviting explorations of translation, mistranslation, and untranslatability. By traversing that space in conversation with the strategies of superposition through which Yao's digital chromogenic prints bring together the mountain and water paintings of the Song Dynasty (860-1279) and the rubble covered with protective green nets in construction sites of urban and rural China to produce illusions that we can vividly see, we will pursue a practice of "kaleidoscopic translation", whose work, as the poet philosopher Édouard Glissant writes of relation, "always changes all the elements composing it and, consequently, the resulting relationship, which then changes them all over again" (1997a, 172).

Rippling and scattering across Glissant's poetics of relation, with its unsettling of western colonial notions of nature and language and wide world of relays and mixings, *tout-monde*, and "great chaoses", the unstable disjunctions, bypasses, and intersections that punctuate kaleidoscopic translation are moved and transported by the marvelously plural image he offers of the intermingling "in which are caught humanities and things and vegetations, the rocks and clouds of our universe" (1997c, 109).¹ His insistent affirmation that "My landscape is still convulsive; the symmetry of planted fields makes me uncomfortable" (1997b 19), gives voice to the profound sympathy, the impassioned relation with, that is transmitted by the land in which he wanders, the plantation landscapes of the Caribbean, and of Martinique, in particular, the island of his birth (2010b, 102-3).² Not unlike the hastening into dry leaves and hard mud to which he refers to in the stark, desiccated poems of *Boises*, the wooden yokes that colonialism imposed on the enslaved, the disturbances and blocked possibility that the ordering codes and symmetry of the European landscape inflict, mark the prolonged dry season that he names in the collection's subtitle *Natural History of Aridity*. Simultaneously refusing destitute emptiness and "removing boxes that are too full" (1997,

209), Glissant's vertiginous poetics proliferates "Tomorrows," the title of the collection's closing poem, through the performance of critical release from the 'yokes' of colonial scopic regimes.

"Tomorrows" that, in *Yokes*, wind through the shackling of memory in a land which, shrunken, emptied, enclosed, was still ruled by French colonial administration, tenuously relay as imagination, no longer dangling decoratively, held in place by regimes of fiction and truth, is affected by and effects plural zones of translation. Ever in flux, spinning lightly nearby reflections of loose debris, colorful patterns, glass bits, translation warps and reroutes conceptions of nature as "knowable", "homogeneous", "harmonious". Traveling downwards and upwards, creeping, grasping, resuming search, that which is deemed un-related, uncertain, primitive, of little significance, and upon occasion, unreliable, accumulates slowly, tilting, almost invisibly, the axis of interpretation.

Hazy Luminosity: Searching into Heart and Mind

"Then, coincidentally," Yao Lu recounts, "I saw the construction sites around the Academy of Fine Arts [in Beijing] that closely resembled the green mountains and waters of the Song Dynasty, which inspired me to create a related series of works." As his dialogue with curator and critic of contemporary Chinese art, Feng Boyi, in "Concealment and Restructuring: New Mountains and Waters Concealment, Replacement, and Restructuring", continues, Yao comments, as though the fusion of happenstance and the symbolic were self-evident, "Actually, whoever passes by the Academy will find the big mounds of earth covered by dustproof nets, and will connect them with ancient Chinese mountain-and-water paintings" (2011, 21-22). Not content to combine the mounds that he photographed with design pictures in the pattern of classic *shan shui* (山水), or mountain and waters paintings, Yao, as his landscape series indicates, thought more deeply, while making use of the flexibility of photography to record histories and to re-assemble and re-edit what appears. The striking outcome of his reflections may be viewed in the C-print for which Yao received the BMW Paris Photo Prize (2008) for contemporary photography and for which he was short-listed for the Prix Pictet

(2009) global award in photography and sustainability, “Passing Spring at the Ancient Dock”:



Yao Lu, *Passing Spring at the Ancient Dock*, 2006. Digital C-Print. © Yao Lu.

Amid the interplay of shadow and light, orange peaks rise upward in the distance, occluded by free-floating particles, which, in a momentary blink, display every color of the rainbow. A pagoda, deserted, rests on a pinnacle of refuse; a fallen tower lies inert. Spurting from the netted debris, water gushes toward the lake. No dock in sight, though fishers gather in small boats floating on clouds of dust. Workers in yellow hard hats stride across piles of netting at the mountain's base, while a crane, wings raised, perches on the bow of a boat run aground in the dry lake bed. The Chinese idiom,

“graft one twig on another” (移花接木), suggested by Alicia Zhang in her review, “The Future of Landscape” (2013), aptly describes the assemblage, though with the passing of spring one might hope for at least a leaf, flower, or fruit. Yet, by skillfully implementing his belief in a style that maintains “a beautiful feeling in the framing of the image, including composition, line, density” (2009), Yao Lu’s jointing of scattered remains evokes and sustains the ancient dock, if tenuously, through a fruitless, empty, season of new beginnings, haunted by the destruction wrought by economic and political interests.

Whether one lingers before “Early Spring on Lake Dong Ting”, looks out from the promontory of “View of Waterfall with Rocks and Pines”, or seeks signs of abiding warmth in “Snow-Cleansed Riverside Village”, to name a few of Lao’s landscapes, some of which, commencing with his first solo exhibition, “Concealment and Restructuring—New Mountains and Waters”, are digitally archived at 798 Photo Gallery, Beijing, and may be visited via internet (Yao, 2006-2011), the shadows of classical *shan shui* are inescapable. The “snow” may be neither cold nor wet and “Dong Ting”, abode of the immortals during the Song Dynasty, deserted, the outstretched gnarled branches of pines may hang from netted cliffs of garbage and “birds” overhead but black plastic fluttering, nonetheless, the similarity to ancient mountain water painting of the formal compositions and layouts, including their evocative power, is remarkable. Even the satire, frequently expressed in the work’s titles and inscriptions, the humor that sparkles when the artist places himself, as a photographer, within the irruptions of netting, and the irony, conveyed through the more traditional deployment of fishers, hermit scholars, and villagers, in tandem with citizens of all ways of life, small figures which, Yao considers, “should be the soul of the picture” in that, “because they are alive, they have the right of speech, play a role and point out the subject” (2011, 22), participate in the construction and re-construction of an art form familiar to the peoples of a nation in a state of unparalleled rapid growth.

A smooth, orderly, account of the transitions between and among Yao’s visual narratives of deconstruction, relocation, and

disappearance would, however, ring hollow, as if a moment of chiasmatic rupture could be even-paced. Eruption: a rash of blue, brown, green, black net streaks across the scene, then hangs limp, loosely draped from mountain to sky, from clouds to river stones. Have you observed the persistence of a web without a root, less grand than a solid structure, the purpose and outcomes less sure... a rhizomatic planting cut and stitched by hard labor, positioned by workers who, dangling from unsteady structures, may tumble. Voluminous synthetic membrane, conceptual and emotional skin, profuse growth that enwraps unbridled narratives of yearning for disappearing and futural spaces and times, inchoate, overflows. If the shield divides, splits, and separates that with which it is intimately bound or abruptly breaks off, so, too, is it porous and pliant, revealing and concealing that which rests in the folds and tears of its expanse.

Let us, for a moment, linger quietly nearby the wanderer, poised on a stone bridge at the base of the long scroll, “Smoky Waterfall over the Mountain”. Lifting our gaze from the surrounding mud puddles and abandoned inn at the threshold, climbing with eyes and mind the beautiful scenery of jutting mountain peaks that rise among the drifting clouds and watery cascades, we almost fly, skywards bound to the beautiful writing that descends, in four parallel rows, from the uppermost limits of our vision. The inscription, “People living far away from home are particularly sensitive to changes of nature scenery. Poets express their deep sense of longing for home by beautifying the landscape,”³ at once describes and turns inside out the homesickness of the literati of the Song Dynasty, assuming the face of those in the 21st century for whom wandering and migration are non-elective and inevitable. Still churning, the wanderer’s longing for that which has disappeared pervades the landscape, which is itself a “happening” or relational event within the heart, feeling, intelligence, *xin* (心), of the mountain guest.

Rappelling down the pitch of “Smoky Waterfall over the Mountain” may, however, require more endurance than the ascent, for how are those far from home, distinguishable but inseparable from the mountain host, to absorb Han Cho’s advice, given in his text, dated 1121 C.E., on landscape painting: “Painting is ‘brush’ use,

but it is at the same time an action of the mind. That is to say, even before you begin to represent forms, you must search into your mind for them” (1998, 39). Bold ochre tones fill the mountains, rivers, valleys, and sky of Yao Lu’s digital C-print, not abiding the stipulation by Han Cho, in “Concerning Clouds and Mist, Misty Luminosity, Wind, Rain, Snow and Fog”, that mists should not be heavily applied with color, since “by doing so there is a danger of losing the misty luminosity, the rustic nature, and natural spirit” (1998, 31-34). Upon searching into heart and mind, as in the verse by Song poet Zhu Xi, no “pond” appears, no “uncovered mirror where sunlight and clouds linger and leave” kept clear by spring water that keeps flowing in (1998, 164); the slight figure of the wanderer on the stone bridge inhales, breathing the humidity and hazy luminosity of the smog-filled valley.

“Like the Tip of a Hair on a Horse’s Body”

Yielding neither guidebook for a wanderer nor a blueprint for change, the affective space of Yao Lu’s digital mountain and water paintings sustains multiple detours and unending journeys. Yet, “like finding a mirror or a walking stick” (2011, 23), as Yao refers to our existential relation with contemporary art, how readily the amplitude of reflections and actions that space conveys can slip from sight. Criticized for the beautiful scenery, dismissed for mishandling an ancient cultural form, reviewed as conveying “a sense that the human presence has little or no impact...a sense of helplessness that persists” (Bailey, 2011), categorized ideologically, “Yao’s message seems more poignant and mournful than defiant. His transformation of environmental depredation into nostalgic renderings of natural beauty raises the question of whether the new China, like Yao’s fabricated scenes, is built on falsehood” (Cash, 2010), the commentaries suggest, as does Yao himself, that his works “are not an easy subject” (Personal communication, Jan 2013).

Yao acknowledges that “the beautiful scenery is manufactured garbage”, which made him “very anxious, because our environment is really bad” (Personal communication, Feb 2013). Indeed, from the tales and parables compiled in *Zhuangzi*, an influential Taoist

text of the late 4th century B.C.E., which bears the name of its traditional author, Master Zhuang, to neo-Confucian debates on Taoism and Buddhism in the Song Dynasty and beyond, the path and principles of nature have been ever in motion, spilling forth in *shan shui* of countless contemporary artists, including Ai Weiwei's photographs, in which industrial scenes replace mountains and waters, reconstructions of the Vietnam war, by Yuan Xiaofang, the body tattoos of Huang Yang, and *shan shui* city architecture designs of Ma Yansong. Critic, artist, and curator Gu Zheng notes, in "Concealment is the Essence of Reality—Yao Lu's 'Chinese Landscapes'", Yao's art "is a postmodern drawing, which means that it activates tradition, attaches tradition with new possible opening . . . He talks with tradition, but aims at the present" (2011, 17-18). Yao recollects his return to his place of birth and seeing the changes, "I was full of loss," though, he adds, "...in the meantime, I understood this situation as related to the question of existence and development of the whole nation, so you cannot stop it. This feeling of loss is quite helpless" (2011, 22). When asked for words that might describe "a heavy feeling", a phrase he frequently uses when discussing his work, Yao proposes "nostalgia" and "sorrow" as "appropriate", though "sorrow" he finds to be "not great" (Personal communication, Feb 2013). "If a city does not have such green hills and piles covered by dustproof cloth," Gu Zheng emphasizes, upsetting the valence of individualistic readings of Yao's re-constructions in a country where development is a major focus, "it may look unfamiliar, unnatural, unconfident, and unsafe, as it may indicate that the city lacks vigor...in other words, it has no future... Therefore, the landscape formed by green dustproof cloth implies a city's fate" (Yao, 2011, 17).

Replacing, opposing, and complementing one other, the commentators, including this writer, virtually mimic the processes of de-construction by which, Yao states, "The right and wrong, protection and destruction, are replacing, opposing, and complementing each other, forming our present situation of a society in transition" (2011, 22). Prompted by the remarks on comparative inquiry and change that Beihai Ruo, the North Sea lord, makes to He Bo, god of the River, in "Autumn Floods", an Outer Chapter⁴ of *Zhuangzi*,

There is no end to the comparative measuring of things, no stop to the changing times, no constancy to the ways things can be divided up, no fixity to their ends and beginnings. Thus, when a person of great wisdom contemplates both the far and the near, he does not find what is small to be too little nor what is great to be too much, for he knows that comparative measuring is endless ... 68)

how might we engage the “heavy feeling” that Yao hopes (Personal communication, February 2013) people will learn from the aesthetics and poetics of his art. Amid the hazy luminosity of Yao’s *New Landscapes* the shifting kaleidoscopic patterns appear endless. Nonetheless, there is an urgency, expressed by Yao and shared by many, that the world makes a “benign transformation” and becomes “more and more harmonious”, that people take action to protect the environment, so that “we do not later regret it if, through ‘wrong’ actions or lack of action, we really have not done anything” (Personal communication, Feb 2013).

Caught in the grasp of colors, shapes, sounds, intervals felt, if not spoken, heart stretched across struggles to survive, the emphasis, in Yao’s C-prints, on the mingling of frequently perceived oppositional correspondences, especially, those concerning national traditions and modernities, elicits encounters with a plurality of relations, not as a linear progression, but as nondual. Loosened from comparative debates, *New Landscapes* perform an optical somersault across the borders and yearnings of fixed conceptions and valuations of the ancient and the modern. Dichotomous distinctions between that which is lofty, but distant, and that which is cramped, and nearby, resume motion, taking on multiple patterns. Heart and mind, their parameters adrift, slip from quantum packets to orbit trajectories differentially lodged in space and time.

“Criticism in a language of praise”, poems in praise of nature and beautiful scenery, beautifully written, modeled on classical forms of poetry composition, the calligraphic inscriptions in some of Yao’s works, trace a unique path (2011, 22; personal communication, Dec 2014). One might, in fact, care more about the atmosphere that the poems create than about the actual meaning of the lines,

which sustain the aesthetic purpose of the image and its unique character of ambivalent meanings. So important is the poem in early Chinese painting that the inscription and the drawing, both brush work, were not differentiated, or the drawing might perform a supporting role to explain the poetry. The high aesthetic of the language diminished gradually, over time, through movements of popularization, but people still appreciate how elegant and beautiful the language used to be in both spoken and written aspects.

Recognizing the sentiment that is made tangible by traditional poetry, lines and metaphors from which are still used in the present day, Yao mixes traditional and modern aspects of writing, deploying language in a fluid style that serves and is involved with themes of his work. In interaction with the materiality of language, he places characters downloaded from traditional painting within inscriptions that reflect his own creation and editing. Ancient calligraphy font, or parts of the characters and the content associated with a particular landscape, may be selected and mixed with simplified typefaces and brush strokes of the artist's invention that open expressive dimensions, yet have no equivalent meaning.

If viewing or reading the inscriptions invokes an innovative practice of relation, even more so does the name of the poet, Wen Zhengming, at once a painter, calligrapher, and scholar of the Ming Dynasty and, remarkably, with humor and grace, the author of the extended poem that manifests on Yao Lu's horizontal scroll "Beauty of Mountain and Lake" (Yao, personal communication, Feb 2013). Using a calligraphy font modeled on ancient forms, Wen Zhengming describes Yao's creative process, recalling a trip that he, Yao Lu, and a friend and print maker, Guangjun, made many years ago, following the arrival of spring. Together they climbed to high places and saw beautiful landscapes. A reader's imagination soars until attention falls on the smokestacks and green nets of Yao's landscape, in which the poem is lodged. Now, the appearance has changed greatly, and every day, Wen writes, one hears "the voice of the motor and machine". The ancient city of temples and buildings has been demolished, replaced with a "forest of modern high-rise buildings". Living "as ants" in cities full of polluted air, "People's

spirit is very anxious, and all good things are quiet and slowly disappear.”

Open to translation, and to the impossibility of translation, Yao Lu’s half moon fan series of C-prints that feature the figures of animals, though not human animals, continues the performance of criticism in the form of praise, while, not unlike the half moon that we see each night, alluding to surfaces and depths not visible to human understanding. “Bright Carp Swimming in the Water”, “Roaring Tigers in the Mist”, “Sheep on the Snowy Cliff”, which looks back to a world of purity, an appreciation of the beauty of the snowy mountains, are among the landscapes in the series that stretch and shift a sojourner’s awareness of circumstance. Through kaleidoscopic transformation of elements and relationships, the figure of the wanderer and guest in classical *shan shui* is reawakened, and people living far away from ‘home’, residing “as ants” in polluted cities, become the invisible guest of birds, fish, insects, of all living things.

In “Calm Spectator of the Sea”, the noble gibbon, ascribed, in Taoism, with the ability to assume human shape and an example of ideal human existence, the gibbon’s call associated with sadness and a symbol of the melancholy of travellers far from home, faces the sea in a state of meditation while seated at the top of a garbage heap. A young gibbon rummages through cast-off metal scraps among bunches of netting that mark the contours of what remains. The inscription mimics lines of well-known poetry that are widely used, by adults and by children, and that convey the delight of savoring the joy of life. Sitting here and watching the sea is a very happy thing to do...secluded from the world I just sit, exulting in life I just watch, I witness the life of a tender flower, from blossom until the petals fall, the cloud with its ever-changing shape: irrespective of how the lines are read, the poetry expresses an unrestrained attitude to living a life in which one is not disturbed by others, including by authorities, or by hardship.

One might consider the North Sea Ruo’s comment in *Zhaungzi*, “For if I compare myself to all the creatures taking shape between heaven and earth and receiving vital energy from the yin and yang,

I see that my position between heaven and earth is like that of a small stone or a tiny weed on a vast mountain... We number the types of creatures at ten thousand, and man is but one of them" (68). Unlike the gibbon, the spectator of an ongoing period of extinction, a small stone or a tiny weed has its place on the mountain. If, in Yao's "Horses by the Spring Stream", the Wushan horses, which have survived since the rock art of the Bronze Age, can but ingest the planetary seepage of events, nibbling at the garbage along the dry river bed, might one also recall North Sea Ruo's probing question, "Among the ten thousand things, is not the human realm like the tip of a hair on a horse's body?" (68). Sometimes there is no articulate response. Squawking loudly, "Cranes Squawking on the Desert Hill", red-crowned cranes, sign of longevity and wisdom, stand with wings outstretched by the lotus pond, a rubbish infested pool where, among the inscriptions, "Simple joy in the pond, the lucid pond", or, more directly, "Clear, the pond." How the landscape calls for new mindscapes in the sense of *xin*, new *-scapes* for heart and mind.

Translation in the Meshes of Imagination

Pale grey clumps of netting, a desert mirage of water in a river channel gone dry, fishing boats tilt askew, though fishers sometimes appear on the parched lake floor...between the disappearance of long-rooted tradition remembered and reconstructed in Yao Lu's landscapes and Glissant's discourse of *creolité*, wrested from the history of aridity in the Caribbean, there is no clear path, no straight line. Each encounter is singular and unrepeatable. Amid the disjunctive linkages of the root and the rhizome, or of rhizomes and root, since which is which may be but a reflection of one's place, time, and subtle orientation, there emerges the risk of clusters of unanticipated life forms.

Language, for Glissant, is a rhizome, rather than a tree, *métissage* of interest to him for the "poetics of its form", rather than for its content, a poetics of translation a practice that informs not the content, but the processes of relation, the search to ground translation in rules of equivalence between languages, he terms a "mirage" (2011). The field of translation, he emphasizes, is not the field of languages, but

the field of the relationships of languages (2011), a sonic rhizome or “fugue”. Such an interweaving of voices, through which a part, or all, of a human language may disappear, and with that, a part of the human imaginary, calls for the performance of renunciation in the sense of relinquishing, yielding, giving way, releasing, but not mourning, since in the act of translation the imagination is enriched (1995b, 28).

Interestingly, Glissant does not exempt, but situates his own writings on language and translation within the fugal counterpoint of encounters that unceasingly negotiate relation. His earlier emphasis on creolization changed, he notes (2011), as his approach shifted from an inevitably bi-lateral encounter with the Creole of the French Antilles, which does not exist on its own, but always alongside French, to the multi-lingual *tout-monde*. While the discussions of Creole language in his *Caribbean Discourses* (1981) permitted the conception of the *tout-monde*, Glissant comments (2011) that there is no longer any point in emphasizing it. Indeed, he maintains, to fight for a Creole language would stop its progression, since such action, as if there were “natural” or “folk” languages innate to specific social realities, for instance, those of the Caribbean, would necessitate an ideological stance, and Creole does not support ideology.

In a lecture on translation, “Traduire: Relire, Relier,” Glissant stresses that when we are in the presence of two languages, we are never in the presence of only two languages; rather, we are in the presence of all languages that hold sway in our imaginary, even if we know only one language. Translation, he observes (1995b, 25-27), is “autonomous creation”, “a specific art”, but also, “an art of global relation” that is as necessary as is poetry or visual art or orality in the practice of each particular language. While Glissant’s harkening of discrete expressive practices might appear unnecessary from the purview of 21st century multi-platform art and literary production, his approach (1995b, 12) to translation as “one of the languages of the world”, “a literary genre and not a tool in the service of literary genre”, gives voice to translation as an innovative work of relation. Not unlike Yao’s membranous netting, though wearing a more benign countenance, translation might be

imagined in the spirit of Glissant, as it stretches and winds along the unstable magnetic field of the *tout-monde*, an irreducible totality of “all times and all spaces of all people in the world gathered in one sole space-time” (2002, 2009a, 38). The intermittent openings, opacity, incomprehensibility and, perhaps, mystery, of the all-world that constitutes Glissant’s response to the stripping away of the depths of spaces, which has perpetuated the natural history of aridity, cautions us that, rather than impose translation that reflects our own image, “It depends upon relation that the knowledge in motion of the being of the universe be granted through osmosis, not through violence” (1997a, p.188).

Tomorrows, however, are seldom ready at hand. Migrations of translation, incommensurable crossings, fluctuations, rather than a walking stick, might one find in Yao Lu’s art of translation a prismatic mirroring? “Even the Hanging Gardens of Babylon are overshadowed by this hanging villa in Beijing”, writes one Weibo user (Feng, 2015), a line that flashes over the web as the volume of chatter increases regarding the mountains and waters scene atop a high rise building towering above its neighbors in Beijing, built by a powerful doctor with political connections. Continuing in the form of traditional Chinese painting, but no longer *shan shui*, “Heaven on Earth”, the first C-print of Yao’s new series, inscribes the grotesque re-construction of mountains and water, fake temples, karaoke bar in place of tea house, and grottos covered with netting, the polluted waters streaming down the building’s windows, with criticism expressed in the language of praise, “Standing in such a high place to see the scenery”. If the intermingling of persistent ecologies of construction and disappearance in Yao Lu’s photographic series offers viewers the opportunity to reconsider notions of change, continuity, and impermanence, it also renders a subliminal push to stagnant imagination.

Touched by exchanges that indirectly configure humanities into shapes that may be unfamiliar, might we feel the lure and the necessity of practices of cultural, visual, and linguistic translation that alter the very “humanity” our imaginaries have produced? Letting go of anxiety with regard to natures and connectivities that emerge breathtakingly close to the solidity and control of

reason, we might resist establishing structures and imagine the reciprocities and exchanges between dissonant and discarded textual, sonic, and corporeal overlappings which, swept by the currents of environments that have inspired our reflections, frequently slip between well mapped lines.

Notes

¹ The use of the plural is striking, "...les humanités et les choses et les végétations, les roches et les nuages de notre univers." With the exception of passages from Glissant's *Poetics of Relation*, translations from French to English are by the author.

² "Mon paysage est encore emportement, la symétrie du planter me gêne," is almost untranslatable, owing not so much to the lack of an equivalent wording in English as to the intensity of Glissant's rapport with the planted, or "Plantation," which he calls "my" landscape, simultaneously convulsive, replete with anger, fury, passion, and rage, and discomfiting him, blocking possibilities physically, emotionally, linguistically, and conceptually. Yet, in an interview for *La terre, le feu, l'eau et les vents* (2010a, 19), Glissant speaks of "une sympathie fondamentale" as having the potential to change the world.

³ I thank poet He Dong and Wang Hwa Yeong, philosopher, for assistance with the inscriptions in Yao Lu's landscapes.

⁴ The Outer Chapters of *Zhuangzi* are not written by Zhuangzi, but contain stylistic elements and themes consistent with those found in the Inner Chapters, which are attributed to him. "Autumn Floods" is attributed to Zhuangzi's disciplines of the Shu Zhuang Pai, or "Transmitter" school.

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