

Excerpt of *A Thousand Plateaus*, by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari
From the chapter "1837: Of the Refrain"

... The brown stagemaker (*Scenopoeetes dentirostris*) lays down landmarks each morning by dropping leaves it picks from its tree, and then turning them upside down so the paler underside stands out against the dirt: inversion produces a matter of expression.

The territory is not primary in relation to the qualitative mark; it is the mark that makes the territory. Functions in a territory are not primary; they presuppose a territory-producing expressiveness. In this sense, the territory, and the functions performed within it, are products of territorialization. Territorialization is an act of rhythm that has become expressive, or of milieu components that have become qualitative. The marking of a territory is dimensional, but it is not a meter, it is a rhythm. It retains the most general characteristic of rhythm, which is to be inscribed on a different plane than that of its actions. But now the distinction between the two planes is between territorializing expressions and territorialized functions. That is why we cannot accept a thesis like Lorenz's, which tends to make aggressiveness the basis of the territory: the territory would then be the product of the phylogenetic evolution of an instinct of aggression, starting at the point where that instinct became intraspecific, was turned against the animal's own kind. A territorial animal would direct its aggressiveness against members of its own species; the species would gain the selective advantage of distributing its members throughout a space where each would have its own place. This ambiguous thesis, which has dangerous political overtones, seems to us to have little foundation. It is obvious that the function of aggression changes pace when it becomes intraspecific. but this reorganization of the function, rather than explaining the territory, presupposes it. there are numerous reorganizations within the territory, which also affect sexuality, hunting, etc.; there are even new functions, such as building a place to live. These functions are organized or created only because they are territorialized, and not the other way around. The T factor, the territorializing factor, must be sought elsewhere: precisely in the becoming-expressive of rhythm or melody, in other words, in the emergence or proper qualities (color, odor, sound, silhouette...).

Can this becoming, this emergence, be called Art? That would make the territory a result of art. The artist: the first person to set out a boundary stone, or to make a mark. Property, collective or individual, is derived from that even when it is in the service of war and oppression. Property is fundamentally artistic because art is fundamentally poster, placard. As Lorenz says, coral fish are posters. The expressive is primary in relation to the possessive; expressive qualities, or matters of expression, are necessarily appropriative and constitute a having more profound than being. Not in the sense that these qualities belong to a subject, but in the sense that they delineate a territory that will belong to the subject that carries or produces them. These qualities are signatures, but the signature, the proper name, is not the constituted mark of a subject, but the constituting mark of a domain, an abode. The signature is not the indication of a person; it is the chancy formation of a domain. Abodes have proper names, and are inspired. "The inspired and their abodes . . ."; it is with the abode that inspiration arises. No sooner do I like a color than I make it my standard or placard. One puts one's signature on something just as one plants one's flag on a piece of land. A high school supervisor stamped all the leaves strewn about the school yard and then put them back in their places. He had signed. Territorial marks are readymades. And what is called art brut is not at all pathological or primitive; it is merely this constitution, this freeing, of matters of expression in the movement of territoriality: the base or ground of art. Take anything and make it a matter of expression. The stagemaker practices art brut. Artists are stagemakers, even when they tear up their own posters. Of course, from this standpoint art is not the privilege of human beings. Messiaen is right in saying that many birds are not only virtuosos but artists, above all in their territorial songs (if a robber "improperly wishes to occupy a spot which doesn't belong to it, the true owner sings and sings so well that the predator goes away.... If the robber sings better than the true proprietor,

the proprietor yields his place"). The refrain is rhythm and melody that have been territorialized because they have become expressive—and have become expressive because they are territorializing. We are not going in circles. What we wish to say is that there is a self-movement of expressive qualities. Expressiveness is not reducible to the immediate effects of an impulse triggering an action in a milieu: effects of that kind are subjective impressions or emotions rather than expressions (as, for example, the temporary color a freshwater fish takes on under a given impulse). On the other hand, expressive qualities, the colors of the coral fish, for example, are auto-objective, in other words, find an objectivity in the territory they draw.