Identity in architecture and art: Versailles, Giverny and Gyeongju

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This paper explores the different "identities" projected by the palace and gardens of Versailles, the house and garden of Claude Monet in Giverny (France), and Mount Namsan in (South) Korea. It is argued that the palace and gardens at Versailles are the embodiment of what Deleuze and Guattari call "striated space" — a specific modulation of space according to lines of power that organise, hierarchize or exclude. Monet's estate, while not devoid of a subtle kind of striation, may be seen as an exemplary instance of fusing it with "smooth space", where the freedom of nomadic exploration breathes a welcoming aroma in the midst of gentle spatial striation. Ranciére gives one another, complementary perspective on Versailles with his evocative phrase, "the distribution of the sensible", which is the manner in which the extant world is organised, arranged, and ordered according to what is visible, audible, admissible and sayable. In the 17th and 18th centuries this meant a hierarchy of classes from royalty through nobility and the bourgeoisie down to the fourth estate, or proletariat, whose absence from this elevated space is conspicuous in that they are not represented in the artworks surrounding one. Compared to Versailles, the home of Monet is gentleness incarnate; here the "distribution of the sensible" operates according to inclusion, not exclusion. What Ranciére labels the art of the "aesthetic regime" is conspicuous here, in contrast to the hierarchical art of the "representative regime" at Versailles. The paper focuses on the distinctive cratological "identities" of Versailles and Monet's estate, respectively, through the lenses of Deleuze/Guattari and Ranciére, and then shifts to a different cultural context as a comparative case: the fusion of striated and smooth space on Mount Namsan near Gyeongju, Korea.
Key words: architecture, art, identity, smooth space, striated space

Identiteit in argitektuur en kuns: Versailles, Giverny en Gyeongju
Hierdie artikel ondersoek die verskillende "identiteite" wat deur die paleis en tuine van Versailles, die huis en tuin van Claude Monet in Giverny (Frankryk), en die berg, Mt Namsan, in (Suid-) Korea geprojekteer word. Die paleis en tuine by Versailles is die toonbeeld van wat Deleuze en Guattari "gelaagde ruimte" noem – 'n besondere modulering van ruimte wat dit volgens magsbeginsels van eksklusiwiteit en hiërargie organiseer. Ofskoon Monet se huis en tuin ook 'n subtiele soort "gelaagde ruimte" vertoon, smelt dit hier saam met "gladde ruimte", waar die vryheid van nomadiese eksplorasie hand aan hand gaan met die struktureringsfunksie van gelaagde ruimte. Ranciére bied 'n alternatiewe perspektief op Versailles met sy suggestiewe uitdrukking, "die verspreiding van die sintuiglike", wat 'n beskrywing is van die wyse waarop die wêreld volgens kriteria van sigbaarheid, hoorbaarheid, toelaatbaarheid en beskryfbaarheid georganiseer is. In die 17de en 18de eeue het dit die vorm aangeneem van 'n klasse-hiërargie vanaf koninklikes en die edelstand tot die middelklas en die proletariaat, waarvan die afwesigheid in die hoë ruimtes van Versailles opvallend is deurdat hulle nie in die kunswerke wat 'n mens omring verteenwoordig is nie. In vergelyking met Versailles, word die tuiste van Monet deur vreedsaamheid gekenmerk; hier funksioneer die "verspreiding van die sintuiglike" in terme van insluiting in plaas van uitsluiting. Wat Ranciére as die kuns van die "estetiese regime" bestempel, is opvallend hier, in teenstelling met die "kuns van die representatiewe regime" by Versailles. Die artikel konsentreer op die onderskeibare kratologiese "identiteite" van Versailles en van Monet se huis en tuin aan die hand van Deleuze/ Guattari en Ranciére se teoretiese invalshoeke, onderskeidelik, voordat daar op vergelykende wyse na 'n ander kulturele konteks oorgegaan word, naamlik na die sintese van "gladde" en "gelaagde" ruimte op die berg, Mt Namsan naby Gyeongju, Korea.
Sleutelwoorde: argitektuur, kuns, identiteit, gladde ruimte, gelaagde ruimte

A 'method' is the striated space of the cogitatio universalis and draws a path that must be followed from one point to another. But the form of exteriority situates thought in a smooth space that it must occupy without counting, and for which there is no possible method, no conceivable reproduction, but only relays, intermezzos, resurgences (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*: 377).

What is it that makes one feel at home in certain spaces, and somehow unsettled, out of sorts, in others? To be sure, it could be the company you happen to be in, or the temperature, or humidity, but here I am thinking particularly of the distinctive qualities of the spaces in question. In no uncertain terms, these experiential qualities contribute to the likelihood, or lack of it, of "identifying" with them, in other words, with the manner in which spaces are structured, organized, textured or modally marked by certain of their features. What does this amount to? The question regarding "identity" in architecture and art can be approached from various angles, the most obvious one being the psychoanalytical one, deriving mainly from the work of Freud, Lacan and Kristeva. Here I have chosen to avoid this "obvious" approach, and focus instead on the fecundity of the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, on the one hand, and that of Jacques Ranciére, on the other.

First a methodological observation is called for, however. At a time when "discourse" is the chief theoretical matrix for approaching and (linguistically) conceptualizing phenomena from identity to power, it is salutary to consider that, while human beings are demonstrably discursive beings – that is, their subjectivity is linguistically articulated – discourse is not the *only* register in which this occurs. Even for a language theorist like Lacan (Lee 1990: 30-60) two other registers, in an uneasy intertwinement with the symbolic (discourse), comprise human subjectivity, namely the imaginary (the register of the ego or *moi*, and of images) and the (enigmatic) "real" (that which surpasses the symbolizable as an "internal limit"; Copjec 2002: 95-96). These three registers arguably cover everything human beings experience – in the case of the real in the form of what Lacan (1981**:** 55) calls a "missed encounter" – but taken at face value they also hide aspects of non-discursive levels of experience, such as space, for example. Because space is so often neglected in relation to questions surrounding identity, the present investigation will concentrate on ways to approach this fraught question "spatially", as it were.

What does this entail? In his penetrating study of *(Post)Apartheid Relations* (2013: 18-46) Derek Hook provides a paradigmatic instance of a space-oriented approach to issues of identification. In his analysis of the ideological significance of Strijdom Square, with its gigantic, sculpted head of the politician (J.G. Strijdom), in Pretoria, during apartheid, Hook focuses precisely on the non-discursive qualities of space. This enables him to demonstrate how unconscious identifications with certain spaces, or more particularly, places, are inscribed on subjects' bodies when they experience these with affective intensity. Drawing on the work of Gaston Bachelard and Henri Lefebvre (two largely neglected voices in the French intellectual tradition), Hook explores the link between specific places and "psychic investment", thus providing a way of understanding subjects' subliminal identification with certain spaces, particularly at an ideological level. In light of Lefebvre's work on the socio-historical "production of space" he points out that monumental spatial ensembles comprising architecture and sculpture might be expressly interpretable through language, but *not* reducible to it. Hence Hook's insistence that discourse-analysis has its limits when it comes to comprehending the "inter-subjectivity of (body-)subject and space". This insight informs my approach to the question of identification in relation to qualitatively diverse spaces in this article, although I shall pursue it in different registers, namely those encountered in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, and of Ranciére, as indicated earlier.

Deleuze and Guattari's characterisation of smooth space, as opposed to striated space is evocative, and puts the observer in a position from where she or he can decipher experienced spaces in a manner compatible with Hook's non-discursive approach to spaces with which individuals identify ideologically at an affective level (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 474-475):

> Smooth space and striated space—nomad space and sedentary space—the space in which the war machine develops and the space instituted by the State apparatus—are not of the same nature. No sooner do we note a simple opposition between the two kinds of space than we must indicate a much more complex difference by virtue of which the successive terms of the oppositions fail to coincide entirely. And no sooner have we done that than we must remind ourselves that the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space. In the first case, one organizes even the desert; in the second, the desert gains and grows; and the two can happen simultaneously. But the de facto mixes do not preclude a de jure, or abstract, distinction between the two spaces. That there is such a distinction is what accounts for the fact that the two spaces do not communicate with each other in the same way: it is the de jure distinction that determines the forms assumed by a given de facto mix and the direction or meaning of the mix (is a smooth space captured, enveloped by a striated space, or does a striated space dissolve into a smooth space, allow a smooth space to develop?).

This description will provide part of the interpretive grid to be implemented in relation to specific spaces in this article. In the case of Rancíere's work (2010: location 499), the expression, "the distribution of the sensible" will furnish interpretive direction in both an aesthetic and a political-cratological sense. What this means, is that Rancíere thinks of the world of the senses, which is first and foremost also the "sensible" world of common sense assumptions, as being "distributed" or "partitioned" along axes of power-relations, which may be (and in most cases are) hierarchical, marked by "vertical" domination, and in others incline towards various degrees of egalitarian relations. Hierarchical power-relations correspond roughly to Deleuze and Guattari's "striated space" while spaces which tend in the direction of equality correspond more or less with mooth space".

Two countervailing spaces

In France one has access to many qualitatively different spaces. Two of these, which diverge fundamentally as far as cratological spatial quality, or (in other words) power-related experiential distinctness is concerned, are those of specific places at Versailles and Giverny. They are, in fact, diametrically opposed, or mutually exclusive. The first is the palace and gardens of Versailles, known as the residence of a succession of French kings, of whom Louis XIV and Louis XVI are probably the best known (the latter with his equally well-known queen, Marie-Antoinette, who was beheaded nine years after her husband, in the wake of the French revolution). The second is the house and gardens that used to belong to Claude Monet, the artist, (one of) whose paintings gave the Impressionist movement its name.

The spatial differences between these two places are almost tangible, which should surprise no one, given humans' inalienable "spatiality". While Monet's house and gardens, including the famous Japanese garden, with the Japanese footbridge that Monet painted several times, exude a sense of peace and tranquillity, the palace at Versailles strikes one as the embodiment of the "striated space" that Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 474-475) describe (above) — that is, a specific modulation of space according to lines of power that organise, hierarchize, exclude or hem in. In fact, compared to Versailles, Monet's estate, while certainly not devoid of a subtle kind of spatial striation, or the kind of gentle power that is peculiar to some kinds of art, including impressionism, struck one almost as an exemplary instance of "smooth space", breathing a welcoming aroma. Monet's paintings hanging in his house, as well as the layout of his gardens allows for freedom of nomadic exploration on the part of visitors via multiple ways of traversing them.

Versailles

Arguably not even the most ornate Baroque buildings in Europe, or the most flamboyant palaces in China — with their penchant for red and gold — can boast such excessive opulence as (the interior of) the royal palace of Versailles. In the face of striated space on this scale it is small wonder that the impoverished masses of France launched a rebellion that eventually turned into a full-scale revolution in 1789. Confronted with such an ostentatious display of financial wealth and political power, one is struck by the thought that, had the people of France in the 18th century been familiar with the interior of Versailles palace, they would probably have rebelled much earlier. Although it had started out as a mere hunting lodge used by Louis XIII in the early 17th century, about three hours on horseback from Paris, he eventually turned it into a brick and stone palace, which was enlarged and completely transformed by his son, Louis XIV, who also decided to move the royal court as well as the seat of government to Versailles in 1682. He may not have read Machiavelli's *The Prince*, but he certainly knew that you had to keep those who might undermine your power close to you; within view, as it were. And without the benefit of having read Deleuze and Guattari, he knew what to demand from his architects and artists as far as the spatial and visual embodiment of the striated space peculiar to the state was concerned.

Whether one approaches the palace from the direction of the gardens or from the city, it addresses the spectator as striated, monolithic slabs with an air of austerity, but there is a qualitative difference between the two approaches. The formal layout of the gardens makes of them a homogeneous extension of the striated interior and exterior of the palace, but the qualitative barrier between the palace and the city has the effect of relegating the space adjacent to the latter to one of subordination. The palace therefore exemplifies what was known in the 18th century as "absolute monarchy"; Franklin Baumer (1977: 96-116) goes as far as alluding to the French king of this era as a "mortal god". Louis XIV was called the "Sun King", and everywhere around this well-preserved palace the iconography – in sculpture, painting and metal ornamentation – confirms his reflexively glorifying self-conception, which is not unrelated to the question of identity in relation to this hierarchical space.

As an aside I should point out that it is true that, if it had not been for this inflated idea of his own importance, the palace would not have been the repository of as much outstanding art from the 17th and 18th centuries as it is today. Louis XIV died in 1715, and the further embellishment of the palace continued under Louis XV and Louis XVI in the 18th century. The latter and his family had to leave Versailles during the first few days of the revolution in 1789. Although French democracy was arguably born with the advent of the revolution, it was soon followed by "the terror" in the guise of the persecution of everyone suspected of not having the requisite amount of revolutionary fervour, and ironically it did not take too long before the monarchy was reinstated, with King Louis-Philippe opening a museum dedicated to "all the glories of France" in Versailles palace in 1837.

What particularly interests me is the paradigmatic embodiment of political power in the discrete elements that make up this palace and its enormous gardens and parks. I have already mentioned the notion of "striated space" — space qualitatively marked by the imprint of power — here, "absolute" power, which is imprinted in the many sculptures of the "sun king" on his horse, or posing in regal paraphernalia in many paintings, usually dressed predominantly in red (the colour of royalty; even people's shoes were colour-coded at the time: red for royalty, blue for nobility, etc.). At first sight it seems obvious that identity, or processes of identification, to be more precise, would happen exclusively by way of identifying with the variously framed images of the king – a process persuasively described in Lacan's analysis (1977: 1-7; see also

Olivier 2009) of the "mirror-stage", which comprises the foundation of all subsequent acts of identification. To some extent this is no doubt the case: spectators "identified" with the image of the king, not in such a manner that they experienced themselves as being in his position of power, even vicariously, for a fleeting moment (although such fantasies probably did occur in Louis XIV' time, and do so even today). Identification in this case would imply, first and foremost, an experience, on the part of the onlooker, of being placed in a position of subordination to the king (represented by the images in question), insofar as the act of identification confirms the unassailable authority of the king, simultaneously constituting the spectator as his relatively powerless subject.

However, it is not only the large number of painted images of the king and of the queen, either in the form of portraits, or surrounded by their courtiers or by ambassadors of other countries, that afford the iconic means of identification for spectators. The non-discursive, spatial register that Hook invokes (above) in his study of spaces of or for affective identification, functions in this space where royal absolutism is elaborated in architectural terms, too. Hence, while identification with representative images certainly does occur, the fact that this happens in the broader context of an architecture which is exhaustively (and hierarchically) striated, reinforces the mode of identification immeasurably. In the case of the various rooms comprising the king's *grand appartement du roi*, the sumptuously decorated walls and high ceilings (on which the supposedly heroic actions of Louis XIV were depicted in the form of allegories based on events which putatively occurred in the ancient world) comprise spatial surroundings redolent with the feeling of expansiveness, reciprocally constituting the visitor as small and insignificant. The non-discursive, primarily spatial identification which takes place under such circumstances would unavoidably have interpellated the visiting nobleman or diplomat as a subject in awe of the royal power of the "Sun King" – something which is unlikely to occur in the same way in our secular, liberal democracies, except at the level of fantasy, perhaps. That subject-identity could be constituted in this way is not surprising, if one reflects on Deleuze and Guattari's remark, that (1987: 370):

> Homogeneous space is in no way a smooth space; on the contrary, it is the form of striated space. The space of *pillars.* It is striated by the fall of bodies, the verticals of gravity, the distribution of matter into parallel layers, the lamellar and laminar movement of flows. These parallel verticals have formed an independent dimension capable of spreading everywhere, of formalizing all the other dimensions, of striating all of space in all of its directions, so as to render it homogeneous.

Accordingly, the architectural space(s) of Versailles – and the surrounding gardens and parks may be understood as a continuum of this space – is recognizably homogeneous, as all striated space is, and presents itself as a pervasive "space of pillars" which extends beyond the buildings into the formal gardens. The metaphor of "pillars" is appropriate here – doesn't an autocratic form of government as instantiation of the "state apparatus" rely on an architecture of striated space as ideological spatial "support" or "mainstay"? Interestingly, the presence of thousands of 21st-century tourist-visitors streaming through the palace on a daily basis with their cameras and mobile phones could be seen as representing the incursion of nomadic, "smooth space" into what used to be the striated space of monarchical rule, were it not for the fact that, as a premier French tourist attraction, it exemplifies what has today become the striated space of (here, French, but ultimately international or global) capital — no one gets to enter the palace grounds without paying a hefty entrance fee. It is justifiable as being necessary to maintain the palace in pristine condition, but it is also aimed at turning a handsome profit. Hence the cratological "pillars" in question no longer coincide with the architecture of the Chateau Versailles, but are entirely invisible or abstract in the form of the monetary values that encircle the globe.

When I used the phrase, "representative images", above, I had in mind Ranciére's (Tanke 2011: 75-85) very specific sense of the term "representative", insofar as it fits into the category of what he calls the "representative regime of art". The latter denotes the conception of art that correlates with a hierarchically structured society (where tragedy is a "nobler" dramatic genre than comedy, and paintings of great historical events are preferable to those depicting everyday scenes), as opposed to the "ethical regime of images", which proscribes the use of images in the interest of a metaphysically structured society, and the "aesthetic regime of art", which treats all images as equal, and can therefore be described as a truly "democratic" conception of art. Ranciére therefore gives one another, complementary perspective on Versailles, highlighting the hierarchical implications of the "representative" character of the artworks in the palace. Whether it is a portrait of the Sun King and his entourage, or an allegorical painting depicting Louis XIV as a mythical hero performing heroic deeds, or (in the War Room) a painting of the king on the battlefield, accompanied by his officers, while wounded soldiers look up at him for succour, this is truly the "representative" art that Ranciére writes about – the art that finds its exemplary objects among royalty and nobility, and in a kind of fusion of historical and mythical events, depicted in idealising images that show a blind spot for ordinary, everyday social reality.

This interpretation of the art at Versailles is enriched in the light of his evocative phrase, "the distribution of the sensible" (referred to earlier; Ranciére 2010: location 499), which is the manner in which the extant world is organised, arranged, and ordered according to what is visible, audible, admissible and sayable. The "representative regime" of the arts instantiates one such "distribution of the sensible" insofar as this "distribution" changes in every era according to the parcelling out of social spaces by the dominant powers of the time. In the 17th and 18th centuries (specifically in France) this meant a hierarchy of classes from royalty through nobility and the bourgeoisie down to the fourth estate, or proletariat, whose exclusion or absence from this elevated space is conspicuous in that they are not represented anywhere in the artworks surrounding one (except in the paintings collected in the War Room, where they feature as soldiers ready to die, dying, and having died, for the king). In other words, the proletariat was pretty much invisible, and inaudible, until they made themselves heard in the clamour of the revolution, which was a disruptive manifestation of what Ranciere calls "equality", the gist of the political. Violence by itself would not qualify as a manifestation of equality in the sense of a quasi-transcendental political category (that is, as the condition of the possibility, as well as the impossibility of the political; of its possibility *and* its ruin, simultaneously); as Ranciére (2010: location 523; 1999: 22-23) reminds one, the assertion of equality, in principle, must be accompanied by the *logos*, or the assertion of the ability to speak, no less so than those in power.

Giverny

Compared to Versailles, the home of Monet at Giverny is gentleness incarnate; here the "distribution of the sensible" operates according to inclusion, not exclusion. What Ranciére labels the art of the "aesthetic regime" – which instantiates "equality" in terms of artistic object-choice, style and medium, with no privilege accorded to any particular variety – is conspicuous here, in contrast to the hierarchical art of the "representative regime" at Versailles. Accordingly, Monet's paintings, replicas of which are everywhere in the house (the originals being stored elsewhere for preservation purposes), are of flowers, trees, mountains, ordinary people; that is, objects of interest selected from the endless spectrum of what offers itself to artists, and not as dictated by conventional rules — as it was the case in Monet's day by the French Academy of Fine Arts, from which artists like Monet broke away.

His love of Japanese prints, which adorn many of the walls in his house, reflects his openness to the world around him, and simultaneously testifies to the fundamentally organising function of the "aesthetic regime", which does not privilege any artform above any others, in his oeuvre. The famous Japanese footbridge in his garden, rendered with loving attention to the detail of a particular "impression" in several of his paintings – with the consequence that a "dialogue" of sorts ensues between the real bridge and the redoubled bridge(s) in the paintings – is a particularly poignant case in point. Even if spectators were unaware of the cultural provenance of this type of bridge, its unusual shape would strike one's vision as something that binds the two banks of the stream together by means of a charming cultural artefact that does no violence to the stream or surrounding trees and flowers. On the contrary, in Heidegger's (2001: 150) phrase, the bridge "…brings stream and bank and land into each other's neighborhood. The bridge *gathers* the earth as landscape around the stream". It is true that Heidegger was talking about a different bridge, but his phenomenology of its being applies to Monet's bridge just as much.

In fact, Monet's house and everything it contains, together with his garden, embody the "aesthetic regime", and therefore instantiate an aesthetic model for true democracy — everything is treated with equal attention, love and gentleness, which pervade the aesthetic space(s) concerned, and this effectively prevents a hierarchization of any kind. Versailles, by contrast, represents a model of what Ranciére (2010: location 499; Tanke 2011: 42-43) calls "the police", a symbolic constitution of the social according to hierarchies of exclusion. It is interesting to note that the French "absolute" monarchy may be long gone, but in its place today, as noted above regarding the rule of capital in Versailles as privileged "tourist space", we have an equally ruthless, globally extended, dominant power that perhaps deserves the epithet of "absolute" more than Louis XIV did. (As historical events showed, "absolute" was a misnomer in the Sun King's case; it will inescapably prove true of globalized capital, too, as of all contingent historical phenomena.)

How does identity – or rather, identification – work in the aesthetic surroundings of Monet's home? To be sure, it is no less subject to the striation brought about in the space of tourism as subdivision of the space of capitalist power – one pays an entrance fee to imbibe the aesthetic space at Monet's house as in the case of Versailles. Hence exclusion of those who cannot afford the entrance fee operates at both sites, and already contributes to a sense of identity inseparable from global consumerism. But while striated space as architecturally articulated at Versailles is conducive to identification in terms of the relation between unquestionable power and subordination – where the lingering imprint of the "Sun King's" "absolute" rule is still discernible by 21st-century visitors, and may even be apprehended by some in its new incarnation as the superimposed rule of global capital – Monet's art-rich house and garden display a different kind of striation. One could even discern elements of spatial smoothness there, considering Deleuze and Guattari's (1987: 474-475) observation, quoted earlier, that the two kinds usually appear in an admixture of sorts, and one that is not stable, but oscillates between smooth space invading striated space and *vice versa*. Smooth space, they further point out (1987: 380-381), is the space of the nomad, as opposed to sedentary striated space, which belongs to the migrant, among others. Because of its walls and garden paths, Monet's house and garden constitute striated space, and one visits this locale as a "migrant", but the countervailing force of nomadic, smooth space asserts itself in the fact that its layout and inviting aesthetic qualities encourage one to "distribute" oneself in this space, wandering "aimlessly" like a nomad, without the teleological burden of the migrant. Hence, at a non-discursive, affective spatial level, the identification to which entering this space is conducive, is that of the nomadic wanderer,

temporarily freed from the constraints of striation, which one therefore surpasses from within. Small wonder that one gets the impression that visitors are loathe to leave, and roam or amble through the extensive garden into the house and back again, stopping intermittently to admire a flower, lean on the Japanese footbridge, or gaze (appropriately) at an impressionistic painting. "Impressions" seem to characterize such quasi-nomadic behaviour, so that one could perhaps speak of "impressionistic" identification in this singular place, stretched between striated and smooth space.

Gyeongju, Korea

When visiting (South) Korea with a view to investigating the area where some of the oldest Korean cultural artefacts are to be found, one's destination(s) should include the famed city of Gyeongju, two hours South-East from Seoul by rapid train. I used the word "famed" deliberately, given the city's reputation as an "open-air museum" — walking through the city one comes upon many huge mounds of earth that just happen to be the ancient burial sites, or underground burial chambers, of Korean royalty dating back more than 10 centuries. In Gyeongju one gets a first taste of Eastern, specifically Korean, "spirituality" when wandering through the grounds of Anapji (Wild Goose/Duck) Pond, where the royal residence known as Eastern Palace, was built during the reign of Silla King Munmu in 647 CE as a "pleasure garden" (Paxton 2013: location 5587). The way that the buildings, the vegetation and the "pond" nestle in one another's embrace adumbrates the more all-embracing sense of "connectedness" that awaits one elsewhere in the country.

A visit to the Gyeongju Cultural Museum is likely to reinforce the feeling experienced at Anapji Pond. Walking from one hall to another, overawed by the rich cultural history of the Korean people, one's sense of having a "western" identity is relativized in the face of a very different set of cultural markers for judging personhood. Most literate people are aware of the fact that the Roman Empire lasted for centuries, but it is unlikely that many westerners know about the "golden" Silla kingdom on Korean soil that lasted almost 1000 years (from 57 BCE to 935 CE), with Gyeongju being its capital city continuously for most of that time (Paxton 2013: location 5100). As a measure of the level of Silla civilization, it is informative to note that the gold artefacts discovered in the royal burial chamber in Gyeongju are the Korean counterpart of those found in the tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamen. From the existence of these artefacts used by people of royal rank one can already infer that ancient Korean society was no less marked by hierarchical power relations than any western society. This is apparent in light of Ranciére's notion of power relations as something aesthetically as well as politically inscribed – in fact, the aesthetic has direct political import, and *vice versa* (Ranciére 2007: 560), along the axis of the "distribution of the sensible". Art structures the world of political affairs, and political actions leave their imprint on the manner the social world is perceived, and therefore also on the arts. The gold artefacts from the Silla burial chambers are no exception to this rule; they represent an index of the supreme political and cultural power of the Silla royal class, and therefore carry within them the memory traces of ancient striated space.

If exploring the city of Gyeongju on foot allows one to imbibe the distinctive spirit of this corner of Oriental culture to a certain degree, it may prove to be but a pale version of what awaits one when ascending Mount Namsan, a few kilometres outside the city. Here a tangible sense of "oneness with nature" asserts itself – not in any mystical way (although someone sensitive to the mystical aspects of experience may well be privy to such an experience in these

mountains), but precisely because of the specific "distribution of the sensible" by the unique intertwinement of nature and culture. What one witnesses here is indeed "intertwinement" and not mere juxtaposition of cultural artefacts and natural entities like trees and rocks.

The way in which space has been modulated in the great churches of Europe sometimes allows one to get a sense of the "spirituality" that it engenders, even now, in a visitor – centuries after the demise of the theocentric world of the Christian Middle Ages. In the mountainous region around Gyeongju on the Korean peninsula one encounters something comparably "spiritual"– in fact, Mount Namsan is truly suffused with what one can only describe as a pervasive sense of spirituality. But there is a difference between these two experiences, phenomenologically speaking. Upon entering a Gothic church like St Vitus cathedral in Prague, one's "spirit" is directed upwards, towards what medieval Christianity believed to be the direction of heaven, simultaneously uplifting one's being. This is significant, because for Christianity what matters is the immortal soul, which is virtually synonymous with spirit, and whose "home" is located in an otherworldly realm. This axiological (value-) prioritisation of the soul above the body in the spatial design of the cathedral - its characteristic "distribution of the sensible" - explains the fact that, from the moment of entering such a Gothic cathedral, your gaze is directed upwards along the verticals to the vault, high overhead. One's spirit soars, metaphorically speaking, and one experiences it almost tangibly in those hallowed spaces. Interestingly, the flipside of this is the countervailing awareness of what one might call "demonic" forces surrounding these churches, attributable, perhaps, to the ever-present array of gargoyles hovering above one on the building's exterior. After all, in addition to their technical-practical function as water-spouts, gargoyles simultaneously represented and (supposedly) warded off evil.

The experience of "spirituality" is very different in the Eastern spaces of Korea and Japan, however. Mount Namsan in Korea, with its beautiful rocks and forests, breathes spirituality, not least because of the many Buddhist shrines, statues and rock engravings dotted all over it. One moment you would be climbing up a steep slope to where the trail vanishes on a ridge, and the next you would gasp with astonished surprise when you cross the ridge and come face to face with a seated Buddha smiling benevolently at you despite its stony, centuries-old features (in most cases about 1400 years old), with one hand in a giving gesture and the other lifted reassuringly. Here it is not otherworldliness that impresses itself on the receptive visitor, but a paradoxical transcendence-in-immanence: the manner in which cultural markers or signs in the form of images engraved on, or carved into, or out of rocks function to impart a sense of "spiritual" meaning to the mountain space. By "spiritual" I mean that it instantiates the fusion of nature (the mountain) and culture (the engravings and sculpted images, usually of Buddha figures), bringing about something qualitatively different from the spaces of Gothic church interiors. In the case of the latter, the striation of the space is one of vertical, spiritual hierarchy and divinely sanctioned authority, as articulated in the form of an encompassing architectural-cultural edifice or work, imposed on the natural landscape, instead of being fused with it. By contrast the mountain spaces in the East (specifically Korea), while also partly striated, were no doubt smooth space before the presence of human beings brought about a striation through the appearance of mountain paths and the creation of images and sculptures inscribed on the very "flesh" of the mountain. The difference is therefore that the striation is not unilaterally impressed upon the natural landscape, but is somehow interbraided with what one still experiences as the co-presence of smooth mountain space as one negotiates the mountain paths (that sometimes tend to merge with the qualitatively heterogeneous landscape) on foot. This is made more comprehensible in the light of Deleuze and Guattari's observation (1987: 371):

> Smooth space is precisely the space of the smallest deviation: therefore it has no homogeneity, except between infinitely proximate points, and the linking of proximities is effected independently of any determined path. It is a space of contact, of small tactile or manual actions of contact, rather than a visual space like Euclid's striated space. Smooth space is a field without conduits or channels. A field, a heterogeneous smooth space, is wedded to a very particular type of multiplicity: nonmetric, acentered, rhizomatic multiplicities that occupy space without 'counting' it and can 'be explored only by legwork.'

In terms of the "distribution of the sensible" the space peculiar to Gothic church architecture is of an unmistakeably hierarchical (if ultimately otherworldly) kind, while the mountain space in the East (in this case in Korea, although the same holds for the mountain space around Kyoto, Japan) displays a much less hierarchical quality by virtue of the intertwinement of nature and culture, "spirituality" (in the sense of a distinctively human "presence" through artefacts) and materiality. Primarily, regardless of the signs of human interaction with nature, these are mountain spaces that embrace you with a welcoming Gaian gesture, drawing you close to them without any feeling of being suffocated.

It is not difficult to understand why this particular mountain (Mount Namsan) attracted Buddhist adherents, inviting them to adorn nature with images of the Buddha, which they believed was ubiquitous throughout nature, anyway. While the Christian cathedrals elevate the spirit, infusing it with a feeling of being ethereal, these spaces do not propel the spirit "heavenwards", as it were; instead, it is as if "spirituality" is diffused throughout the mountain landscape: the streams, rocks, trees and even the human visitors to this place of refuge are imbued with it. It is this-worldly, not otherworldly like the spirituality of Christian spaces. It therefore functions therapeutically by divesting the receptive visitor of cratologically structured aspirations, inducing a sense of tranquillity and stillness instead, as one walks along the mountain paths or rests in the shade of the forest trees. As in the case of Monet's art-pervaded house and garden, the kind of identity that is configured on the visitor's part via their identification with a domain that is a blend of striated and smooth space, is consonant withRanciére's notion of the subject of the aesthetic regime, or (in political as well as aesthetic terms) of "equality", without hierarchy or subordination to dominant interests, as in the case of Versailles.

A concrete example of such a therapeutic experience of the "distribution of the sensible" in the space of Mount Namsan would probably be conducive to understanding what was described above. On one's way down from the peak one comes upon something that draws the awareness of pervasive "spirituality", or "oneness" of nature and being-human, together like a beautiful, intricate knot in a tapestry. At first hidden by a thick curtain of leaves, it suddenly emerges into one's field of vision like an unexpected, unwelcome visitor who has unwittingly spoilt one's daytime reverie — a feeling that is soon dissipated, however. It is a modest little structure — two houses at right angles to each other, overlooking the undulating, cascading waves of leaves and trees below them. A hermitage, where a wrinkled old lady offers one green tea and gestures into one of the two houses that happens to be a Buddhist temple, resplendent with a golden Buddha figure and oriental paintings adorning its walls. Drinking one's tea and looking out towards the sea of green below, it would not come as a surprise to be overwhelmed by the feeling that one could happily spend the rest of one's life there, in the bosom of the mountain spirit, untroubled by the everyday worries, chores and irritations that punctuate an ordinary working day in the striated space of a world dominated by economic and political power-struggles.

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As an undergraduate student, Bert Olivier discovered Philosophy more or less by accident, but has never regretted it. Because Bert knew very little, Philosophy turned out to be right up his alley, as it were, because of Socrates's teaching, that the only thing we know with certainty, is how little we know. Armed with this '*docta ignorantia*', Bert set out to teach students the value of questioning, and even found out that one could write cogently about it, which he did during the 1980s and '90s in opposition to apartheid. Since then, he has been teaching and writing on Philosophy and his other great loves, namely, the arts, architecture and literature. In the face of the many irrational actions on the part of people, and wanting to understand these, later on he branched out into Psychoanalysis and Social Theory as well, and because Philosophy cultivates in one a strong sense of justice, he has more recently been harnessing what little knowledge he has in intellectual opposition to the injustices brought about by the dominant economic system today, to wit, neoliberal capitalism. His motto is taken from Immanuel Kant's work: '*Sapere aude*!' ('Have the courage to think for yourself!') Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University recently (2012) conferred a Distinguished Professorship on him.