0: INTRODUCTION, OR ABYSS LESSONS

The geophilosopher is one who philosophically experiences rather than flees the earth, who passes through by remaining with it. Geophilosophical experience entails facing, more and more deeply, the fact of earth as the place of philosophy, and more profoundly, experiencing earth as facticity itself, the site of thought’s passage to the absolute.

Nicola Masciandaro, “Becoming Spice”

Thinking takes place in the relationship of territory and the earth.

Deleuze and Guattari, What is Philosophy?

In Jules Verne’s Journey to the Center of the Earth, Professor Lidenbrock, after exploring the town of Grauben, forces his nephew up the narrow staircase of a church in order to induce vertigo. The professor tells him that they must take “abyss lessons,”¹ in order to prepare themselves for their forthcoming descent into the planet. In the spirit of Deleuze and Guattari’s appropriation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Professor Challenger, what we require is the services of a geophilosopher (or

¹ Jules Verne, Journey to the Center of the Earth (New York: Bantam Classic, 2006), 42.
geophysicist), possessed with the madness of Lidenbrock, in order to unground the earth in philosophical and folk thinking.

In far too much continental philosophy, the Earth is a cold dead place enlivened only by human thought—either as a thing to be exploited, or as an object of nostalgia. This split is endemic to philosophies of nature on the whole, a split diagnosed by Pierre Hadot as the divide between the Promethean and Orphic tendencies in viewing nature. Furthermore, this divide not only presents a false choice between exploitative capitalist Cartesianism and neo-pagan Spinozism, but also wrongfully presupposes that nature is a thing ontologically separate from humanity. That is, both the Promethean and the Orphic tendencies assume that human beings are \textit{a priori} set apart from nature, either due to divine entities (God, Soul, etc.) or to our purportedly unique cognitive abilities.

Setting aside religious arguments for the sake of realism and materialism (and brevity), the Earth has been used to ground thought instead of bending it; such grounding far too often gives too much supposedly immovable ground to thinking, leaving the planet as nothing but a stage for phenomenology, deconstruction, and other forms of anthropocentric philosophy. Geophilosophy, to return to Deleuze and Guattari, is named as the invention of Nietzsche,\textsuperscript{2} and, as Masciandaro notes, after Nietzsche geo-philosophy devolves into a philosophy of place (\textit{topos}),\textsuperscript{3} particularly in Heideggerian philosophy, as the earth is carved into dwellings, homes, and the open.\textsuperscript{4}

While there have been some attempts at showing how the earth-as-process is integral to humanity’s existence, such

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{2} Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, \textit{What is Philosophy?} trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (London: Verso, 1994), 85.
  \item \textsuperscript{3} Nicola Masciandaro, “Becoming Spice: Commentary as Geophilosophy,” \textit{COLLAPSE} VI: Geo/Philosophy (January 2010): 33 [20–56].
  \item \textsuperscript{4} Masciandaro, “Becoming Spice,” 34–35.
\end{itemize}
as Manuel De Landa’s discussion of *Homo sapiens’* endo-
skeletons as mineral invasion,\(^5\) or Jane Bennett’s ecopolitics,
the terrestrial globe on which we haplessly crawl begs for more
philosophical attention, especially as the globe has contoured
every aspect of our material, cultural, and noetic existence.
This will be our task.

\(^5\) Manuel De Landa, *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* (Cam-
bridge: Zone Books, 2000), 27.