

Deterritorialization—A key concept in the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, and especially elaborated in their *Anti-Oedipus* (1984) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). Their philosophy depends on a particular lexicon, including, in addition to the current term, RHIZOME, FLOWS, NOMADISM (and see PSYCHOANALYSIS), strata and assemblages. The concluding section of *A Thousand Plateaus* comprises a brief summation of some of these terms. Here ‘assemblages’ are described as always ‘basically territorial’ (1987: 503) composed of different contrary aspects: in the first instance they are both non-discursive bodies and discursive utterances (‘content and expression’); in the second, they are defined by their constitution as ‘territories’ and by a counter ‘deterritorializing’ interior movement that agitates for change. Animal, social and political assemblages are therefore seen as dynamic combinations of reterritorializing forces that seek stability and the ‘lines of flight’, creative energy or DESIRE, that ‘cut across’ or deterritorialize a given assemblage and ‘carry it away’ (1987: 504).

The ‘Conclusion’ of *A Thousand Plateaus* further distinguishes in abstract fashion between ‘relative’ and ‘absolute’ types of deterritorialization (1987: 508–10). The first takes place in the actual world and can take a ‘negative’ form when the lines of flight are blocked, or ‘positive’ when the lines of flight escape the forces of repressive reterritorialization. ‘Absolute’ deterritorialization refers to a deeper movement in the ‘virtual’ order of things, acting on the ‘molecular’ rather than ‘molar’ plane of existence (Patton 2001: 210). ‘Deterritorialisation is absolute,’ write Deleuze and Guattari, ‘when ... it brings about the creation of a new earth’ (1987: 510). These more profound, qualitative transformations depend on a relative deterritorialization coming to a point of connection with other deterritorializations in other fields to produce a new natural, social or political ‘assemblage’. This does not produce a new majority society or culture but installs a continuing deterritorialization that generalizes a ‘creative process of becoming-different or divergence from the majority’ (Patton 2001: 213). This process is central to Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of revolutionary politics.

See PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY.