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Detecting deviance: Exploring a controversy surrounding a rainbow crossing through a Deleuzo-Guattarian lens

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how landscapes and their traits evoke a certain kind of world and how it then provides people a warrant to rectify or remove any trait that they detect as deviant or undesirable. This process is exemplified by an event that took place in Turku, Finland, in 2021. It elaborates a rarely utilized landscape theory drawn from the works of Deleuze and Guattari to address a controversy surrounding a landscape trait, a rainbow crossing, that was removed shortly after its implementation. The findings highlight how landscapes are highly effective in detecting supposed social deviance and in providing a warrant to correct any supposed abnormalities to maintain normality. The implementation encapsulated the social changes related to sexuality that occurred in Finland at the turn of the millennium, whereas the removal can be understood as typifying conservative sentiments and, more specifically, the political backlash against these changes that took place in the following decades. The heteronormative social order was quickly reinstated as the rainbow crossing was able to visibly challenge the dominance of the Oedipalized form of sexuality.

1. Introduction

This article elaborates how landscapes and landscape traits evoke a certain kind of world and how that world provides people a warrant to correct or remove any trait that they detect as deviant or undesirable. This process is exemplified by a controversy surrounding a landscape trait, a rainbow crossing that was implemented in a central location in Turku, Finland, in 2021, and its removal from the landscape, as demanded by the police. This article therefore also explores normativity and sexuality in connection to landscapes.

The landscape theory utilized in this article is largely drawn from the works of Deleuze and Guattari. It is a non-representational theory, but, contrary to non-representational landscape theories that emphasize affect (Waterton, 2019), it recognizes that, while distinct, bodily affects cannot be neatly separated from the signs through which we make sense of them (Wetherell, 2015). There is existing research that utilizes concepts coined by Deleuze and Guattari, but, aside my own work (Savela, 2023), it is difficult to find studies that draw the landscape theory from their works, as noted by Crouch (2012) and Entrikin (2011). For example, Nast (2000) discusses desire and sexuality in relation to their work, but the article's landscape theory is, at best, implicitly based on their work. Olwig (2008, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c) acknowledges their landscape theory, but does not expand on it, nor utilize it in his own work. In response, this article therefore seeks to provide an expansive, yet accessible account of their theory of faces and landscapes, making it highly novel and a significant contribution to landscape studies.

While this study utilizes a theory that has been rarely applied, it is worth noting that it is similar to Foucauldian approaches in landscape research (see, for example, Matless, 1992, 1994, 1998; Schein, 1997, 2003; Schein, 2009) due to the similarities of the underlying philosophies, as commented by Deleuze (1988). The theory is, nonetheless, different as it accounts for how landscapes establish what is considered desirable and how they guide people to detect, reject and remove any landscape trait that is considered deviant or undesirable. As a result, in Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) view, it is not, no longer, the people who define the composition of landscapes, but rather the composition of landscapes that define the people as they adhere to the composition.

Relevant to the empirical example investigated in this article, there are many existing studies that pertain to landscapes and sexuality. Many of them address the articulation of femininity and masculinity in landscapes (McDowell, 2008; Monk, 1984, 1992; Pritchard and Morgan, 2000; Rose, 1993; Sayer, 2005). Some of the studies focus particularly on buildings and monuments (Álvarez, 2022; Buentello García and Rice, 2023; Domosh, 1996; Drozdzewski and Monk, 2020; Weidenmuller et al., 2015) or on depictions of landscapes (Dando, 2023; Hoogenboom, 2005; Nash, 1996; Setten, 2003). Others focus on the linkages between

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sexuality and colonialism (Anzai, 2005; Duncan, 2005), gentrification (Bondi, 1992, 1998; Papayanis, 2000), nationalism (Blaustein, 2005; Dowler, 1998; Hjartarson, 2005; Johnson, 1995), religion (Gorby, 2005; Helphand, 2005), and tourism (Doyle, 2005; Goodyear, 2005; Heaney, 2005).

These existing studies are relevant to this article due to their shared criticism of phallocentrism. They expose how, through landscapes, men are presented as the standard-bearers of humanity, championing norms, laws and reason, and how women are relegated to a subordinate position, acting as foils, highlighting the supposed superiority of men (Braidotti and Dolphijn, 2014). The case examined in this study is, however, more closely related to landscape studies that assess sexual normativity (Andersson, 2023; Boyd, 2010; Elder, 2005; Hubbard, 2000; Myslik, 1996; Ruez, 2016; Valentine, 1995; Witcomb, 2021).

Excluding the introduction and the conclusion, this article is divided into six sections. The second section introduces the empirical example. At this stage, it is examined in physical terms, focusing solely on road safety concerns. The third and fourth sections provide a semiotic account of the event. They address the limitations of a purely material account of landscapes and elaborate the centrality of landscapes to the production of subjectivities and social order. The fifth and sixth parts expand this discussion. They specify the connection between landscape and normativity, explaining how landscapes function as deviance detectors and how they facilitate discrimination. Sections six and seven discuss the importance of sexuality to social order and account for the heteronormative objections to the rainbow crossing and for its removal from the landscape.

2. The colors

The case investigated in this article pertains to a rainbow crossing, which was implemented by the City of Turku, a municipality situated in Southwest Finland. Turku City Theater had proposed this initiative to its owner, the city, and covered the expenses (City of Turku, 2021a). According to the City of Turku (2021b) press release, the idea behind this rainbowizing of municipal infrastructure (Bain and Podmore, 2023) was to express open-mindedness, tolerance, equality and diversity, as contemporarily associated with the rainbow motif (Bitterman, 2021). The city therefore indicated that everyone has the right to the city, to be part of it and to participate in urban life (Harvey, 2008; Lefebvre, 1996). Fig. 1 illustrates the rainbow crossing at the time, in the evening of June 9, 2021, a day after its implementation.

The rainbow crossing depicted in Fig. 1 was situated in a central location, but it hardly stood out in the landscape. While certainly sizable, it was implemented on the road surface. In comparison, the large screen mounted on the side of the theater building was arguably much more noticeable in the landscape than the rainbow crossing.

To explain the situation in terms used by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), landscapes are akin to faces. They are recognizable by their physical features, some of which are more distinct than others and thus stand out even at a distance. Faces have various *facial traits*, such as freckles, wrinkles, and the shape of one's chin, whereas landscapes have *landscape traits*, such as buildings, bodies of water and landforms.

Fig. 1 contains innumerable landscape traits, of which the rainbow crossing was only one among many. For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), these traits are, in the broadest sense of the word, merely *bodies* among other bodies, arranged and connected to one another in a physical system, to which they refer to as a *regime of bodies* and as a *machinic assemblage of desire*. The former offers as a synchronic view, a snapshot that accounts for a specific arrangement of bodies at a given time, whereas the latter offers a diachronic view, accounting for how physical matter is formed and deformed, how bodies move, integrate and disintegrate in relation to each other (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 1987). In terms of production, a regime therefore appears to us as the product and an assemblage as the process (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). The bodies are, however, never mere end products, separate from the process. They therefore also function to regulate or regiment the flow of *desire*, which is the force that accounts for the transformation of physical matter, how bodies integrate and disintegrate as parts of larger composite bodies (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 1987).

The city emphasized the permanence of the initiative, how, unlike occasionally flying the rainbow flag, a rainbow crossing functions as a constant reminder of equality and inclusivity (City of Turku, 2021b). It was therefore set to be "a rare acknowledgment that sexuality is a critical organizing feature of cities", as Muller Myrdahl (2021, p. 50) might characterize it. However, the initiative quickly became mired in a *rainbow infrastruggle* (Bain and Podmore, 2023). The City of Turku (2021c) received multiple public complaints and the police demanded its removal. The city obliged and procured its removal the following day, on June 10, 2021, as illustrated in Fig. 2.

The City of Turku (2021b) stated in its initial press release that the implementation of the rainbow crossing was legal. In its view, it adhered to the Road Traffic Act (729/2018, secs. 1–2) and to the supplementary Government Decree (379/2020, secs. 36, 44) that define a pedestrian crossing as a part of a road that crosses the roadway, the bikeway, or the tramway, as indicated by road signs and/or road markings. The Southwestern Finland Police Department (SFPD) approved the implementation (Lund, 2021). The rainbow crossing was, however, deemed illegal by the National Police Board of Finland (NPBF), as indicated by the City of Turku (2021d) in a subsequent press release.

The City of Turku (2021d) maintained that the rainbow crossing was legal as a pedestrian crossing must be indicated *either* by road signs *or* by road markings, but not by both. In its view, the implementation was not

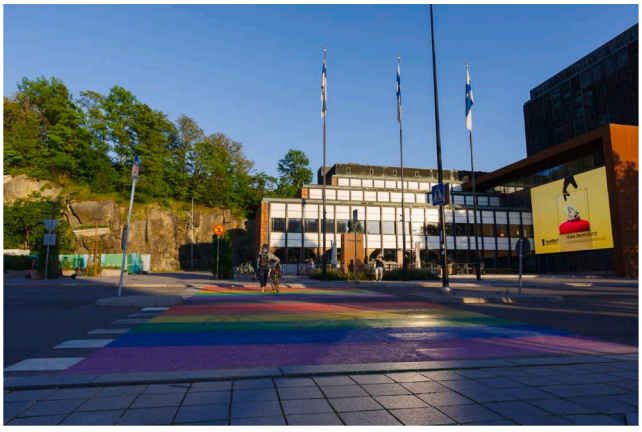

Fig. 1. Turku rainbow crossing. Photograph: author / CC BY 4.0.

Fig. 2. Turku rainbow crossing removed from the landscape. Photograph: author / CC BY 4.0.

illegal as the pedestrian crossing was clearly marked by road signs. In fact, there were a total of eight pedestrian crossing signs in the landscape, as emphasized by the city in its press release (City of Turku, 2021d) and illustrated by Fig. 2. While four of these signs do not pertain to the same pedestrian crossing, they are so close to the other four that, in the absence of road markings in one of the pedestrian crossings, it is highly unlikely that a driver would not be alerted by at least one of the eight signs. Moreover, it is worth acknowledging that road signs are considered the preferred option for indicating a pedestrian crossing as people are expected to rely solely on them as, come winter, road markings are often obscured by snow and ice in Finland, as explicitly noted in the Government Proposal for the previous Road Traffic Act (HE 74/1979, pp. 4–5) on which the current act is based on.

The NPBF could, however, still argue that the rainbow crossing was illegal, not because the pedestrian crossing was not marked in accordance with the law, but because it was an illegal traffic control device. To be more specific, the NPBF insisted that, according to the Road Traffic Act (729/2018, sec. 73), the placement of disruptive or unauthorized signs, markings, or devices that may be confused with any traffic control devices, that may decrease their visibility or efficacy, and/or that may dazzle road users or interfere with their attention is prohibited on the road and in its vicinity. Moreover, nothing that does not bear relevance to the intended use of legitimate traffic control devices or is detrimental to traffic control shall be attached to these devices, or to their carriers (379/2020, sec. 2). Furthermore, road markings must be maintained to prevent them from being confused with other road markings (379/2020, sec. 42). The police or the entity responsible for the placement of traffic control devices, in this case the city, may therefore remove such signs, markings or devices (729/2018, sec. 73).

It is also worth noting that placement matters. It is illegal to place unauthorized devices that can be misidentified as legitimate traffic control devices. For example, implementing a rainbow crossing somewhere where there is no pedestrian crossing is illegal as it might be mistaken for a pedestrian crossing and thus endanger road safety (HE 74/1979, p. 15). In this case, however, there was no risk of misidentification as the rainbow crossing was implemented in an existing pedestrian crossing, as clearly indicated by road signs, as seen in Figs. 1 and 2.

The City of Turku (2021d) defended the initiative by equating it with other common markings that are not listed in the appendices of the Road Traffic Act (729/2018). These include the red, green, and blue markings that indicate bike lanes, parking spaces reserved for charging electric cars and parking spaces for disabled people, as seen in Figs. 3–5.

These markings have been in place for years, on two thoroughfares, and they could all be interpreted as illegal on the same grounds as the rainbow crossing depicted in Fig. 1. However, no action has ever been taken against them by the police, even though people have complained about them. For example, it has been noted that the red bike lanes depicted in Fig. 3 may confuse drivers and cyclists (City of Turku, 2018a) and that, in certain weather conditions, the thin red layer is difficult to see (City of Turku, 2023) and slippery for the cyclists (City of Turku, 2018b). Moreover, it has also been noted that another, much more prominent landscape trait, the large screen mounted on the side of the theater building depicted in Fig. 1, could endanger road safety (City of Turku, 2020).

Fig. 3. A bike lane marked in red. Photograph: author / CC BY 4.0.

Fig. 4. A charging area marked in green. Photograph: author / CC BY 4.0.

Fig. 5. A parking space marked in blue. Photograph: author / CC BY 4.0.

There is no doubt that devices that may cause confusion or interfere with road users' attention are illegal. However, when pressed by the media, the SFPD spokesperson tasked to handle the matter locally on behalf of the NPBF was unable and thus unwilling to provide any evidence to support this position (Ihatsu, 2021). In fact, there never was any data that would support it. Moreover, the spokesperson also stated that the rainbow crossing was deemed illegal as it could not be guaranteed that it did not endanger road safety (Peltola, 2021). The problem with this argument is that it is based on an appeal to ignorance. As the police had no evidence that the rainbow crossing *may* confuse drivers, the burden of proof was shifted, giving the impression that the city must prove that the rainbow crossing *may not* confuse the drivers. It is worth underlining the absurdity of this argument. The burden of proof would have rested on the plaintiff, i.e., the public prosecutor, not on the defendant, i.e., the city, had this issue been decided in court, as defined in the Code of Judicial Procedure (4/1734) as the default procedural arrangement.

To be clear, studies that pertain to this issue do not support the view upheld by the police. In fact, the few studies that were available at the time contradict it. According to a study conducted in Australia, colored road surfaces have a positive effect on road safety (Corben et al., 2000).

Similarly, according to a study conducted in Canada, rainbow crossings do "not decrease pedestrian safety" and, in fact, have "a positive influence over motorist behaviour" (CITYlab, 2015, p. 8). More recent studies echo these findings. A study conducted in the US indicates that the "implementation of asphalt art appears to have a positive impact on the rate of crashes of all types" and that this applies to "a variety of roadway settings, traffic control types, and art improvement type[s]" (Schwartz, 2022, p. 22). Furthermore, it is indicated in a Canadian study that, for the drivers, "[t]here is no statistical difference related to the type of crosswalk setting (standard pavement markings or non-standard pavement markings) and distraction from the message the crosswalk [is] conveying" (Montufar et al., 2023, p. v). The only evidence that does not contradict the position maintained by the police pertains to various adverse effects that non-standard markings may have on disabled people (Montufar et al., 2023, p. iii). This evidence is, however, anecdotal and, more problematically, ignores jurisdictions in which the road surface is regularly covered with snow and ice during the winter, forcing people, including disabled people, to rely solely on the road signs.

If this case is explained in terms used by Deleuze and Guattari (1983, 1987), the cited reason for the removal of the landscape trait was that this change in the regime of bodies could alter the machinic assemblage of desire, increasing the risk of certain bodies colliding with other bodies. As there was no evidence to support this view, it was argued that the landscape trait had to be removed as there was no evidence that suggests otherwise. What is particularly problematic about this is that there is evidence that suggests the exact opposite, that colored strips of paint may, in fact, decrease the risk of collisions.

A purely material account of this case is, however, simply insufficient. There are studies that account for landscape as a purely physical entity, but, despite the pushback (Price and Lewis, 1993), such morphological views espoused in, for example, Finland (Granö, 1997), France (Vidal, 1903, 1911), Germany (Passarge, 1919, 1921) and the US (Sauer, 1929) have for a long time been considered inadequate by landscape scholars (Cosgrove, 1983; Cosgrove and Jackson, 1987; Duncan, 1990). While there is nothing inherently wrong about focusing on various landscape traits, such "as house types, barn types, fences, or landscape 'ensembles'", it becomes questionable inasmuch as they "are claimed to reveal culture regions or culture hearths", as explained by Duncan (1990, p. 11). In other words, such supposedly self-evident and objective accounts of landscapes and their traits are problematic as "all interpretations are necessarily theory-laden", as expressed by Duncan and Duncan (2010, p. 227).

To be clear, this does not entail that landscapes do not have materiality, but that they are more than material and therefore they cannot be explained in purely physical terms. In other words, landscape "is both a material thing and a conceptual framing of the world", as summarized by Schein (2003, p. 202). The following section expands on this topic, shifting the discussion of landscapes and landscape traits from their physical aspects to their semiotic aspects.

3. The values

For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), facial traits and landscape traits are not mere physical features that we simply know how to recognize. Therefore, the rainbow crossing was never mere strips of paint on a road surface. Instead, it stood for much more for everyone involved.

To account for this more, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) complement physical systems of bodies, regimes of bodies, and machinic assemblages of desire with semiotic systems of signs, *regimes of signs* and *collective assemblages of enunciation*. In their view, these two systems, regimes and assemblages do not, however, correspond with one another, nor are they capable of directly transforming one another. Therefore, a *sign*, such as a word, does not correspond to a matching body. Furthermore, only bodies can act on bodies and signs on signs. They do, however, acknowledge that signs require physical bodies, such as vibrations of air, or, in this case, strips of paint, just as physical matter only makes sense to us as consisting of distinct bodies that exist in relation to one another inasmuch that matter has also been *incorporeally transformed* through signs and *attributed* accordingly at its surface, as also noted by Wetherell (2015).

These two systems do, nonetheless, share the same principles in terms of their arrangement and production, as explained by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). Therefore, similarly to bodies, signs can only be understood in relation to other signs. Moreover, they come together to compose other signs and, ultimately, a regime of signs that is best understood as the product, whereas the collective assemblage of enunciation is the process. A regime does, however, also function to regulate or regiment the flow of signs and thus influences the collective assemblage of enunciation. In other words, similarly to the physical system, the semiotic system regulates its own transformations of semiotic matter.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) indicate that the contemporarily dominant sign regime mixes *signifying* elements and *subjectifying* elements. In summary, this mixed regime is based on a despotic desire, marked by *signification*, a paranoid search for objective meaning, the *signified*, and on an authoritative desire, marked by *subjectification*, a passional promotion of one's subjectivity. This combination results in a desire to know not only what everything means, but also what it all means to the subject that constructs itself according to the signifieds.

Signification and subjectification are problematic for Deleuze and Guattari (1987). In their view, there are no signifieds, only *signifiers* that refer to other signifiers in a redundant fashion, resulting in infinite circularity. In plain terms, words do not mean anything on their own. This is exemplified by dictionaries: all words are defined by other words (Frawley, 1985). Subjectivity is therefore not constructed in reference to objective meanings, the signifieds, but in reference to meaningless signifiers that are treated as signifieds.

Bracher (1993) helps us to understand the underlying issue with this mixed regime: subjectivity is constructed with recourse to collectively established signifiers that have been given a socially privileged status. This means that one does not simply define oneself. Instead, one identifies with what has been established as worth identifying with. Moreover, as these signifiers are collectively viewed as desirable, one is tempted to agree and identify with them as recognizing oneself and being recognized by others as agreeing and identifying with such signifiers tends to result in preferential treatment from others who do the same. One therefore desires to identify oneself and to be identified in relation to certain privileged signifiers, as well as with any other signifiers that are associated with them. In other words, one does not therefore act according to one's own desires, but rather according to the desires of others and thus the desire to be desired. This is highly problematic as it involves a profound self-deception in the form of misrecognition, as noted by Rose (1993). One acts simultaneously as the master and the slave; the more one acts according to the desires of others, as fueled by the desire to be desired, the more one appears to be directing one's own desires, as explained by Deleuze and Guattari (1987).

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), faces and landscapes have no physical dimensions of their own as they only adhere to bodies as their outer boundary layers. In other words, they view faces and landscapes as surfaces that cover the bodies, the human and the non-human alike, marked by traits onto which signifiers inscribe themselves and according to which one interprets the intentions of others. Even household items, such as "a knife, cup, clock, or kettle", all have faces and facial traits (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 175). In fact, landscape can be understood as the face of the whole world, as noted by Jackson (1980), Montaigne (1889) and Ronai (1976) and further discussed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). Therefore, the landscape and its traits depicted in Figs. 1 and 2 are not simply material, nor is the NPBF intervention reducible to concerns over colliding bodies, namely cars running over pedestrians due to the presence of multicolored strips of paint.

The entire world appears to us as a collection of landscapes that are

populated by faces, with us continuously shifting between the two, at times even treating faces as landscapes and landscapes as faces (Ballantyne, 2007; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). We can understand the landscape traits that compose landscapes, such as buildings, monuments or, as in this case, rainbow crossings, as faces, but we can also understand faces, such as closeups of human bodies, as landscapes (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Guattari, 2011; Nash, 1996). In practice, this means that the landscape traits that one analyzes can also be understood as faces that can be addressed separately by analyzing their facial traits, as elaborated by Dando (2023).

The following section elaborates how bodies, signs, regimes and assemblages come together, constructing a kind of reality in which the world appears to us as faces and landscapes. It also explains how landscapes are not representational, but rather non-representational, while acknowledging that it is a commonly held belief that they represent some otherworldly order (Dewsbury et al., 2002).

4. No illusions

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) link bodies and signs, regimes of bodies and signs and machinic assemblages of desire and collective assemblages of enunciation to one another with what they refer to as *abstract machines*. In summary, abstract machines are immanent causes that connect the two regimes through the assemblages and produce immanent *machinic sense*, establishing how the world makes sense to us at any given moment, how it appears to us as a certain physical and semiotic arrangement that consists of bodies and signs (Deleuze, 1988; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Guattari, 2011).

These machines are abstract as they cannot be thought to be physically, nor semiotically concrete, unlike the assemblages, and while abstract, they should not be conflated with structures, as cautioned by Guattari (1984a, 2016). Their existence is not eternal, nor transcendent, nor separate from the bodies, signs, regimes and assemblages, hence their immanence and machinism (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). They are always time and space specific and therefore an abstract machine "does not function to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 142).

For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the type of reality that is marked by the mixed regime and populated by faces and landscapes is constructed by two abstract machines: *faciality* and *landscapity*. They are what provide the immanent causes to the production of faces and landscapes and the necessary parameters for their production through the assemblages. This distinction, referring to faciality/landscapity and faces/landscapes, also helps to avoid the confusion that tends to arise when landscape researchers refer to *landscape* as a concept, typically in singular form, without an article, and when others then conflate it with how it is often understood as a mere physical entity, as *a* landscape.

Landscape researchers have long been aware of how reality appears to us as a certain construct. Notably, for Cosgrove (1984, 1985), landscape is not something that we simply see and are prompted to recognize. Instead, it is "a way of seeing, a composition and structuring of the world", which then lends itself to legitimate changes that are desirable to the observer and to prevent changes that are not desirable to the observer (Cosgrove, 1985, p. 55). Similarly, for Duncan (1990, p. 12), "a language is not a set of words which have a one-to-one correspondence with reality 'out there'" and "[d]escriptions are not mirror reflections", but rather constructions that make sense "within the limits of the language and the intellectual frameworks of those who describe."

The understanding of reality posited by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) is non-representational. In their view, all enunciations or, even more broadly speaking, all expressions, including the rainbow crossing, are performative, not descriptive, regardless of their semiotic mode. What people are in the habit of referring to as representations are, in fact, "performative presentations, not reflections of some *a priori* order waiting to be unveiled, decoded or revealed", as summarized by Anderson and Harrison (2010, p. 19). For example, Cosgrove (2006, p. 51) refers to landscape as "a characteristically modern way of encountering and representing the external world" and to "maps, paintings, photographs, and movies" as forms of representation, whereas for Deleuze and Guattari (1987) these are all part of a belief according to which the external world can be represented. They would therefore also disagree with Cosgrove (1984, 1985) and Daniels (1989) on that, as a way of seeing the world, landscape is an illusion that hides the truth as that would entail a hidden, transcendent reality that one strives to uncover in order to escape some illusory reality (Dewsbury et al., 2002).

While the terms that are used may differ, landscape researchers are well aware that landscapes do not exist on their own, physically, nor semiotically, waiting for us to discover them, but rather appear to us pragmatically as the incorporeal transformations of the corporeal world, as explained by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). For example, Duncan (1990, p. 17) acknowledges that landscape is not a structure, yet, similar to Bourdieu's (1990) *habitus*, it is structured, as well as structuring, and refers to it is a signifying system, "an ordered assemblage of objects … through which a social system is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored." Similarly, Schein refers to what one sees as "the assemblage of the landscape" (2003, p. 200) and to landscape as an ensemble of materialized discourses that account for the countless human actions that have become practices (Schein, 1997; Schein, 2023; Schein, 2010).

The rainbow crossing depicted in Fig. 1 is both corporeal and incorporeal as it is a body and a sign. Furthermore, it exists in relation to other bodies and signs and therefore it is part of a regime of bodies and a regime of signs, a product of a machinic assemblage of desire and a collective assemblage of enunciation. It is, however, produced as a face or a landscape trait that is part of a larger whole, the landscape, by the assemblages as the existing mixed regime of signs provide the necessary conditions for the abstract machines of faciality and landscapity to appear. As a body, it has become facialized or landscapified, allowing signifiers to attach themselves to its surface. This does not, however, mean that it resembles a face or a landscape, as emphasized by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). Instead, it functions the same way, sharing the same machinic sense (Guattari, 2011), so that it bears a certain look, one that immanently "evokes a particular world" and "creates a specific atmosphere", as clarified by Bogue (2003, p. 104).

It is this look that the following section will further elaborate. It focuses on what Schein (2003) refers to as the normative dimensions of landscapes. It explains how landscapes and their traits evoke a certain kind of world, an atmosphere that is aligned with the dominant mixed regime of signs in which the production of subjectivity is tied to privileged, socially desirable signifiers and to the judgement of anything that is, purportedly, deviant or undesirable.

5. Deviance and discrimination

Howard (2011) helps us to understand the controversy surrounding the rainbow crossing through a couple of important insights. Firstly, people do not like change. Secondly, they like to think that their relationship with landscapes is highly rational, but it is not. Instead, it is highly personal and notably moral, as also discussed by Matless (1994, 1998). In other words, what people say about landscapes is less telling of the landscapes than it is of themselves. However, what matters is not *what* people like or dislike, but rather *why* they like or dislike it. Focusing on the latter helps us to understand the former, how it is that people come to consider something desirable or undesirable, not because it is inherently good or bad, but because it is their desire or lack thereof that makes it appear to them as good or bad, beautiful or ugly (Spinoza, 1884).

To expand on Howard's (2011) account in terms used by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and Guattari (2011), the abstract machines of faciality and landscapity function in two ways. Firstly, they provide the parameters needed in the production of faces and landscapes and their

desirable traits that function as *points of subjectification* through which the subject comes to define itself. In other words, they define which traits are deemed *normal*, what is considered right, square, or straight, and thus create a sense of *normality* (Canguilhem, 1991). Secondly, they also function as deviance detectors. They guide the subject to detect any supposedly undesirable traits and provide a warrant to rectify and, in some cases, eradicate such deviance, as also noted by Matless (1998). They therefore also indicate the traits that are deemed *abnormal*, what is considered wrong, corrupt, or twisted, and provide a reason to *normalize* such circumstances (Canguilhem, 1991).

To be more precise, these abstract machines define the composition of faces and landscapes according to the *frequency* of their signifying traits and their *resonance* with subjects (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). The more common those traits are thought to be, the more people tend find them desirable, and vice versa. It is, however, worth emphasizing that frequency pertains to how some traits are stated to be common and not necessarily to their actual commonality as, for Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the notions of majority and minority cannot be understood as merely quantitative due to the way those in positions of power are able to posit themselves as the majority. This is why normality is a product of *normativity*, what is considered desirable by those privileged enough to impose their rule over others (Canguilhem, 1991; Ewald, 1990).

What makes these abstract machines highly problematic is how they facilitate discrimination through the formulation of various binaries (Olwig, 2008). For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), this discrimination is tied to signifying *biunivocalization* and subjective *binarization*. The former pertains to making distinctions between faces, landscapes and their signifying traits, establishing which faces, landscapes and traits are desirable and, conversely, which are therefore deviant or undesirable. The latter pertains to how they are established as mutually exclusive, how one can be one but not the other; "$x = x = \text{not } y$" (Massumi, 1987, p. xiii). The series of dichotomies instigated by the abstract machines then function as grounds for prejudicial treatment of people. For example, certain facial traits, such as darker complexion, hair and eye color, are often viewed as foreign in Finland and thus undesirable in the eyes of the majority who posit themselves as local, as discussed by Toivanen (2014). Similarly, landscape traits that do not match the rural idyll of the early 1900 s, as recorded by Granö (1997), are often viewed as untraditional and thus foreign in Finland, as elaborated by Linkola (2015).

What makes these abstract machines even more problematic is how they constitute a feedback loop. They define faces and landscapes, as well as their desirable and undesirable signifying traits, which, in turn, prompt people to identify themselves normatively, associating themselves with the desirable traits and disassociating themselves from the undesirable traits, thus reinforcing the existing social order at the expense of supposed deviants (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). In other words, landscapes play an important role in (re)producing our ideals, as summarized by Schein (2003).

Landscape scholars are well aware of this feedback loop, how "[t]he normality of yesterday supports that of today" (Guattari, 2011, p. 78) and how that sense of normalcy evoked by it reinforces the signifying and subjectifying capacities of landscapes, making it difficult to escape their influence. In Lewis' (1979) view, it all simply *is* for most people. Schein (1997) specifies this by noting that the surrounding world appears so ordinary and unproblematic that it is simply taken for granted. Mitchell (2002) characterizes landscapes as, at best, something that people have been taught to admire from a distance, to appraise their beauty from afar, thus ignoring their conditions of existence. Similarly, for Ronai (1976), landscapes have a(n)esthetic qualities that make people appreciate them, while also rendering people unaware of where this appreciation comes from.

The general lack of landscape traits that pertain to women exemplifies these problematic functions particularly well. It is common to find various monuments, such as statues, plaques, and murals, depicting men, whereas women are rarely given such recognition (Drozdzewski and Monk, 2020; McDowell, 2008). This invisibility is particularly noteworthy, considering that women account for half of the human population. In fact, their absence is so commonplace that it is considered normal and prompts people to reject changes that would increase their visibility in landscapes (Álvarez, 2022; Buentello García and Rice, 2023; Weidenmuller et al., 2015).

The following section specifies what the short-lived rainbow crossing signified. It helps us to understand the reactions the landscape trait prompted in people and how its existence came to be understood as a threat to what is considered normal in the Finnish society.

6. Sex and social order

Societies rely on *sex* to identify people as *either* male *or* female according to their capacity for sexual reproduction and on *gender* to classify the social expression of their *sexuality* as directed towards the opposite sex, the same sex or both sexes and, in some cases as lacking direction. In other words, humans are typically classified as either men or women and as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual or asexual, albeit one may also be understood as being transsexual, crossing over from one sex to the other, intersexual, having physical characteristics that challenge the typical binary classifications, or transgender, transitioning to another social expression of one's sexuality. In short, one's sex is largely taken for granted in the mixed regime and understood as about having a distinctive identity and associated interests, or lack thereof (Coward, 1983).

Sexuality has never been absent from landscapes. It is rather that it is predominantly manifested in a form that is thought to be asexual, as stated by Nast (1998). The dominant form of sexuality, heterosexuality, has, in fact, been desexualized through *Oedipalization* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). Its conjugal and familial manifestations therefore appear to most people as "normal, natural, innocent and unremarkable" (Hubbard, 2000, p. 200), whereas manifestations of sexuality that do not conform to this *heteronormative* view are subject to removal or confinement, regulation and surveillance in designated areas, such as red-light districts (Hubbard, 2018). In stark contrast, the supposed deviants find it painfully obvious that landscapes are riddled with heterosexual landscape traits (Hubbard, 2000; Myslik, 1996; Valentine, 1996).

It is for these reasons that Deleuze and Guattari (1983, 1987) prefer the term desire over sexuality. "We are all perverts!", as they proclaim, not because we all have something that we want to hide, some narcissistic "dirty little secret", but because, as machinic assemblages of desire ourselves, we can become aroused by anything that we are coupled with or connected to (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, pp. 67, 370). In their view, desire is mundane and can therefore be found everywhere, including in "the way a bureaucrat fondles … records, a judge administers justice, a business[person] causes money to circulate; the way the bourgeoisie fucks the proletariat" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, p. 293).

The vast majority of people do not, however, share Deleuze and Guattari's (1983, 1987) revolutionary enthusiasm, nor their radically open-ended view on (the) matter. Instead, they understand sexuality as based on sex. Based on their bodies, it appears self-evident to people that they are, in a biunivocal and binary manner, either men or women. As a result, classifying people as "men and women is even more necessary as a foundation of our social order than distinctions of class or caste or anything else", as expressed by Guattari (1984b, p. 234), and "one of the most pervasive yet unexamined dualisms in social thinking", as emphasized by Bondi (1992, p. 157). This does not mean that other classifications are not problematic, but rather that nothing is as divisive as sex. To be more specific, men are typically given priority over women, regardless of one's skin color, wealth, social status or age, but discrimination according to such 'man-made' categories is not mutually exclusive, rather the exact opposite, as emphasized by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), and discussed by Eaves (2017), Gieseking (2016, 2020), Hubbard (2000), and Mackey (2000).

This issue is further exacerbated in the Finnish language as it has no

separate word for gender. A distinction between sexual orientation and sex can be made, but the problem persists as both terms presuppose the division into men and women. The Finnish word that covers both sex and gender, *sukupuoli*, was coined in the 1800s for demographic purposes, to distinguish independent men from their dependent wives (Kinnunen, 1991; Lempiäinen, 2001). It consists of two words, *suku* for genus or kin and *puoli* for half. The latter specifies the former as consisting of two halves and thus functions to semantically legitimize an essentialist view that there is one humanity that comprises of two complementary halves, the male and the female, who come together as a family (Lempiäinen, 2001). In other words, the notion of *Oedipal lack* is therefore explicitly evoked every time that the word is uttered (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). It entails not only that one can only be either of the two halves, a man or a woman, but also that the other half is missing and that it is one's purpose in life to find the other half (Lempiäinen, 2001), with procreation and child-rearing being thought of as the "fulfilling outcome of 'sexual congress'" (Hubbard, 2008, p. 642).

This heteronormative view is based on a presupposition. A certain body, that of a man, is assumed to have something that another body, that of a woman, lacks; either you have a penis and live in fear of losing it or you do not have it and live in the hope of attaining it (Beckman, 2011; Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). The problem with this *phallocentric* reduction is not, however, tied to physiology, nor to procreation (Deleuze, 1995). Instead, the problem is that penis is "regarded as the ultimate social symbolic object of desire" and the sole purpose of attaining it is thought to be reproduction, as aptly summarized by Nast (1998, p. 201). A certain body type is therefore essentialized as the universal object of desire, as discussed by Bondi (1992), Lacan (2001) and Rose (1993), and anyone who does not conform to this view is to be labeled a sexual deviant, a pervert, an inferior person in need of correction or exclusion from society (Bell and Valentine, 1995; Boyd, 2010; Mackey, 2000).

To be clear, the underlying issue is not attributable to heterosexuality. Instead, it is attributable to heteronormativity as it is what privileges the heterosexual man and legitimizes its social dominance (Berlant and Warner, 1998; Guattari, 1996; Hubbard, 2008; Nast, 2002; Valentine, 1993). Attributing it to heterosexuality would, in fact, be misleading as it would ignore the diversity of heterosexuality, as cautioned by Beckman (2011), Hubbard (2007, 2008) and Thomas (2004).

Heteronormativity was enshrined in the Criminal Code of Finland in 1889. The Estates (nobility, clergy, bourgeoisie and land owning peasantry) were in a privileged position to codify their view of sexuality that was based on "absolute sexual morality" and "patriarchal social structures" (Niemi-Kiesiläinen, 2004, p. 172) and thus govern sexual relations from a socioeconomically privileged male perspective. Notably, intercourse outside marriage was defined illegal and the only way to be pardoned from this finable offense was a subsequent marriage between the perpetrators. Furthermore, acts of homosexuality and bestiality were marked as punishable for up to two years in prison.

Following the abolishment of the Estates and the establishment of the Parliament in 1906, conservative views persisted throughout the 20th century (Mustola, 2007). Heterosexual families remained the blueprint for the Finnish nation (Valenius, 2004). Heterosexual acts outside marriage were legalized in 1926 and the prohibition of adultery was repealed in 1948, but intercourse remained one's marital duty until 1994 when lack of spousal consent was criminalized as rape (Frisk and Taavetti, 2022; Niemi-Kiesiläinen, 2001, 2004).

Attitudes towards other forms of sexuality remained largely conservative in the 1900s. Finland legalized homosexual acts in 1971 (Niemi-Kiesiläinen, 2001). However, public encouragement to homosexuality was simultaneously criminalized (Kangasvuo, 2021). People were no longer to be held responsible for their urges. On the contrary, they were to be provided with treatment as, according to the psychiatric theory that was dominant in Finland at the time, homosexuality was a contagious mental disorder (Stålström and Nissinen, 2003) that could spread through public discussion (Kangasvuo, 2021). This medicalization resulted in self-censorship as mere public acknowledgement of homosexuality was potentially illegal (Taavetti, 2016) and punishable for up to six months in prison (Kangasvuo, 2021). The homosexual age of consent was set higher than the heterosexual age of consent for the same reason (Niemi-Kiesiläinen, 2001). These decisions were repealed in 1999.

This shift was problematic as homosexuality was therefore no longer to be viewed as something socially deviant, but rather as psychologically aberrant and predatory behavior that needed to be contained. The legislators' insistence that homosexuality was a contagious mental disorder was particularly questionable, considering that the Finnish health authorities declassified homosexuality as a mental disorder already in 1981 (Alasuutari, 2023; Stålström and Nissinen, 2003).

Several additional legislative changes in the 1990s and early 2000s prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexuality and same-sex partnerships were legalized in 2002 (Mustola, 2007; Repo, 2019). The partnerships were not, however, considered marriages until 2017. Similarly, adoption rights were harmonized in 2017 and instant recognition of parenthood of same sex couples was added to legislation as recently as 2019.

The rainbow crossing depicted in Fig. 1 encapsulated these major changes that occurred in the previous three decades. The landscape became a site of a rainbow infrastruggle (Bain and Podmore, 2023) almost instantly and the landscape trait garnered nationwide attention for two reasons. Firstly, its motif, the multicolored pattern, was based on the rainbow flag that came to symbolize the Gay Pride movement in the late 1970s. As such, its implementation on a public road during the Pride Month signified the acceptance of homosexuality and functioned as "an appropriation of public space by homosexuals" (Hauksson-Tresch, 2021, p. 553). The motif has also gradually become a symbol of a larger queer movement that advocates for open-mindedness, tolerance, equality and diversity (Bitterman, 2021; Klapeer and Laskar, 2018), as espoused by the City of Turku (2021b) in its press release. Therefore, its implementation and removal pertained not only to homosexuality, but also to sexuality or desire in general (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 1987). Secondly, the juxtaposition and tension of numerous seemingly asexual landscape traits and a supposedly sexually deviant landscape trait suddenly made people keenly aware of how landscapes, this and others, "have been *produced* as (ambiently) heterosexual, heterosexist and heteronormative", as expressed by Bell and Valentine (1995, p. 16).

Homosexuality is no longer deemed illegal, undesirable, nor grounds for discrimination in the Finnish legislation. These developments should not, however, be equated as overarching social acceptance of homosexuality, nor of other supposedly deviant forms of sexuality. The 1970s, 1980s and 1990s were marked by conservative beliefs, but attitudes began to change in the 2000s and 2010s (Taavetti, 2016). These developments also led to a backlash that helps us to understand what made the implementation and the removal of the rainbow crossing controversial. This is discussed in the following section.

7. The backlash

Various forms of sexuality have gradually become more and more accepted in the Finnish society. However, it would be an oversimplification to state that Finland has become a gender equal country. For example, a widely used psychiatric textbook presented homosexuality as a mental disorder until it was replaced in 1999 (Stålström and Nissinen, 2003) and the education system remains largely heteronormative (Lehtonen, 2023).

In politics, the male dominated Finns Party grew in popularity in the 2010s. It has embraced a traditionalist view of masculinity and femininity and emphasized the importance of the nuclear family for the Finnish nation (Saresma, 2018; Ylä-Anttila and Luhtakallio, 2017). Moreover, those who adhere to this view have been keen to emphasize that there are fundamental differences between men and women and

that equality between them would ignore their complementary nature (Saresma, 2018). The underlying issue of this view is that it is thoroughly Oedipalized. It reduces sexuality to sex, defining it in terms of a lack, and assumes that this lack can only be filled through the union of the two sexes, as noted by Saresma (2018).

This Oedipalized view is openly promoted by the Finns Party, but it is also supported by other parties, namely the Christian Democrats and the Centre Party (Saresma, 2018), and their supporters. The Finns Party shares religious convictions with the former (Martikainen and Sakki, 2021) and the rural origins with the latter, being the successor of the Finnish Rural Party that split from the Centre Party (Patana, 2020). If the support of these three parties is accounted at the national level, these views currently account for at least a third of the Finnish population (Statistics Finland, 2023).

In governance, this view is also likely common within the Finnish police. According to a survey procured by the Finnish Police Union (Rahkonen, 2015), police officers tend align themselves with the more conservative center-right and right-wing parties, with 25 percent supporting the Centre Party, 23,3 percent the National Coalition Party and 28,3 percent the Finns Party, whereas the support for the more liberal center-left and left-wing parties is low, with 5 percent supporting the Green Party, 3 percent the Left Wing Alliance and 10 percent supporting the Social Democratic Party. Moreover, it is specified that the support for the center-right and right-wing parties is notably higher among male police officers, whereas the support for the center-left and left-wing parties is higher among the female police officers. This is an important observation as, according to police statistics, women are underrepresented in the police force. In 2021, women accounted for approximately 30 percent of all personnel, 20 percent of police officers and 15 percent of chiefs and senior officers (Police of Finland, 2021). Furthermore, those responsible for making decisions, the chiefs and the senior officers, are liable to espouse conservative views, considering that "[i]t is generally accepted that older people are more conservative" (Truett, 1993, p. 405).

Due to the lack of transparency, it is not possible to identify the person or persons responsible for the decision to remove the rainbow crossing, nor to assess whether they acted in bad faith. It is also worth acknowledging that is possible that the NPBF acted at the behest of its superiors at the Ministry of Interior, who, in turn, may have acted at the behest of politicians. There is, however, no evidence of such involvement.

The events surrounding the implementation and the removal of the rainbow crossing do, nonetheless, exemplify how, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), landscapes function as deviance detectors. Firstly, their signifying traits indicate what is considered desirable and thus normal in a society. Secondly, they guide people to detect, reject and remove any supposedly undesirable landscape traits that deviate from established normality in order to maintain the existing social order.

In this case, the implementation of a colorful landscape trait resulted in a rainbow infrastruggle (Bain and Podmore, 2023), which pertained to who has the right to the city (Harvey, 2008; Lefebvre, 1996). The City of Turku (2021b) advocated for greater inclusivity. This prompted multiple public complaints (City of Turku, 2021c), some of which emphasized how the rainbow crossing sexualized landscape, while simultaneously ignoring how heterosexuality is manifested everywhere in public, as established in existing landscape studies (Hubbard, 2000, 2012; Nast, 1998; Valentine, 1993; Weidenmuller et al., 2015). To those who objected, the rainbow crossing amounted to an undue appropriation of space by sexual minorities, affording what Patai (1992) refers to as *surplus visibility*, i.e., granting excessive visibility to people who are expected to be invisible in the landscape (Bain and Podmore, 2023). These objections that exemplify the normative dimension of landscapes (Schein, 2003) did not, however, resonate with the city.

It is possible that people proceeded to express their grievances to the NPBF, which then acted in resonance with them, as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) might explain the turn of events. It is, however, impossible to know what prompted high ranking police officers to intervene in this case. The intervention was nonetheless controversial. Notably, the NPBF disagreed with the city and overruled the SFPD, even though the city was able to undermine its interpretation by linking this case with the other cases depicted in Figs. 3–5. Therefore, by following through with its demand, it engaged in what may have appeared to some as inconsistent, if not selective or politically motivated policing, which may have eroded public trust in police and made future police work more difficult.

To account for the inconsistency noted by the city in terms used by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the other colored road markings depicted in Figs. 3–5 are all landscape traits that can be understood as potential code violations, but they are, nonetheless, deemed normal or, at least, tolerable as they do not signify anything that challenges the heteronormativity that is central to the mixed regime of signs and the collective assemblage of enunciation. People have made complaints, voicing their concerns over road safety, but no action has ever been taken against them. The rainbow crossing depicted in Fig. 1 can also be understood as a potential code violation, but, in stark contrast with the other landscape traits, it was detected as intolerable and thus abnormal as it crossed a threshold by signifying supposedly deviant forms of sexuality that challenge heteronormativity. Concerns over road safety were expressed. Despite being unfounded, this resulted in the removal of the rainbow crossing.

8. Conclusion

This article contributed to existing landscape studies by elaborating a rarely utilized landscape theory drawn from the works of Deleuze and Guattari. It set out to explore how, in their view, the abstract machines of faciality and landscapity provide the immanent cause for the production of faces and landscapes, as well as their traits, that together evoke a certain kind of world, which, in turn, provides people a warrant to correct or remove anything that is not considered part of that world. The purpose was therefore to demonstrate how these machines constitute a feedback loop, how they indicate what is considered desirable or normal and guide people to detect, reject and remove what is deemed undesirable or abnormal, thus reinforcing the existing social order.

To make this rather complex theory more accessible, this study sought to exemplify it with an event that took place in Turku, Finland, in June 2021. The implementation of a rainbow crossing, a landscape trait consisting of strips of colored paint, proved to be controversial, garnering nationwide attention, and culminated in its removal from the landscape. People were quick to complain about the rainbow crossing, objecting to it as a sexually deviant landscape trait, but these objections did not resonate with the City of Turku. The police also objected to it and ordered its removal, citing road safety concerns that turned out to be unsubstantiated.

While not unique, this case exemplifies Deleuze and Guattari's landscape theory particularly well. The rainbow crossing was a landscape trait that signified supposedly deviant sexualities. Its implementation celebrated the social changes that occurred in Finland at the turn of the millennium, while its removal can be seen as typifying the political backlash against these changes that took place in the following decades.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Timo Savela: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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