



Above us is the sky: at 3km up it starts to become unliveable; at 3km down there are no living processes. Within the band of 6km under-over, *terrestrials* /earthlings define. Everything here is interlaced: rock, greens, water, algae, air and animals. All are builders and dwellers of what we call the Earth.

All Earthlings. This is Bruno Latour's conclusion of his sustained effort to redraw the earth. Not in terms of a cartography of surfaces of territory seen from space, but a systematic attempt to develop a cartography of what we are part of: immersed, confined and even immured from the universe.

The *universe* above our heads. And the universe *underground*. It seems to correspond with the *Pleroma* of the alchemists. The realm of Earth—a thin varnish on the scale of the planet—links to *Creatura*. It is a realm of opposing forces: an interdependent realm of transformation of universal cause.



These days, no term is likely to have less credibility than ‘progress’. However, if—as Bruno Latour insists—there is a *terrestrial* course of development (the counter-point to the globalisation of modernism), we would need to determine how to work *for* it, and also to identify *terrestrial progress*.

The problem of *human unsettlement* on planet Earth has, presently, become replaced by our settlement in the life-cycle of garbage. This is we currently—subjectively, objectively and affectively—live. Because of the scale of this settlement, in space and time, it has given a name to a *geological* era.

The *anthropocene* categorises the human life-form as the garbage-maker of the earth, far beyond the individual life-span, modernity and human history. This is what is entailed when a geological era is proclaimed: it has scale and scope that places it in the history of the earth, of which we know but little.

There is a small step from human being conceived as the *garbage-maker* of the earth, to considering human being as *waste*: a failure of the Darwinian principles evolution, caused by the evolution of a *non-evolutionary* life-form that can develop by partially succeeding at controlling its *environment*.

It has proceeded at this over millennia to the point of impending collapse of the earthly environment that supports it. The question raised by Bruno Latour: is there a sustainable future that includes this creature? Or, is it simply an agent of self-destruction currently moving unto a *lemming-race*?

This is also where Bruno Latour’s most recent book starts—[Où suis-je? Leçons du confinement à l’usage des terrestres](#)—which I have read at this point. A philosophical tale using Gregor Samza, the main protagonist of Franz Kafka’s story *Metamorphosis*, who is transformed in confinement.

Just as we presently may all be experiencing that we have all been transformed by the C19 pandemic. A creaturely aspect turned up with the confinement: a creature who learned how to dwell indoors and move in new ways, overcoming old barriers by its new impediments turned into talent.

This creature moves outside its former circle, yet ever deeper into a dwelling made up *by* and *from* alongside “earthlings” of various kinds. From confinement and its transforming impact, obvious constraints are turned to a less conspicuous—yet real—freedom: map and territory are worked out *jointly*.

*De part-en-part*, that is piecemeal and sideways—“crabwise”: how do we improve at this? And what is [making](#) under conditions where the *di-vision* between nature and culture no longer exists? Among the earthling everything is *made*: that is to say that it is an *artefact*, compared to the universe.

Shall we than conclude that the Earth—and the terrestrials—feature a realm in which the transformation of universal causes has taken a *holistic* turn? But from which *vantage point* are we to consider anything such as universal cause (if nothing *about* us can be asserted/proposed *without* us)?