

TERRITORY IS NOT NOTHING: A REINTERPRETATION OF DELEUZE'S 'IN BETWEEN'

I would go further in my critique of Deleuze's idea of nomad territory. The nomad does the reverse of domestication of space, but with the same idea in mind. The nomad is able to activate the space of transaction as a (maximally) portable entity. What comes to mind are the vans and trucks (lorries, semi's, etc.) whose sides fold out to make a snack bar. In Italy, these have been developed to include seating areas, awnings, and enclosed kitchen/refrigeration spaces to serve the motoring public. The point here is that the transactional space required to prepare, sell, and consume food can be set up wherever traffic can support this. Like the institution of silent trade, the space of consumption grows from a slight turbulence in the flow of traffic. It is portable, an "anywhere."

An "intimacy" develops within an object-space, creating a "subjective objectivity," i.e. a "partial object, an "organ without a body," not a "body without organs" as Deleuze and Guattari maintain. From *Nomadology, The War Machine ...*

The nomad has a territory; he follows customary paths; he goes from one point to another; he is not ignorant of points (water points, dwelling points, assembly points, etc.). But the question is what in nomad life is a principle and what is only a consequence. To begin with, although the points determine paths, they are strictly subordinated to the paths they determine, the reverse happens with the sedentary. The water point is reached only in order to be left behind; every point is a relay and exists only as a relay. A path is always between two points, but the in-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both an autonomy and a direction of its own. The life of the nomad is the intermezzo. (380)

The in-between becomes the basis of nomadism for Deleuze. This is the wrong step to take. The in-between of silent trade, for example, is the double negation of the trading situation, where each trading partner conceives of the other in terms of divine agency ("Hermes"). The system is self-regulating, although each transaction lacks determinacy. As with the milk and cookies left for Santa, the values might seem to be arbitrary, but they are market driven. If the milk and cookies happened to be insufficient, we could imagine that Santa would adjust his gifting level in the next trading cycle. Milk and cookies are supplements to the required good behavior already in an escrow account.

The stability of silent trade shows that this system, despite its informal enforcements, works better than more directly regulated systems that encourage cheating and stealing. Once the mechanical system is substituted for the informal self-regulating exchange, the partners attempt to make concealed micro-adjustments, the "thumb on the scale" kind of cheating on the vendor's part, the grapes nibbled off before weighing on the buyer's. Self-regulation is more conservative because violations occur continuously but are continuously held in check by

counter violations. The “space” of silent trade is the space of one of Hermes’ other attributes, the ability to make a “tricky oath.” The trick is the silent component of an agreement that allows the unfairly obliged party a way out. This is the basis of countless comedies and need not be explained further. The Deleuzian “in between” of the nomad is in fact a highly regulated transactional space that converts everything and anything to a potential commodity. It is space in space’s most essential function as a “simultaneity.” There are no exceptions except for the part of each contract that is concealed within, as a trick-clause of the oath, the fine-print of the contract. This is what makes the transaction of the nomad a “partial object.” Its working parts are concealed, but they allow the space to convert effectively.

The nomad does not live in the space that separates states, the nomad constructs the in-between in a “wherever,” converting an “any space” to a space of transaction. The nomad’s autonomy stems from this “wherever” and “any,” in other words, from partiality (subjective objectivity, intimate externality).

Because nomadic space is transactional and partial, it is useful to see the antipodal case, military space. This is based on the idea of soil, in particular soil sanctified by blood, a material connection evident in foundation rites, purification ceremonies, and dedications of all kinds of symbolic spaces, from private homes to cemeteries to urban centers to battlefields. This is a logic of contiguity, maintained even in cases where contiguity seems to be impossible (i.e. Alaska and Hawaii). The contiguous space of the nation is not limited to contiguous map space. It is defined in terms of soil that is converted to national soil through the status and actions of the citizens who occupy it. The idea of *planting* a flag to claim soil links earth to heaven through a sign, animated by a “divine” breeze — a moment celebrated in the U.S. National Anthem.

Military space is protected by a continuous barrier that, despite the many breaks actually present through terrain, oceans, etc., is treated as continuous in terms of the function of violation. The illegitimate crossing of the border constitutes legal transgression, and may be met with prosecution or military defense. This can occur wherever soil–territory can be defined by jurisdiction, as *domain*. The soldier stands ready to defend this border against violations, and is committed to give “the full measure” should this be required. This is the *code relationship* that is inseparable from the idea of national territory. While the nomad may be thought to be extra-territorial, nomadic code is a kind of anti-code, a “code of the gypsies,” a code that “exists because it *re*-sists.”

Deleuze’s path of the nomad is defined in terms of relays, but it is actually the military path, and its related code supports, that is a net of relays, from the simple idea of supplies of weapons, ammunition, personnel, food, and other supplies, to the flow of orders along and through the chains of command. In these relays, families are regarded in the same terms as other commodities managed by quartermasters: “belongings” that must be transported to maintain a minimally effective net. In such a network of relays, subjectivity is constructed in

relation to the code that maintains the military space defending the soil-sanctified-by-blood. The contrast between the operative home idea, grounded in the notion of soil, an idea that is Real in terms of the contiguity of territory and the defense of territory, is Symbolic through the range of metaphors tolerated (because insignificant) within the subjectivities of those not directly committed to sacrifice.

Because the code works metonymically and ideas of home work metaphorically, it is possible to explain why "home" is not a synthetic or operational unity. Metonymy is a means of indirect signification, a kind of "signalizing." An analogy would be the military's use of semaphors, insignia, and other signs of valor or accomplishment, descended from the use of *emblemata* and "heroic signs" regarded both as representative indices and sympathetic magic. To wear certain colors, heraldic badges, to carry flags, ensigns, and other trophies, was regarded as not simply symbolic gestures but effective material agents essential for military success. (See Rabelais' chapters on the dress of Gargantua for a detailed account of this.)

The metonymic logic of such paraphernalia is in contrast to metaphor's style of analogical meaning, based on semblance rather than contiguity. The heraldic emblem is effective in battle because, although separated from its place of origin, it retains the quality of that origin and the power of its birth. It is also a "partial object," able to transform space around it and shape the outcome of events. This extends national territory through acts of battle, connecting the field of war to new national territory through the shedding of blood. The outcome of military territorial annexation is durable and legally binding, in contrast to the nomad's space, which dissolves as soon as the transaction is complete and the parties move on.

The concept of home, based on analogy, allows home to be considered in a fractal-like way, as a scale transformation of the city, which is in turn a scale transformation of the cosmos. The house is also scale transformed, to the tomb, and the relation of the tomb to the *name*, as Lacan emphasizes, is key to its metaphorical logic. The covenant that defines home as agency of the name relies on the home's metaphoric assimilation within the scale-conversions of cosmos to tomb. These operate "vertically," where the home is understood as an analog of universal orders. The military can appropriate this vertical order without endangering the horizontal contiguity of its territory, maintained with the code of sacrifice; but its principal unit, the "nation," centralizes the idea of home to home-*land*.

Vertical incorporation is an ancient idea. In Werner Jaeger's discussion of *arête*, the Greek concept of excellence, the Good was conceivable only in national terms, which related directly to the idea of education as that which aimed at the proper raising of the citizen. The sophists who crowded the streets and plazas of Athens were free to speculate, Plato emphasized, because they were not bound by *arête*. The limits that qualified knowledge as a particular knowledge *of* did not apply to their word games. In the same way the sophists were parasites in the fundamental sense elaborated by Michel Serres in his book on the subject of

that name, sophists employed the “anywhere” spatial opportunism of the nomad. Owing allegiance to no particular soil, unwilling to die for any country, they inhabited a space that was not in-between but “inside” and “amidst.” Their presence was tolerated in the same way that itinerate entertainers were. They were allowed to come and go; their provenance was the circuit they traveled to make a living.

In contrast, *arête* partook of the idea of the home as committed to the dead and the soil occupied by the dead, and to the voice of the dead, cultivated in the worship of the hearth, undertaken collectively, through familial devotion, and personally. There was no private dimension to this relation; to be private was “idiotic” literally, and idiocy was the subject of tragedy, comedy, and farce. Based on blood, worship of the ancestral dead, the *manes*, was shrouded in secrecy, but not private — public in a radical sense.

The space of ritual devotion, including the space of pilgrimage, was also radically public although its devotions were concealed, anamorphically, in a way that we could compare to Poe’s device of the “purloined letter,” invisible because left out in the open. Negation, by which the territory of *arête* invested in magic, performance, sacrifice, and ritual shedding of blood, cultivated its “silent speech” through customs and rituals secure from the eyes and ears of strangers. This was not penetrable by nomadic logic of the anywhere and everywhere; it was singular and place specific, although the *templum* of rituals employed universal and universally transportable form and orientation. Stateless, the nomad has a kind of unlimited access to transactional spaces of commodity, but will be restricted from, and ignorant of, the sites established by *arête*. In the view that nomads, by virtue of their intermediary nature, Deleuze and Guattari over-invest in their metaphor of polarity, opposing nomads to the “state apparatus.” Both the state and nomadic survival depend on spatial ideology, and ideological space. They are co-dependent; without the nomadic supplement, which is able to match perfectly the mechanisms of political and military control, the state could not survive.

However, the *arête* of Plato’s committed society is not ideology. It is, as the trial and execution of Socrates demonstrated, the opposite of ideology. It is the remainder, which can be captured only through convivial, directed dialectic. The tension between this view of philosophy, as both a supplement and antagonist to ideology, is a historic fact.