# PIRATES OF PENZANCE

*The aim of this developmental essay is to consolidate topics relating to predication, Hermes, motility/scale/identity, etc. around the issued of territory. In particular, the "nomad" model is contrasted with the "military" model in that they involve polar extremes of the definition of home. In order to contextualize home within a "situate paradigm" (a critical context that is not merely erosive but based on the formation of ideas relating to home), it is necessary to find the essential fit of the home complex within the DYNAMIC ratio (cf. Bloom's "revisionary ratios") whereby home relates to styles of motility, the resulting scale dysfunctionalities (which allow thematization to permeate materials in a radical way), and identity, which is here treated in terms of "code" — commitments made within the Lacanian Symbolic ("networks of symbolic relationships"). This essay is only one remove from a set of basic notes; the next stage will be a more rhetorically developed argument, assembling evidence/examples around the primary contrast of military and nomadic "models," both treated as forced choices within ideology, in relation to transference love, the "psychoanalytic remainder" allotted to interpellation but with the characteristic shift of interest to inter-POL-ation, i.e. authentic travel. Readers are recommended to be familiar with Henry W. Johnstone's "Categories of Travel" to understand how "authentic travel" is defined, and how it serves as an alternative or successor — we don't yet know which — to interpellated (code-based) travel. Thanks to Crista Livecchi for setting up the original problem, sorting out the essential arguments and definitions, and consolidating the issues around the study of the military family's concepts of mobility and home. In response to the reported demand for "theorizing the data," this sets up a reversed predication whereby the data "speak for themselves" in a "surprise ending" found in the matter of stealthy oaths, revealed by Gilbert and Sullivan's* Pirates of Penzance *and its modern-day successor,* Moonlight Kingdom.

STRATEGIC MOVEMENT. Mobility within a fixed territory is "strategic." It never really leaves the territory; it defines where it is at as "home," but the conditions of the territory are collective (= membership in the group) and commitment is based on a code (= castration, symbolic).

NOMADIC MOVEMENT. Nomadic mobility is analogous but there is minimum if any definition of territory; consequently, there is minimal commitment; territory is defined by route, travel possessions, agreements, etc.

AUTHENTIC MOVEMENT. Johnstone's idea of travel authenticity is based on movement outside the defined territory, where movement is correlated to learning. It uses place encounters experimentally. There is minimal commitment, except to the project of travel.

In experience, the three modalities can be mixed, with alternative emphasis on one or another. In the family, for example, a parent can be committed by code to strategic mobility while other family members are obliged to follow (nomadic mode); but any member can become engaged in authentic travel by bracketing the other modes, i.e. treating them as efficient causes (the forces that set up the travel experience but then were eclipsed by the experiment).

Authentic travel employs dysfunction in a structural relationship: motility becomes dysfunctional, then scale, then identity. All three dysfunctionalities involve "detached virtuality" (double, story-in-story, travel through time, contamination of reality by the dream). The double is about identity. Story-in-story, travel through time, and dream contamination involve scale dysfunctions, but these are generated by motility dysfunctions.

MOVEMENT IS PREDICATION. Each step of a journey encloses the previous steps: (…))))) … . With the return home, the sequence is set in reverse thematically if not literally, and the result is a re-inscription to "home," the starting point. Home is this re-inscription, and concepts of home entail the notion of authentic travel and consecutive predication, whether or not it is undertaken. Home is "retroactive," in that the predication is always-already present, latent or active. As travel generates consecutive predications, it also creates delayed predication. In that predication involves two main elements, delayed predication is the separation of two elements among other predicates, "delaying" the discovery of the predicate that will be, in contrast, identified as "authentic" (relating to Johnstone's idea of authenticity). Delay provides the tension in authentic travel that energizes its relation to knowledge (*kenosis*).

In strategic and nomadic movement, delayed predication is neutralized — i.e. movement is "one experience after another" — but this neutrality affects only those committed by code to these forms of travel. Those not committed to code may experience delay and, hence, engage the issues of authenticity. They may find "meaning" in the travel experience based on this delayed predication. They may have a concept of home that is neither strategic nor nomadic. They may conceptually tie this concept to other non-code metaphors of home. Those who have a code commitment to strategic or nomadic travel may also sustain a non-code concept of home through a fantasy that supplements their main travel modality.

STRATEGIC/NOMADIC SYMMETRY. Strategic mobility "extimates" home territory. It re-defines external, objective space in terms of an abstract interior condition. For example, a military encampment becomes "national soil," through the metaphor of reversed predication. Instead of territory being the ground of activities and occupancy, occupancy and activities become the definition of territory, as in the case of embassies, which are regarded as occupying the soil of their respective nations, with the same rules of inviolability. An army is able to "fight for territory," even in a foreign country it has invaded, by reversely predicating its location as its national possession. Its "home" is abstractly related to space but immediately and emotionally related to code, as exemplified by the military practice of recovering, sometimes at great cost, the bodies of casualties in alien territory. Nomads use what could be considered the opposite of this spatial practice. There is no commitment to "casualties" in foreign territory, because their extimation has not carried any national soil with it. They have not reversely predicated space, as defined by action and/or occupancy. Their action, their "route," is assimilated as a process to their identity. They are permanently a part of a world of strangers, with whom they relate commercially rather than militarily. They play the role of the "dead who do not know

they are dead," but it would be equally accurate to say that they treat the Other as dead. This supports trade interaction operating outside restrictions that would limit trade inside the group, making it possible to exploit the Other without limit or regret.

If the nomad operates, effectively, "between the two deaths," this suggests that the strategic traveler is the polar opposite of nomad, the "living being with a kernel of death/fate inscribed at his/her center." Indeed, this is an accurate description of the soldier, whose commitment to the code amounts to a willingness to die for it. The nomadic/strategic travel modalities can be abbreviated by the Jentschian uncanny polarity, DA/AD. This raises the issue of the status, in relation to the uncanny, of the "authentic traveler," who is like both the nomad and the soldier but differs in key ways. Odysseus, for example, was a soldier in the *Illiad* but a traveler, in Johnstone's authentic sense, in the *Odyssey*. His travel took on some forms of the nomad but, because of its commitment to code, in the form of "home" as a category of travel, travel was defined as a "round trip," a complex and non-strategic movement out, and a complementary movement back.

Authentic travel seems to ground itself in the DA/AD traditions and techniques, while creating for itself "sites of exception." These, again, draw from models set up by nomadic and military models. In Wes Anderson's 2012 romantic comedy film, *Moonrise Kingdom*, this relationship is idealized when the orphan Sam Shakusky runs away from his military-style summer scout camp with Suzy Bishop. Suzy lives with her lawyer parents in a house called Summer's End. Although it appears that the family lives on the idyllic New England island of New Penzance, they fit the pattern of nomads. The parents maintain a life "in the city" and discuss ongoing legal cases. The children are equipped with toys and gadgets that keep them comfortable in their seasonal residence. The film opens with a horizontal tracking shot that treats the residence as a doll house, is if it were capable of being folded up like a tent.

Sam opens up New Penzance by his clever discovery of hidden pathways and coves, used to elude his fellow campers, who pursue him with military determination. Suzy's parents, in contrast, regard her as property that has been stolen. The threaten officials and others with lawsuits to, in effect, "get their property back." In England, the town of Penzance, on the westernmost extension of Cornwall, was known for its relation to smuggling, hence the Gilbert and Sullivant operetta, *Pirates of Penzance*. Isolation afforded it the conditions of extra-territorial relations with the rest of Cornwall, to say nothing of England. New Penzance's isolation puts the complementary valences of nomadism and strategic militarism in close proximity, and Sam and Suzy's elopement sets up the experimental conditions for seeing how authentic travel constructs its own "sites of exception" in relation to these two polar models.

First, it should be noted that both nomadism and militarism can be described in Lucretian terms. In *De Rerum Natura*, reality is described as an even flow of atoms through a void. We may characterize this flow in Vitruvian terms, as a flow kept even (i.e. laminar, non-turbulent) by the balance of demand (*utilitas*) with supply (*firmitas*) — two forces that could be

considered as components of a trade. The "nomad" uses trade productively, i.e. to the economic satisfaction of both parties; armies define trade through balance of power, with turbulence resolved through battle, ending with the success of one party or the other, an extension or contraction of territory in which the army may move with impunity.

Sam and Suzy, soldier and nomad, abandon their modalities but they retain some of these modality's forms and habits. Sam uses his navigational skills and disciplinary resolve. Suzy demonstrates an imaginative extreme of mobility, taking along library books, a record player, and her kitten, with full cat food supplies. They use these native attributes to hide — to become invisible — in their construction of sites of exception. In uncanny terms: (1) Like the dead who do not know they are dead (nomads) their invisibility enhances their ability to trade. They can "trade off" in confrontations with their pursuers by making deals satisfactory to both parties; i.e. they do not engage in aggressive confrontation with Others. (2) Like the living with a kernel of fate, Suzy and Sam are driven by the desire to exploit the "remainder" of ideological interpellation that haunts them — respectively, the ideology of military life as duty, and the ideology of family life, as obedience. This escape is constructed around the indivisible remainder, love, materialized in their desire to marry, and in marriage provide a means to combine the military and the nomadic ideals.

It is time to realize that the A remainder of DA is related to *kenosis* (knowledge by halves) in a way that reveals how the D remainder of AD is related to the acousmatic voice (*apophrades*, the voice/return of the dead). The dead do not know they are dead, but this is a double negative: they are not aware of something where "they are not." This does not convert to "they know what they are" (identity), but it gives identity its key form: motility dyfunction. Motility has a negative empirical side: being lost, being isolated, being trapped or imprisoned. All three play roles in *Moonlight Kingdom*. Motility in the negative becomes the basis for motility's relationship to *kenosis*, i.e. a "journey of identity." This can be nothing less than the movement related to the "authentic travel" that retroactively identifies home as its origin and end.

The thesis stands in this form: for *kenosis* to be reinstated as the basis for the authentic home, travel must go through a stage of double negation. In this way, the status of *kenosis* as double negation (dead who do not know they are dead) becomes the acousmatic voice of "falling in love." The voice of the dead, who do not know they are dead, speaks of love. Incidentally, this is one of the attributes of the god Hermes, who as the god of tricky oaths and seduction, instructs mortals on the art of *whispering*. A whisper is, literally, a half-speech, a *soto voce*. In the tricky oath, what is superficially agreed on is underlain with a sub-text that re-advantages the oath-taker, alleviating his/her obligation, allowing it to be a means to victory. In the *Pirates of Penzance*, Frederick is bound to serve an apprenticeship with the pirates until his 21st year, but he was born on February 29, so his 21st birthday will not occur until he is in his 80s. His beloved, Ruth, must wait for him until then to marry. Captured by

the pirates, the police sergeant plays his trump card. He speculates that the pirates were, originally, noblemen who had gone astray, and implores them using the name of the Queen, to which they must "automatically" respond. The tricky oath was one involving the circular logic: if they were pirates they would not honor any oath; that they honored this one meant that they were, in truth, nobles who had originally pledged themselves to uphold the Queen.

Can marriage be regarded as *apophrades*? It seems that the ancient custom of identifying the bride with the underworld supports this. The veil, the relation of themes of abduction (the Orpheus myth being the best known), and customs relating the wife and daughters to the gods of the hearth, the point of communication with the family's ancestral spirits, attest to this relation. Home, as established by *apophrades*, the hearth, and the marriage that solemnifies the control of this voice from the hearth, is in fact inseparable from the idea of the whispered seduction, the tricky oath, and the Hermetic travel that is the correlate of these.

From these connections, it is easier to reverse engineer the nomadic and military conceptions of territory, as DA and AD "derivatives," respectively. By correcting the genesis of DA and AD, it is possible to see how the *code* works in each, and what the code means in relation to the exceptions that allow the fantasy insertions of the idea of "home," as a portable, miniature substitute for the home-in-relation-to-*apophrades*. In the nomadic conception of code, which might be labeled as commercial, code is directed to the continually maintained fluid boundary that allows the nomad to move with impunity through the space of the Other, without contracting the contagions that would erode nomadic culture. The code is about maintenance of identity by means of and through continual "challenges" to that identity, resolved through transactions where the nomad continually bests the Other.

In contrast but also parallel to the nomadic idea of survival within alien space, the military idea extends territory by defining it as extimate: it is home no matter where it is in technical terms, based on activities and occupancy, 'A', defended to the death, 'D', as in the case of a military camp or embassy. This regards the Other in the opposite sense, not as a *means* of continuance but as a barrier. The boundary of territory thus becomes the non-permeable boundary of the national border.