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HOME: TERRITORY AND IDENTITY

Abstract

Beginning with a story from Deleuze and Guattari of a child in the dark who hums to comfort himself, this essay presents a spatial theory of everyday life through an exploration of the idea of home. The song the child sings brings order out of chaos, a space of comfort amidst fear, in other words, home. Through song, repetition, and other ways of marking we establish personal territories in a search for a place of comfort. This essay explores the nature of these markings, of this territorialization, and how such processes are cultural. Indeed, the essay argues that subjectivity is a product of territorializing, identity is territory. Identity is grounded in habit; the repetition of action and thought establishes home. The essay concludes by returning to the idea of culture on a more general level and how a theory of home and everyday life as territorialization may help better explain how cultures move, adapt, and resist.

Keywords

Deleuze and Guattari; home; territory; identity; habit; culture

Introduction

THERE IS A CERTAIN chronotope to the long commute. A familiar road, landscape, even traffic. The trip's rhythm is marked by mile markers, exits, radio stations whose signals strengthen or collapse, struggling, into a haze of static as you cross that crucial hill that marks the curve of the earth. Books on tape (egregious sins against literacy, I know, I know) lend a sustained thread against the further fragmentation of time. Other temporal rhythms follow: the slower pace of the change of seasons over the well-travelled hills of eastern

Georgia; time marked by encroaching or receding kudzu vine. After a while the trip falls into routine, into habit (always stopping at that gas station for a drink and chips) or the conscious struggle against it (trying different waffle restaurants). The space outside recedes into a blur, the only constant the tapering line of highway, until that too fades into repetition and the world shrinks to the bubble of the car (littered with Pringles cans, McDonalds wrappers and old cassettes). Like a hermit crab, I carry my home on my back, my stuff scattered about, bags packed in the trunk. I carry a space. But surely this is not The home that I carry, for that (family, house, possessions) lies receding in the rearview mirror, a secondary home lies before (an office with the requisite teetering piles of books and papers, and a small apartment room), I am on a road, a line, between (origin and telos), moving with force and acceleration (depending on the cops) in a vectoral space. The road descends and crosses water, past the sailboats and on towards the ostrich farm and beyond. The space-time of Georgia morphs into the space-time of South Carolina.

Another cultural theorist on the road:

Each one of us, then, should speak of his roads, his crossroads, his roadside benches; each one of us should make a surveyor's map of his lost fields and meadows.

(Bachelard, 1969: 11)

The classroom is still only half full. There is a general shuffle of papers, the scraping of desks, laughter. The room is full with the noise, though it is not loud. The rhythms and tones bend and shape the space. The room is roughly striated by the lines of the desks. A table and lectern abruptly cut off their vector (a flight out the window into a blue South Carolina afternoon), perpendicular, faintly authoritarian. Still in the hall I adjust my grip on my briefcase and, low, almost subvocally, begin to hum to myself, a rhythm, a rather tuneless tune that moves me forward, slides me down between the rows (over bookbags, bottled water, stray feet) to the table. The briefcase flat, clasps click open and books and folders are set out, stretching the bubble over the table and lectern. A blue-clipped sheaf of papers and a gradebook are set across the lectern surface, the clip is removed, the papers fanned. With a pencil I tap, quiet, personal, insistent, on the lectern: tap-ta-tap-tap-tap, ta-ta-tap ta-tap-tap-tap . . . I look around as chairs are arranged and the general noise begins to fade (my hum and tapping shifts to meet the resonance of the room), then down at the papers. Home. Territory. Identity. 'All right, people. Let's get started . . .'

Home

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari relate a story of a child in the dark. The child, 'gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath' (1987: 311). The song is calming, a stability amidst the chaos, the beginning of order. The song marks a space, the repetition of the simple phrases structures that space and creates a milieu. The milieu is 'a block of space-time constituted by the periodic repetition of the component' (1987: 313). The song begins a home, the establishment of a space of comfort. Home is not an originary place from which identity arises. It is not the place we 'come from'; it is a place we are. Home and territory: territory and identity. This essay is about home and identity, though home and identity are not the same. They are of course inextricably linked, and they are both the product of territorializing forces.

We begin with the tunes that we hum to accompany ourselves, to fill a void, to reassure ourselves. Doing so, we create a milieu. Whistle while you work; whenever I feel afraid I whistle a happy tune. Songbirds mark space, an area of influence, by sound. The bass-heavy rhythm pounding from a car driving by shapes the space of the street, changes the character of that space. Heads turn (toward, away), feelings (repulsion, identification, recognition) arise. The resonant space thus created is a milieu. Milieus cross, 'pass into one another; they are essentially communicating' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 313); rhythms blend and clash. The car and its occupants cross from one milieu to the next as they venture down the street; a figure on the sidewalk is enveloped in the bubble of sound, by the milieu, and is then released again as the car turns the corner down by the light. The street had its milieus before the car arrived (quiet suburban, congested downtown) which are altered by the arrival of the car and its rhythm, but reassert themselves after it leaves.

But space is marked, and shaped, in other ways as well. It is marked physically, with objects forming borders, walls and fences. Staking a claim, organizing, ordering. The marker (wall, road, line, border, post, sign) is static, dull, and cold. But when lived (encountered, manipulated, touched, voiced, glanced at, practised) it radiates a milieu, a field of force, a shape of space. Space is in continual motion, composed of vectors, speeds. It is 'the simultaneous co-existence of social interrelations at all geographical scales, from the intimacy of the household to the wide space of transglobal connections' (Massey, 1994: 168).

Beyond the walls and streets of built place and the song of the milieu, we mark out places in many ways to establish places of comfort. A brief list of ways of marking: we may mark space more subtly by placing objects (a coat saves the seat), or by arranging our stuff (to make sure no one sits beside us on the bus or the bench) or even our bodies (posture opens and closes spaces; legs stretched out, newspaper up). Smoke from a cigarette marks space (different types of cigarettes, like clove, inflect the shape of the space, and then there are pipes, cigars, reefers) as do spices and scents. Symbols also mark space from clothing style

(preppie, biker, grunge) to words on a t-shirt, but also graffiti, posters, and so on. The very words we use, the language we speak, the accent we speak it in, the ideas we expound on, have an effect on the space about us (attracts or repels others, drawing some together around the same theme, or tune). In and of themselves markers are traces of movement that has passed. 'To live means to leave traces', as Benjamin once wrote (quoted in Boym, 1994: 150). And as Ivan Illich put it: 'all living is dwelling, the shape of a dwelling. To dwell means to live the traces that past living has left. The traces of dwellings survive, as do the bones of people' (1982: 119).

As practised, our life-world is flooded by the variant radiance of the milieu. Each milieu opens up onto others; indeed, it is these connections with other milieu beyond the immediate place that give the markers their resonance – 'the identity of place is in part constructed out of positive interrelations with elsewhere' (Massey, 1994: 169). An encountered photograph glows with memories (though not necessarily nostalgia) of experience, of history, of family, friends. What creates that glow is the articulation of subject (homemaker) to object (home-marker), caught up in a mutual becoming-home. But that becoming opens up onto other milieus, other markers, other spaces (distant in space and/or time). One's apartment opens up onto a distant living room in a house far away, or onto a beach with those waves. But it not only articulates with a then (memory-space), but nows (that building has been pulled down, he's now living in Phoenix, she's in law school). The milieu opened up to is not just memory, not just the 'real', but also imagined places (where one has never been, photographs of objects that never existed, at least *in that way*). And it is not just photographs that open up in this way (see Barthes' *Camera Lucida*), but all markers. A small figurine – a Ganesha, the elephant-headed Hindu god – sits on the shelf above my desk. Its milieu-radiance comes from associated meanings (Ganesha helps one overcome obstacles, an empowering reminder while at work), a childhood in New Delhi, my father who purchased the idol, and so on. No space is enclosed, but is always multidimensional, resonant and open to other spaces.

What creates the *territory* is an accretion of milieu effects. Each milieu affects the space, bends it, inflects it, shapes it. Compound these effects, but then make these effects expressive rather than functional (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 315): The resultant space is the territory. Territories are more bounded; milieu markers are arranged to close off the spaces (even while they themselves open up onto others), to inflect a more common character on that space. 'An open system integrates closure "as one of its local conditions" (closure enables, without preceding, "the outside"): and closure and openness are two phases in a single process' (Morris, 1996: 393, following from Massumi, 1996). Territories are not milieus. 'A territory borrows from all the milieus; it bites into them, seizes them bodily (although it remains vulnerable to intrusions). It is built from aspects or portions of milieus' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 314). A territory is an *act*, territorialization, the expression of a territory. The car with its rhythm, discussed

earlier, creates a territory when the space it moves through does not just react to it, but when the car and its music expresses something. Though some objects are unique in the resonance they provide (the only photograph of a great-grandparent, a cherished childhood toy), what is most important for the milieu is the effect of the object rather than the object itself, the effects on the space. In terms of territory, what is important is how the object expresses (e.g. a home). So one might rid oneself of all one's possessions each time one moves, but might recreate a similar space, a similar home, with a similar feel (a sense of light, of leisure, of tension) in the next place, drawing around oneself an expressive space from a variety of markers and milieus. One makes oneself at home (and, indeed, is often asked to do just that):

My office in early morning reflected sunlight: most wall-space is covered in over-laden bookshelves, what's free is papered with calendars and posters from old conferences. The surface of my desk is well-hidden under rather random-seeming stacks of papers. I settle into my chair and turn on the computer, log on to email – a link from this space to a broader world (often to spaces of colleagues in offices much like mine). The shelf above my desk is cluttered with photographs, two Hindu idols, a Darth Vader action figure (facing off against figures of Scully and Mulder), a Batman PEZ dispenser, a dried rose.

Home, likewise, is a collection of milieus, and as such is the organization of markers (objects) and the formation of space. But home, more than this, is a territory, an expression. Home can be a collection of objects, furniture, and so on that one carries with one from move to move. Home is the feeling that comes when the final objects are unpacked and arranged and the space seems complete (or even when one stares at unpacked boxes imagining). The markers of home, however, are not simply inanimate objects (a place with stuff), but the presence, habits, and effects of spouses, children, parents, and companions. One can be at home simply in the presence of a significant other. What makes home-territories different from other territories is on the one hand the living of the territory (a temporalization of the space), and on the other their connection with identity, or rather a process of identification, of articulation of affect. Homes, we feel, are ours:

It was not the space itself, not the house, but the way of inhabiting it that made it a home . . .

(Boym, 1994: 166)

Culture

The process of homemaking is a cultural one. The resonance of milieus and territories are cultural in that the specific expression of an object or space will be

differentially inflected based on culture. Culture is meaning-making, and so the meaning effects of the aggregate of what I am calling one's markers (one's personal effects) reflect (though not reflect, rather inflect or create) cultures. Cultures are ways of territorializing, the ways one makes oneself at home. ('Culture is judged by its operations, not by the possession of products', De Certeau and Giard, 1998: 254). Personal objects open up onto culture (and open up culturally), we draw on that culture when we mark space with that object (or idea or symbol). A business suit articulates one into a particular culture, a rock poster into another. Culture is the expression of an aggregate of texts, objects, words and ideas, their effects, meanings and uses. One culture differs from another by territorializing differently. Though cultures can share objects and ideas, they arrange and inflect these differently (e.g. different cultures may use the same ingredients, but produce much different food). However, cultures cannot be reduced to a symbolic, or meaning-specific, plane alone; cultures are expressions, they exist only in their expressions (and their repetition, which we will address below). A characteristic cultural space (the feel of a Russian apartment, a Greek Villa, a Korean temple, a stuffy academic office) may not have 'meaning' *per se*, but it is cultural and has the effect of shaping space and therefore the experience of that space. Culture is a complex aggregate of meanings, complexly articulated to an equally complex aggregate of texts (thought broadly), and both in turn complexly articulated to yet another complex aggregate of practices.¹ Though one's spaces are singular iterations of more broad cultural spaces (or modes), a culture only exists as a sum total of its iterations.

To label a space 'home' in and of itself territorializes that space depending on cultural and social norms (though never absolutely). For instance, to use the term 'home' as I have throughout may strike one as odd in the regions of the world that this essay is most likely to circulate, because of strong articulations of the term to gender, passivity, leisure (gendered, again), both household and sexual labour, and so on. Home, as I am using it, is the creation of a space of comfort (a never-ending process), often in opposition to those very forces (Deleuze and Guattari cite a housewife whistling while she labours at home; it is the whistling and comfort-effect that is home, not the house necessarily). Indeed, much in the same way as it is essential to differentiate between nation and state and not conflate the two, it is crucial that we separate the ideas of *home* and *the home*, home and house, home and *domus*. The latter terms in these pairs of contrasts are proper, normative, and may have little to do with comfort. Indeed, the home may be a space of violence and pain; home then becomes the process of coping, comforting, stabilizing oneself, in other words: resistance. But home can also mean a process of rationalization or submission, a break with the reality of the situation, self-delusion, or falling under the delusions of others. Home is not authentic or inauthentic, it does not exist a priori, naturally or inevitably. It is not individualistic. The relation between home and the home is always being negotiated, similar to what Foucault once called 'the little tactics of the habitat'

(quoted in Spain, 1992: 1). It is crucial because only then can we begin to disarticulate the idea of home from ideas of stasis, nostalgia, privacy, and authenticity (which, as Doreen Massey has argued, are then coded as female), and present a more open and dynamic concept that does not tie identity to static place or reproduce gender inequality by articulating women to enclosed prison-homes while the men wander free, wistfully nostalgic for the gal they left behind (see Massey, 1994; Morris, 1988). This is not to argue that homes are not gendered, they are. As Ivan Illich has put it:

Gender shapes bodies as they shape space and are in turn shaped by its arrangements. And the body in action, with its movements and rhythms, its gestures and cadences, shapes the home, the home as something more than a shelter, a tent, or a house.

(1982: 118–19)

One cannot deny that the car-space and office-space described at the opening of this essay are gendered male; the important point is not to universalize that experience – I mean to do just the opposite, to ground it in the specificity of forces. This is why it is so important to differentiate between home as I have been describing it and the home or house; home is a becoming within an always already territorialized space (the home, the house, the domestic). Witold Rybczynski, for example, in his book *Home: A Short History of an Idea* (1986), focuses much more on the changing nature of The Home (or at least, the Western European home) than on the territorializing process itself. His chapter titles clearly set out the normative (and gendered) dimensions of the home: nostalgia, intimacy and privacy, domesticity, commodity and delight, ease, light and air, efficiency, style and substance, austerity, and comfort and wellbeing. Home can be a site of resistance, a leverage point against normative structurations of space, especially as the home becomes a domestic network terminal (Graham and Marvin, 1996) and the idea of homework further expands beyond unpaid gendered labour and the extension of education after school hours.

Subject

At the centre of the home, the territory, is not a singular rational subject, picking and choosing milieu, arranging one's space like flowers in a vase. The space called home is not an expression of the subject. Indeed, the subject is an expression of the territory, or rather of the process of territorialization. Territories, homes, have subject-effects. Identity is territory, not subjectivity. In that milieu-effects are always the result of connections to elsewhere, home and identities are always permeable and social. This is not to deny the existence of individuals, but rather to deny the illusion of individualism. As Henri Lefebvre (1991b) once argued,

the idea of private life is a key source of alienation in everyday life in the modern world, denying the social nature of identity.

What binds territories together in assemblages (homes with subject-effects), is that which binds territories, which is that which binds milieus, which is that with which we started; but it is not the *tune* (whistled in the dark) that has these effects (alternatively, it is not the object or marker in itself, even the practiced mark, the lived mark), but the *refrain* (*ritornello*), the repetition of song-elements. It is the pattern of sound, of light, of meaning that constructs the space. Patterns are the result of repetition. 'Every milieu is vibratory, in other words, a block of space-time constituted by the periodic repetition of the component' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 313). It is the rhythm (which is different from mere meter), which is the organization that fends off chaos. It is the rhythm, a sympathetic vibration or resonance, which opens up one milieu onto another. It is this rhythm, which is the basis of communication (the sympathetic vibration of divergent series of events; the photograph and its subject, the portrait and the family represented are unique, they have gone their separate ways, diverged, and yet they resonate (Deleuze, 1990: 174–75)). Communication, then, is not the exchange of meaning or information (an intersubjective model of communication which Deleuze and Guattari reject (1987: 78)), but a resonance.

The centrality of the refrain points to the importance of sound in the construction of space, and orality in the construction of identity, home, and everyday life (cf. De Certeau and Giard, 1998, but also Ong, 1982). Sound surrounds and envelops one; it is unavoidable (Goody and Watt, 1968). But as important as the aural dimension may seem to be, it would impoverish the ideas of repetition and rhythm to reduce them to just sound (and not light, architecture, texture). After all, the deaf have homes too. In the refrain we have a fusion of temporal and spatial dimensions: the rhythm is a temporalization, but rhythms always relate to territories. The refrain 'always carries earth with it' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 312).

Habit

The subject is the expression of repeated (or repeating) milieus and territories. The repetition that constitutes the subject we may call *habit*. Habit is a repetition of behaviour that is no longer conscious and reflects a process of learning (Reading, 1994: 477). A series of actions become automatic and seemingly divorced from conscious thought. Habit is a contraction, a synthesis of a series of actions (cf. Deleuze, 1994, Massumi, 1992, see also Massumi's essay in this issue), a grasping (Varela *et al.*, 1991). Playing the piano, for example, once learned bypasses conscious thought and appears to be 'in the hands' (Connerton, 1989; Sudnow, 1978). But habits are more than just those of individuals. C. S. Peirce, for example, saw in habit the tendency of the universe to become orderly (Reese, 1980: 206).

The term habit derives from the Latin *habere*, to have. It initially indicated 'the external appearance, manner, or bearing by which one would recognize an individual or class of individuals' (Reading, 1994: 477). This sense of the word remains today with Monks and Nuns habits. We are who we are, not through an essence that underlies all our motions and thoughts, but through the habitual repetition of those motions and thoughts. How is it that we can recognize people by the sound of their footsteps? A pattern of walking. How, too, can we recognize the author of a passage by style alone?

Our identity, in other words, is comprised of habits. We are nothing but habits, Deleuze was fond of saying, the habit of saying 'I'. This is not to say that we are all twitches in a Skinner Box World. Habits are not just behaviours carried through motor neurons, but also thought behaviours as well; obsessive/compulsive thoughts are a form of abnormal habit. As Varela *et al.* have argued, the personality consists primarily of dispositional formations (Varela *et al.*, 1991: 67) and the self is actually the habitual grasping for such a self, grasping to bring together the various *aggregates* (they use the term following a Tibetan Buddhist sense) that are our experiences of the world (Varela *et al.*, 1991: 80). There is no fixed self, only the habit of looking for one (likewise, there is no home, only the process of forming one).

It is through habits that we are brought into culture in a very fundamental way. We cultivate habits, they are encultured. Culture is a way of behaving, of territorializing. We live our cultures not only through discourse, signs and meaning, but through the movements of our bodies. Ways of behaving, of moving, of gesturing, of interacting with objects, environments, technologies, are all cultural. Our habits are not necessarily our own. Most are created through continuous interaction with the external world (Gaston Bachelard wrote that habits are the 'passionate liaison of our bodies' with a space, a house, a home, 1969: 15). We are the result of our own reactions to the world, and are as such an enfolding of the external; indeed there is no internal to oppose the external (no noumena to oppose phenomena), just as there is no place that does not open up onto other places. We are spoken by our spaces, by the effects of territorializations, which pre-exist us, but never absolutely. We are disciplined through habit (Foucault, 1977).

John Dewey noted the intensity of habits and their importance in our lives (cited in Connerton, 1989: 93). There is a certain drive and desire behind, e.g. bad habits that makes them attractive, but that desire is behind all habits. Paul Connerton refers to this as the affective dimension of habits. Connerton, in his book, *How Societies Remember* (1989), argues that habits are both technical abilities that are at our disposal and affective dispositions. Habits are not just signs, Connerton argues, but bodily practices. Knowledge and memory (or practices, in other words, habits) are therefore bodily as well as cognitive (see also Varela *et al.*, 1991). Our social space (the spaces through which we move and interact, home and elsewhere) is made up partly through habitual action, and is a bodily

space as well as a cognitive one. Connerton writes, 'we remember . . . through knowledge bred of familiarity in our lived space' (1989: 95). 'Habit is a knowledge and a remembering in the hands and in the body; and in the cultivation of habit it is our body which "understands"' (1989: 95).

The fact that habits participate and respond to our spaces is illustrated in an example from William James of absent minded individuals who go to their bedrooms to dress for dinner, but instead remove their clothes and get into bed because those are the triggers of being in that place at that time of day (cited in Reading, 1994: 480). We may wander into a room to get something but then forget what it was that we went there to get. That second room, the ways it shapes our space and movement, triggers other habits of thought and behaviour, which override our original vector.

But habits are not just biomechanics. They are not just actions that are learned and then repeated ad infinitum. Habits are not simply a general repetition or the endless recurrence of the status quo (like wind-up toys, clattering along until our springs run out, our lives the product of an elaborate calculus of social physics). What is being repeated is not an essence (the real me), because the essence of territory is difference. 'Territory is first of all the critical distance between two beings of the same species: mark your distance' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 314). Later Deleuze and Guattari write, 'critical distance is not a meter, it is a rhythm. But the rhythm, precisely, is caught up in a becoming that sweeps up the distances between characters, making them rhythmic characters that are themselves more or less distant, more or less combinable (intervals)' (p. 320). The distance marked is a positive difference (not a negative one: this not that), a measurement. As subjects we are caught up in the becoming of that rhythm, the rhythm created by the coming together of the pulses of territories and milieus. But we do not mimic the rhythm, repeat it note for note, pulse for pulse, the exact product of our surroundings and material environments (over-determination), because at the heart of repetition is difference.

Deleuze writes that 'habit *draws* something new from repetition – namely difference' (1994: 73, emphasis in original). This is not the difference that is the distance that is resonating; this is the difference that is introduced in each iteration of a repetition. A little chaos in the interstices of order. Indeed, it is that difference that allows for the resonance in the first place. What makes home is the repetition and difference of habit. A line (the everyday) goes on (force and acceleration in the body, in the hands) until it stops, breaks, bifurcates (Massumi, 1996); a zone of indiscernibility breaks into consciousness (Seigworth, 1998); we realize a gap (the pinolectic, Virilio writes (1991), when we realize that we weren't paying attention). And new lines strike out. Difference can be the point of insertion of a lever to shift the flow of everyday life, the breaks. Despite the, at times, overwhelming territorialization, alienation, and commodification of everyday life (marked on our bodies and the rhythms of our spaces) there is always the optimistic potential for what Luce Giard terms (when

describing Michel de Certeau's work), 'a Brownian motion of microresistances' (1998: xxi).

Nomad

Home is not a static place. We begin to get a sense of this in the previous discussion of difference, the introduction of inevitable change (chaos) into an otherwise static structure. 'One can never step into the same river twice', as they say. Home is always movement (even if we never move, if we spend our whole lives in the same room):

A large component of the identity of that place called home derived precisely from the fact that it had always in one way or another been open; constructed out of movement, communication, social relations which always stretched beyond it.

(Massey 1994: 170–71)

'One ventures from home on the thread of a tune', Deleuze and Guattari write (1987: 311), but home *is* the thread, a line and not a point. At the same time it is, as Jasbir K. Puar (1994/5) argues, non-linear. It is neither an originary point to which we may return, nor an end point (a telos) at which we will eventually arrive. We are always in-between. The nomad is not the tourist (Morris, 1988), the exile (Wiley and Barnes, 1996), or the rebel son (Massey, 1994) always longing for home (constructions which, the previous three citations point out, create unequal gendered spaces, see also Spain 1992); the nomad is the continual struggle between spatial forces and identity, the struggle to make a home, to create a space that opens onto other spaces. Nostalgia may be a tool used to create that space, but it is not the heart of home.

Arjun Appadurai (1996), in an attempt to better theorize the process of globalization, bases his analysis on the idea of flows and landscapes. The surface of the earth is mapped differently according to which of the five dimensions one focuses on (ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, ideoscapes). Each scape has its own tectonics and its own flows and vectors, each moves in its own way according to its own logics and conditions. The flows are not entirely independent of one another, but rather are complexly articulated. What I want to take from this approach is the fluidity of cultures and spaces. And though many may latch themselves tightly to patches of land, that attachment was produced and not natural (though often presented as such). The idea of cultures and peoples in motion is a complex problem for cultural theory. How does one decide what a culture is or is not, what distinguishes one subculture from another? And how to do this without either positing an essential identity to the people or culture (linking culture to genetics at times) or dismissing the whole

idea of a coherent culture as a fantasy since every connection or trait is non-necessary to the whole and the whole vanishes as a coherent entity if one looks too closely at it (dissolves in a play of difference).

And yet cultures do exist, move, expand, contract, adjust, adapt, and reproduce themselves. Cultures are held together by their rhythms, the collection of resonances, the aggregate of meanings, texts, and practices that they make resonate to that particular rhythm or frequency. But what force maintains the rhythms, the articulations? Habit, the cultural covalent bond, the resonance over difference; the rituals, practices, ways of thought and dress that accompany people as they move to new lands, worlds, territories. The adaptation of migrant populations to new locales (creating hybrids which seem jarring to those expecting cultures to remain neat little parcels: a girl of Southeast Asian descent speaking with a South Georgian accent). The challenge to these populations is to make themselves 'at home' (Sowell, 1996). Home then becomes a series of cultural trades or compromises (forced to speak English in schools) taking on some aspects of the new culture but retaining older cultural habits. Different strategies are invoked depending on the nature and duration of the migration (i.e. families abroad for a year or more through employment, but always seeking to return to the original culture, or a permanent move, voluntary or not). Such experiences often leave generational differences; parents raised (territorialized) in the country of origin (let us call it that for convenience) establish stronger cultural habits. Their children (raised in the country of origin – or not – and one or more other cultures) create a set of habits which are somewhat hybrid (imprinted, as it were, by at least two territories).

The problem that illustrates the idea of territory and identity is when the children mentioned above (raised outside their country of origin, the country of their parents, or their passport country) return to their country of origin with a different set of habits and spaces. Legally of that country and not necessarily marked as foreign (i.e. looking like everyone else) the child (perhaps an adolescent or an adult at the age of return) is a stranger in what is supposedly their own land (though individual experiences vary). For the parents this is re-entry, a re-adjustment to life at home (where the rhythms of one's home match back up with the rhythms outside the window or on the TV). For the children this is entry, not re-entry. The sociological literature that discusses these cases labels these children as Third Culture Kids (they are not truly of the culture of their parents, or of the culture in which they live, but form a third culture, Smith, 1994, or see, e.g. Useem and Useem, 1967) or global nomads (a term applied to those who live for a time abroad as children but return to the passport country). It is said that some global nomads often have more in common with other global nomads (despite differing cultures of origin) than with others from their passport country (Smith, 1994); that the confluence and conflict of cultural spaces and territorializing forces sets up its own refrain.

The line of flight that is the global nomad can veer in different ways. Caught

in powerful gravitational fields it can spiral in, abolishing itself in the cultural space of the home, fitting in, never mentioning one's past, one's habits, latching with a ferocity onto the rhythm of majority. A second vector is to scream across the sky (like Thomas Pynchon's V-2's), shedding space and mass as one turns a fundamental difference into a repetition without difference. A third plays on the curved spaces of territories and cultures, orbiting one (figure-8ing around two) then sling-shotting off to another, skirting, skating, balancing, bordering (the anomalous; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 243–46) – cultural theory becomes one's everyday life ('For a man without a homeland, writing becomes a place to live' (Adorno, 1974: 87)). There are other vectors, of course, as many as there are homes, but I trace these here to bring the essay to an open, rather than a close. Time to go home. A dynamic and processual view of home is crucial to the global nomad. And though this is a rather selective population to focus on here at the end, this experience exaggerates the quotidian processes of territory, culture, and habit that make up homes more generally (even if one never moves). The specificity of these processes, their freedom and structure, the extent to which they are or are not thoroughly permeated with capital (to borrow a phrase from Deleuze), are entirely contextual. These are but some of the processes of everyday life:

Everyday life is where the rubber hits the road; the place where clichés infuse our language and our actions because they are the habits of the living of our spaces. Everyday life is where/when the accumulated bodily and mental habits that have funnelled through us over years of experience blend, bend, fuse with the structured spaces we move through. Accumulated action, accreted boredom, the twitch of recognition as we pluck items off store shelves, shuffle down the street, chit-chat, and click the remote.
(Wise, 1998: 8)²

In the car again, but now heading west. The setting sunlight strikes a filthy windshield turning it momentarily into the swaths of yellow and orange of a Turner painting. The space of the car speeds along its vector, tugged by the gravitational forces of the place left behind and the place up ahead. A bead bobbing down a string, but there is no string; the bead is only in the place that it is in the state that it is, it does not reach out in front, nor trail behind; it carries with it only its own forces and energies.³ The space of the car invokes its own habits quite apart from the teacherly space receding in the dust or the homespace before (territorialized in part by a spouse and also by two expectant and energetic dogs), and one invokes a ritornello to calm the space in-between (OK, OK, so I sing in the car).

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Notes

- 1 This culture-assemblage is by way of Lefebvre, 1991a, but see Wise, 1997: 79.
- 2 The quoted paragraph was published as a 'sound-bite' on everyday life in Volume 9 of the Australian journal *Antithesis*. The subtitle of the issue was, 'Everyday evasions: cultural practices and politics'.
- 3 The bead image is one that I borrow from the work of Richard Feynman (Gleick, 1992); in using it here I do not draw on the physics problem that this image attempted to explain.

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