

Deleuze & Guattari – Territorialities, Exterritorialities, Non-Territorialities

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Studies Camp and Conference 2020 in Prague, June 29 to July 1, 2020

The conference will address the complex relation between territory and population, and in doing so reflect on the broad philosophical, political, and anthropological context of the work of Deleuze and Guattari. There are no empty territories; territories are always populated. State or regional territories provide living space for populations that vary in their organization, segmentation and cohesion. Relations between territorial aggregates and populations, however, involve divergence as well as identification, implying that the ties between them are fragile. This is evident particularly in our current situation, when we are confronted with migrations which visibly divide territories and their populations. In this respect, **Arjun Appadurai** directs our attention to ethnoscapas that, together with other forms of global cultural flows, create disjunctions of the semantic context of global civilization. He considers the various types of deterritorialization to be the most fundamental processes within modernity. In this regard, territories abandoned by a part of their population never remain intact; their structure transforms, or collapses.

Migrations of human populations also involve issues of social visibility and invisibility. Deterritorialization entails the becoming visible or invisible of a particular population, depending on the degree of its organization. In the context of the continuing migration crisis, **Étienne Balibar** identifies migrations as serious political and philosophical problems that challenge the integrity of nation-states

and the idea of citizenship, along with the very idea of Europe. He argues that migration compels us to realize that Europe “*has no borders, rather it is itself a complex ‘border’*: simultaneously singular and multiple, fixed and mobile, internal and external.”

A sophisticated investigation of the relations between borders, territories and movements also needs to acknowledge that migrations can bring about fatal processes of depopulation. Migrations do not only lead to more homogenous populations in a given territory; they can also create social deserts, haunted by the ghosts of past social forms. This is one of the negative aspects of deterritorializations: they turn social territories into unhospitable non-territories, and enable the formal structures of state apparatuses, insufficiently articulated to civil society and newly emerging social aggregates, to replace original territories. At the same time, deterritorializations increasingly atomize populations without creating possibilities for new forms of social relations.

These undesirable aspects of deterritorialization processes also compel reflection on the negative impact that past and present traumas have on social reality. The work of **Catherine Malabou** allows us to decipher the structure of society in its inability to overcome the traumatizing effects of historical and political events. By making us attentive to the traumatic effects of events, Malabou’s traumatopolitics can complement **Alain Badiou**’s own concept of the event. Political events such as the Soviet Revolution, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, or the *Solidarność* movement in Poland constitute compelling regional instances of such events. Given that events establish spaces for new collective subjects, how do we then differentiate traumatized subjects from those collective subjects that are capable of constructive plasticity? How can we ensure that the events we experience will open pathways to new territories rather than leaving us in deserted wastelands?

Such troubling questions prompt us to recollect and reconsider the Deleuzo-Guattarian view of the social dimension of thinking, which **Miguel de Beistegui** contrasts with a phenomenological approach to the political. This comparison with phenomenology reminds us of one crucial aspect of deterritorialization: it is—perhaps first and foremost—a process occurring at the microscopic level of appearing, which goes beneath the macroscopic level of social visibility.

Considering such issues, the conference will investigate the territorial migrations of peoples, groups, images, and concepts. It intends to explore problems of social and symbolic condensations as well as problems of depopulation related to the deterritorialization of inhabited territories. Notably, the conference will focus on the historical experience of Central Europe and its historical traumas, which are re-emerging in today’s global context. The ethnic cleansing and social engineering of suffering that are taking place in the Middle East, in the Post-Soviet republics, in

China, or in South America may remind us of the social impoverishment of Central Europe when it lost its Jewish and German populations and experienced the constant exodus of its intellectual and cultural elites. Precisely this alarming situation forces us to examine the intricate relations between territorialities, exterritorialities and non-territorialities.

On top of all that, the works of Deleuze and Guattari resonate with the historical heritage of Central Europe to an even greater degree. Considering this heritage and its philosophical dimension, we intend to organize special sessions dedicated to Deleuze and Guattari's relation to phenomenology, structuralism and Marxism. Psychoanalysis, in its historical development, is also deeply embedded in the social and cultural context of Central Europe. For the same reasons, we cannot forget the literary works of Sacher-Masoch, or Kafka. It was Kafka's work in particular that influenced Deleuze and Guattari's reflections on minority writing and minority groups. What is a minority and what is becoming minoritarian? Deleuze and Guattari claim that it is neither a state of mind nor state of existence; rather, it is a process of deterritorialization that escapes from the established territory of a majority, or, alternatively, transforms it from within. Becoming minoritarian is productive because it creates divergences. This is the spirit we hope will animate our conference as well.

Last but not least, the conference will thematize the manifestation of political and social processes in a broader cultural context: in film, TV, visual art, and music. The artistic domain does not just reflect on political and social processes of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization, it is also in turn affected by them. Art is for Deleuze and Guattari an operation of becoming, and, therefore also of deterritorialization; it is a process of flight from the system of coordinates, one that also demands aesthetic reflection on territoriality.

For all questions and enquires please contact us via e-mail:

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