Chapter 2

A Place Off the Map: The Case for a Non-Map-based Place Title

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Who needs to know my location? Strangers do, outsiders, others. Location is always about others. It's about me to them. It's about them to me. It's about them to each other.

I'm standing in the front yard raking leaves from the little strip of grass separating the sidewalk from the street. The leaves are a mix of pin oak, crepe myrtle and maple. Looking up, I notice a car coming slowly down the street. It may not make much sense to talk about the body language of a car, but there's something about the way this car's moving that says it's lost.

I can see a woman behind the wheel. She slows to a stop in front of me and powers down the window.

'Excuse me', she says.

I walk out into the street and lean down toward her window. There's a young girl in the seat beside her.

'Can you help me?' she asks. 'I have no idea where I am'.

I want to say, 'Sure, sure I can help you. You're *here*!' but I know she doesn't really want to know where she is. She wants to know where she is *vis-à-vis somewhere else*. She wants to know how to get out of here. So instead I ask her, 'Where are you trying to go?' and I tell her how to get there.

Where *I* am, here, my *place*, it's not the same thing as my location. My location is my place *vis-à-vis someplace else*. If my *place* is local, is here, has crepe myrtles and pin oaks and maples in it, my *location* is abstract and is caught up in a universal grid. Most of us – well, I don't know that. I was going to say 'most of us live easily with this duality, can shift from the one to the other as the communication situation demands', but I don't know how many of us can easily jump off and on the map, or how meaningfully, or at what cost any do.

On the map … It's not somewhere you need to be just because you've got a place in the world.

Two Places

Uncle Herman, paterfamilias in Ludwig Bemelmans's first book, *Hansi*, is a forest ranger in the Tyrolese Alps above Innsbruck. The house he lives in was built by his great-grandfather:

> His grandfather had lived in it – so had his father. He himself was born here and so were his children. The house was two hundred years old, and had always carried the name of his family. It was carved into the strong beam in front of the house where the balcony rested. They could never think of any other place in the land as their home.
>
> Mountain houses are fine and simple because they have grown from the rock on which they stand, from the forests that are around them, and from the work of men who looked at mountains all their lives and to whom every tree and flower said, 'See how lovely we are in delicate colors and strong clear patterns'. (Bemelmans 1934: 24)

The house has actually *grown* from the rock. The family has *always* lived in it. The family, the house are exemplars of the rooted. Even the furniture is of the place, has grown from it: 'Each piece was made by hand – no two were alike. Someone had sat down in a room, looked out the window, and said, "I'll build a bed for this room, or a chair." It fitted and stood in its place from then on' (Bemelmans 1934: 24). *In its place*: its situation is as indisputable as the fact that Uncle Herman lives *here*, lives *some*where.

Are there really people today who live where their great-grandfathers did? Sure. Four generations is not that hard to pull off, especially if we loosen the strictures some, if not in the same *house*, then say in the same parish, town, or county. There must be lots of such people. (Though it *would* be interesting to know how many, and how long any have lived anywhere.)

Contrast Uncle Herman with Ryan Bingham, the George Clooney character in the film, *Up in the Air*. Bingham makes his living traveling around the United States to fire people whose employers lack the guts to do it themselves. As a sideline, he delivers motivational speeches that extol a life free of both things and entangling relationships. Bingham luxuriates in the anonymity of his perpetual travel. He *loves* airport lobbies, indistinguishable hotel rooms, his suitcase – he's miserable when he's temporarily grounded – and he holds as an overriding ambition the accumulation of ten million frequent-flyer miles. Ryan Bingham is *nowhere man* incarnate. Despite this he too has a *place*, even if it's spread here and there all over the country: when at the film's end Bingham once again stands in front of a departures and arrivals board in the middle of a busy airport concourse, the satisfied expression that crosses his face makes it perfectly plain that he's home.

Is Ryan Bingham a fiction? Hard to say. Pilots, stewardesses, long-haul truck drivers, ships captains, migrant farm workers, salespeople may be other examples of

those with nowhere places, '*may* be', I say because any number of these may also have places to which they return again and again, *some*where places, places where they do feel rooted. More like Bingham, others may not. I mean, I've known academics *prone to going on about the virtues of rootedness*, who were so busy juggling their many appointments, so busy jetting from one conference to another, that I can't believe that like Bingham they weren't more at home on the road or in the air, settling into their seat on an airplane, checking into a hotel. And the next day into another.[1]

Now, we can assign a *location* to Uncle Herman's place in the world but we can't do that for Bingham's. At best we could assign Bingham's place to a string of locations, though in addition to the ones he's visited already they'd have to include those he has yet to, for unlike Uncle Herman's place which, whatever else it is, is also a *site*, Bingham's place is better thought about as something like a *niche* which, given that a niche is an ecological, not a geographical concept, cannot be posted to a map.
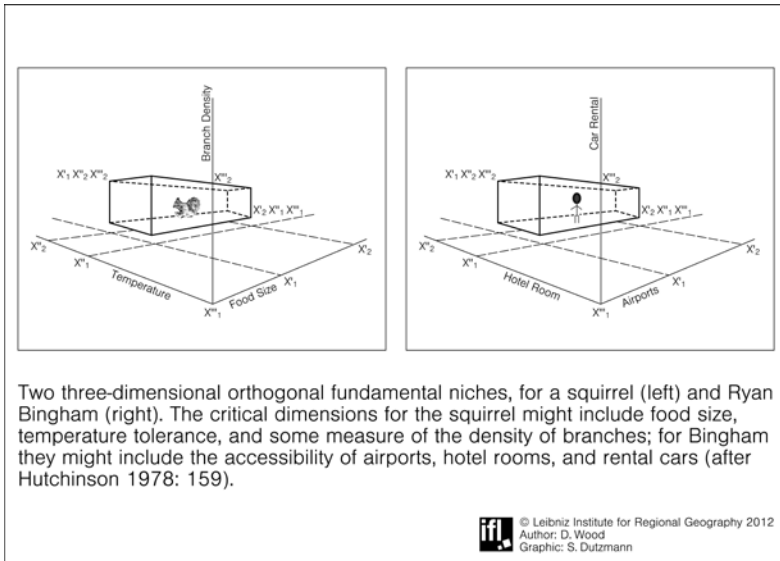
Place Is Like a Niche

'By niche', John Tyler Bonner says (1969: 61, emphasis mine), is meant 'the *place* in nature of the organism. The important emphasis, and in fact the value of the concept of the niche, is that it pinpoints the function, the activity, of the organism within its environmental community. It designates what the animal or plant does rather than what it looks like' (where in 'animal' I want you to hear 'Ryan Bingham').[2] In *Animal Ecology*, the book that established the paradigm of the niche for modern times, Charles Elton wrote that when an ecologist sees a badger 'he should include in his thoughts some definite idea of the animal's place in the community to which it belongs, just as if he had said "there goes the vicar",' (Elton quoted in Hutchinson 1978: 157) where by 'place' should be understood 'the many ranges of conditions and resource qualities within which the organism or species persists, often conceived as a multidimensional space' (Ricklefs 1990: 817). Again, this isn't a physical, it's an abstract space in which coordinates are defined by the values of continuously varying resource attributes, typically things like temperature, insolation, humidity, soil particle size, branch density, nutritional value and the like (Ricklefs 1990: 728–

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1   Notoriously, in a review of Anne Buttimer and David Seamon's *The Human Experience of Space and Place*, I described Buttimer as being one of these peripatetic professors. Irritated by her condescension towards the Worcester residents she imagined 'scarcely ever thought about place at all', I wrote: 'And instead of imagining that this might be because of her bizarre theories or unwarranted assumptions – or because they [the residents] have, in their strong sense of place, no need to belabour endlessly what she in her ceaseless jetting among Ireland, Sweden, and the United States has not – she concludes that they "had become much better adapted to placelessness and individualism than I"' (Wood 1982: 503–506). The arrogance of her words still infuriates me.

2   Of course Bingham constructs his niche – and how to say this – more *actively* than a plant or most other animals can (or do); or perhaps one could say that his agency was greater. Which is not to deny the niche-creating agency of every living thing.

47); though in Bingham's case we'd have to add the availability and quality of airline club lounges (such American Airlines Admirals Clubs), first class accommodations, express lanes, complimentary beverages, turn down services and so on.

Two three-dimensional orthogonal fundamental niches, for a squirrel (left) and Ryan Bingham (right). The critical dimensions for the squirrel might include food size, temperature tolerance, and some measure of the density of branches; for Bingham they might include the accessibility of airports, hotel rooms, and rental cars (after Hutchinson 1978: 159).

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Figure 2.1   The niche

For these niches to be occupied by actual organisms, however, the niches – *this* temperature range, *that* degree of salinity; *that* level of service, *this* degree of complaisance – have to be afforded, expressed, exhibited by or in *habitats*. One speaks of stream habitat, forest habitat, desert habitat, but plainly, there is also business-class airline-travel habitat, truck-stop habitat, labour-camp habitat. Habitats do exist physically and so they can be posted to maps, though whether the niche afforded by a given habitat is occupied is a question only inspection can determine. And whether those inhabiting the niche include a given *individual* – Ryan Bingham – is another question again.

I am *not* claiming that Uncle Herman doesn't have a niche. Unquestionably he does – he's a forest ranger, a householder, a father, an uncle – and he occupies the niche afforded by the mountain forest habitat above Innsbruck in the Tyrolese Alps. I insist, however, that his niche is *uniquely* afforded by *that* individual habitat, the one in the Tyrol above Innsbruck. This, it seems to me, is precisely the burden of the claim that the house *grew* from the rock it stands on, that the furniture is a response to the view from a window: that the house – and by extension Uncle Herman – is *there* and could only *be* there. Because it is exclusively afforded by a unique habitat, Uncle Herman's niche can't be distinguished from its habitat and so his niche effectively *has* a location.

Bingham's doesn't. Bingham's niche is expressed by habitats all over the country, hell, all over the world, with more being built daily (all it takes is a decent hotel, concierge service, a fruit basket in the room). The best we can speak of in Bingham's case is *potential range* which, with respect to habitat, is the entire geographical area containing suitable habitats. Range comes to something like a quantum wave function, indicating that the organism in question may be found somewhere within it but neither where nor how commonly. Where Bingham is at any given moment is lost in the cloud of probabilities vouchsafed by his place, that worldwide constellation of airports and hotels.

This is not to say that with a GPS we couldn't locate Bingham or that Bingham and the others lack an address. Every one of them – most of them anyway – has what we call a 'permanent address'. I mean, it's hard to get a (legal) driver's license without a permanent address; the taxman requires an address and because of this employers do too; you need an address for a passport, visa, work permit; these days you even need one to buy an airline ticket. But permanent addresses are often convenient fictions – a kind of *résidence actuelle de guerre* – where convenience, *bureaucratic* convenience, is the name of the game. To pretend our Binghams live at their permanent addresses, that they regard them as *home* – as their place – is to participate in a fraud only a bureaucrat could stomach.

Though Uncle Herman has little need of a permanent, or for that matter, any kind of address (like location, addresses too are for strangers), he very much lives at his, an address permanent in ways a Bingham could scarcely imagine (and certainly not appreciate). For an Uncle Herman, location, permanent address, niche, habitat, range, all are just different ways of naming the same thing: *Uncle Herman's place in the world*. For Bingham these are all very different. His location could be in the air somewhere between Seattle and Denver, his permanent address an apartment in Omaha, his niche that of privileged traveller, his habitat those of airports and hotels, his range the U.S., the world. None of these really catches his *place* which is not just the sum of his habitats but also *his characteristic moving among them*.

Two places, then: one readily posted to a map, one not; two milieus, one here, one all over … all over the *place*, we'd say in English, if that weren't piling ambiguity on top of ambiguity. Two places: one consisting at its core in private property (Uncle Herman's house and land), the other essentially in rented property (Bingham's hotel rooms, airplane seats); one in which the occupant has rights (all the rights of an owner), the other in which he doesn't, or damn few (and these printed in type too small to read on the back of a ticket). Now, Uncle Herman and Bingham may both be fictions, but in fact millions and millions of people live the way they do, and everyone is more or less rooted, more or less in flight; and the bureaucratic structure of our system of states very much privileges the people of the root over the people of the wing. Bluntly, people in motion are a threat. At the very least they lack a useful address, which is to say, they're hard to post to a map. This renders them hard to keep track of (so who knows what they're up to?) and lets them slip through the net in too many ways.

Maps Are Machines for Establishing Locations

The list I enumerated of entities requiring addresses – license bureaus, the taxman, immigration control, airlines – tells us something about addresses, in fact, about locations generally, namely that they're not primarily for the convenience of strangers, but for the convenience of that omnipresent stranger, the state. Let me say yet again what I say when I say 'location'. I'm not referring to the phenomenological experience of being somewhere. I'm always where I am, *here* in fact, wherever I am. Establishing my *location* means knowing where I am *in relation to somewhere else*. You're looking for your friend in a crowd. You can't see him. You call him on your cell phone: 'Where are you?' The two of you establish a framework – 'See the blue-striped awning?' – by setting a third point that can be used as a guide – 'I'm right across from it'. Now it's you, your friend, and the awning. The awning not only works as a reference, it transforms what were two *points* into a *space*. You, your friend, the awning, *and* that building with the steeple, and the tall skinny tree, and the balloon man: you add enough of these and you can make a map of the world. 'So how do I get to your house?' a new acquaintance asks. You reel off the sequence of moves that will get him to you, or you refer to that general system of collocations we call the map and just give him an address. Type 'location' into Google, and Google Maps comes back at the head of the list. MapQuest comes second.

Maps *can* be thought about as systems of collocations like these, and maps love this sort of alibi, you know, that they're nothing but simple things out to make life easier for us. Interviewing me about maps, Ira Glass, the host of WBEZ Chicago's *This American Life*, asked about the vast number of maps I claimed had been made in the twentieth century: 'What are those maps', he wondered, 'and what proportion of them do you think are the maps that most of us, civilians, usually use which are just road maps to get us from one place to another?'

I cut him off: 'No, but you see, I think you've missed all the maps right off the bat as soon as you go to the road map, because you've forgotten …' and we followed this with the beginnings of a catalogue – the weather map, the maps in newspapers – which would have ended where mapmaking began, with the interest of proto-states in controlling the ownership of property. As we know it today, mapmaking is a kludgy technology, cobbled together in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (maybe the twelfth century in China) from a grab bag of previously independent discourse functions. One of these was certainly this very large-scale, graphic, property control function, documentable to 2300 BCE in Babylon, to the eighth century CE in Japan, and to the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries CE in England. Wholly unrelated to this was a rarer, very small-scale, cosmographic speculation function that can be documented from equally disparate times and places, from the well-known 'Babylonian World Map' of c. 600 BCE, for instance, through medieval European *mappaemundi*, to the Buddhological world maps made as early as the fourteenth century CE in Japan. There was also a relatively small-scale, coastal-navigation function that emerged during the late medieval period that seems equally unrelated to either the property control or cosmographic speculation functions. (In China there

may also have been a military planning function.) In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries these very different discourse functions, together with others entirely novel, began to be understood as no more than different faces of a generalizable *locational discourse function* – the map – into which, over succeeding centuries, more and more of life has gradually been drawn.[3]
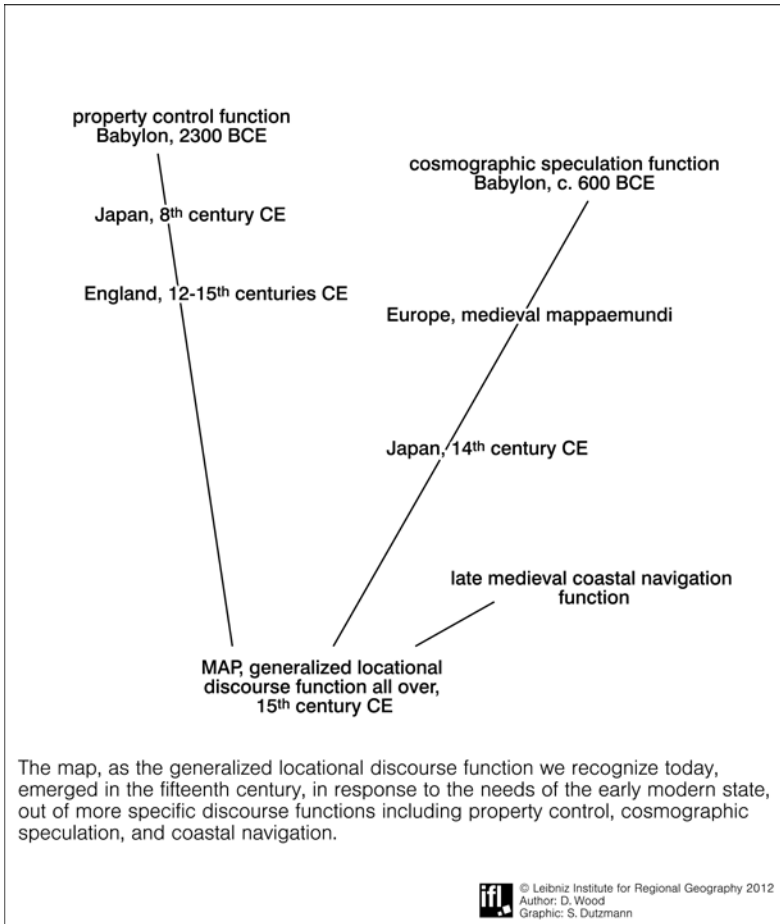
Figure 2.2   The origin of the map

It's probably not necessary to have said more than 1) prior to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries few people used maps at all, and none used them for much; and 2) the revisioning of what had been separate strands as but fibers of a common *map thread*, occurred at the same time that polities around the world began to understand themselves as modern, or proto-modern, states. Because these new states construed themselves as territorial polities – in contradistinction, say, to those feudal societies organized around bonds of reciprocal obligations out of which so many young states emerged – states discovered a huge interest in location and so in mapmaking (Wood 2010: 27–35). Indeed it may not be too much to say that modern states consist of little more than great tabulations of locations, increasingly in map form, over which states exercise their various authorities: maps of the locations of the territory over which they are sovereign, and therefore maps of the locations of the borders which bound their territories; maps of the locations of their constituent elements (territories, provinces, states, counties, parishes and the like, each in turn making maps like crazy); maps of the locations of their resources and properties (which is to say *all* resources and properties over which they exercise eminent domain); maps of the locations of their citizens (to deliver services, question, tax, conscript); as well as maps of the locations of all the things *outside* their boundaries that concern them, which in the case of large modern states is almost everything in the world.
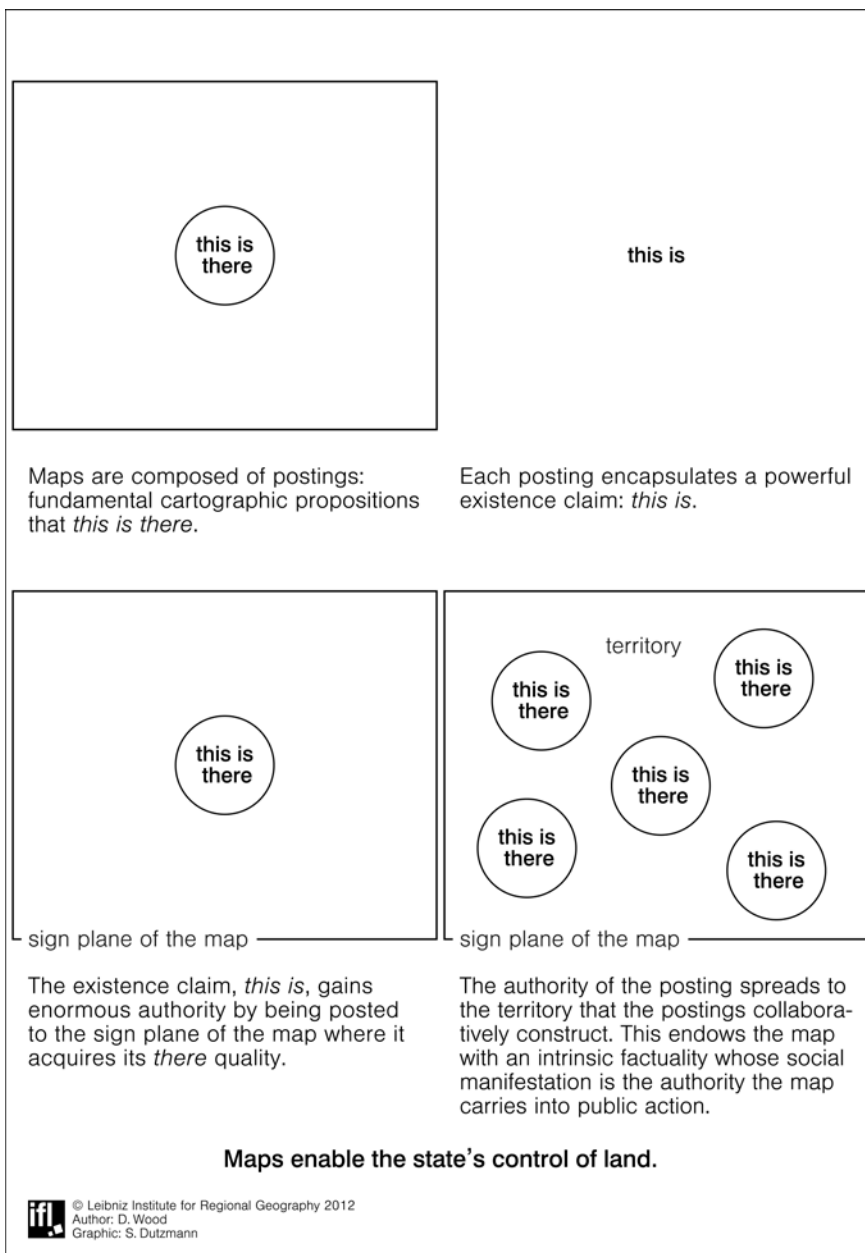
To say nothing of the moon. And Mars. And the rest of the solar system.

Everything that is, *that has a location,* for the logic of the map is a propositional one constructed out of what John Fels and I call 'postings', fundamental cartographic propositions that *this is there* (Wood and Fels 2008: 26–33). Each of these postings encapsulates a powerful existence claim – *this is* – that gains enormous power by being *posted* (that is, from the indexicality vouchsafed by the sign plane of the map). The power gained by the posting of these existence claims arises from the fact that every instance of map use constitutes an implicit act of validation. This validation – all but automatic – is structured by antecedent validations performed in situations ranging from map-learning exercises in school, through successful uses of maps in way finding, to the sight of Colin Powell pointing out on a map of Iraq the locations of weapons of mass destruction.[4] The claim *this is there* is powerful precisely because it implies the performance of an existence test: *that you can go there and check it out*. Having done this in the past, you know the outcome: *it is there*. Besides, who would fake such a challenge? The assent thus given to the postings spreads to the territory that the postings collaboratively construct, and this endows the

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4   The whole process is similar to what Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer (1985) write about as the production of facts by witnessing and reporting in their *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*.

Maps are composed of postings: fundamental cartographic propositions that *this is there*.

Each posting encapsulates a powerful existence claim: *this is*.

The existence claim, *this is*, gains enormous authority by being posted to the sign plane of the map where it acquires its *there* quality.

— sign plane of the map ————

The authority of the posting spreads to the territory that the postings collabora- tively construct. This endows the map with an intrinsic factuality whose social manifestation is the authority the map carries into public action.

— sign plane of the map ————

Maps enable the state's control of land.

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Figure 2.3   This is there

map as a whole with an intrinsic factuality whose social manifestation is the authority the map carries into public action.[5]

Can it be doubted that this locative authority is the reason that the earliest and most consistent use of what became maps – across cultures and throughout history – is *the control of land, the registration of real property*? I think not. Nor, I think, can it be doubted that it was this locative authority that gave the map so heightened a role in the rise of the early modern state. In their history of cadastral mapping Roger Kain and Elizabeth Baigent (1992: dust jacket flap) put it this way: 'Cadastral maps played an important role in the rise of modern Europe' – and I might add modern Asia, the modern Americas, and Australia – 'as tools for the consolidation and extension of land-based national power', where by 'extension' we need to hear among many other things … *colonial settlement*. Kain and Baigent (1992: 265) go on to say:

> In the early years of European settlement in the New World in the seventeenth century, whether in the Liesbeeck River Valley east of Cape Town in South Africa, or on the Atlantic seaboard of North America, land surveying and the production of cadastral maps became established as a concomitant of colonial settlement. Land availability, if not the only lure of migrations from Europe, was a most important influence in the individual decision to migrate. As Sarah Hughes comments in the context of Virginia: 'Immigrant colonists gazing at a wilderness envisaged its taming and imagined new markers bounding the edges of their own fields and meadows. The men who could measure the metes and bounds of those fields held the key to transforming a worthless, uncultivated territory into individual farms […]'

'Individual farms', 'the metes and bounds of those fields', 'markers bounding their own fields and meadows', may not be words Uncle Herman ever uttered, but the idea of place that these words encapsulate is one he'd understand: a place that was simultaneously a location, a location that could be, when necessary – and almost invariably was – posted to a map. (It's no surprise that non-Han peoples who declared their loyalty to the Chinese state were said 'to enter the map' (Csete 2006: 235–37, 240). There were, of course, differences in the processes of settlement and their relationships to cadastral mapping between Capetown and Jamestown, between Jamestown and Plymouth, but common to them all was the reality that the map was the machine that established the locations, and absolutely *nothing* like a sketch drawn 'to communicate a sense of place, some sense of *here* in relation to *there*' (Wilford 2000: 6).[6]

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5   The use of the map by Colin Powell to advance the Bush war claims is a brilliant example of how the map's authority can be/is exploited in public action. Bush may have intended to go to war whatever the case, but the authority of the Powell map greased the political skids.

6   This is another favoured alibi of maps, that they're all about place.

'To communicate a sense of place': this is reaching for an idea of the map as a poetics of place, and perhaps a poetics of place is not wholly beyond the map's reach; but it had nothing to do with the maps made of the parts of the world soon to be seized, and then transformed, by European colonizers. The maps the migrants saw said, 'Here there is land', but little about place, that is, little about its conditions, about the winter cold or summertime heat, about the unfamiliar fauna, about the numbers and sizes of the mosquitoes, about the strange, often bizarre vegetation, and *extraordinarily little* – or as little as could be gotten away with – about the humans already occupying the land.

I mean, what sort of *place* are you describing when you omit the people living there?

But maps are good at that. You know, it's lat/long here and lat/long there, so many hectares, here a river, there a swamp; and for this or that consideration, the patenting of so much land. And, whoops, *you're who? You* live *here? Since when? Since always? But this is my land ...*

Immigrants, settlers, colonists, they weren't much good at recognizing aboriginal title. After all, it was invariably customary in form and so had never been patented, which is a way of saying that it was place-, not location-based. Immigrants were particularly bad when it came to mobile swidden cultivators, to indigenous occupants who cultivated less than they foraged, to hunters, to herders. Their places were too much like Ryan Bingham's, and the immigrants knew about nothing but places like Uncle Herman's.

These are not coincidences, the behaviour of the colonists and the characteristic ineptitude of maps, for if maps were great at establishing location and pathetic when it came to expressing a sense of place, it was precisely this pair of complementary 'virtues' that made the map so invaluable in laying the grounds for migration. A sense of *place* would only have … *gotten in the way*, could only have *deterred* people from imagining a life of their own in a place already richly inhabited by others. Only when maps are understood in this way does Bernard Nietschmann's (1995: 34–37), 'More Indigenous territory has been claimed by maps than by guns', make any sense, though at the very same time it renders wholly moot his assertion that, 'and more Indigenous territory can be reclaimed and defended by maps than by guns'.[7]

In the first place, as I've pointed out elsewhere, maps themselves have no power at all (Wood 2010: 1–7, 117–18). They're rather used to *wield* power: power flows *through* the map. Power is a measure of work, and work is the application of a force through a distance. The work of maps is to apply social forces to people to bring into being a particular socialized space. The forces in question? *Ultimately*,

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7   And Nietschmann (1995: 37) went on: 'Whereas maps like guns must be accurate, they have the additional advantages that they are inexpensive, don't require a permit, can be openly carried and used, internationally neutralize the invader's one-sided legalistic claims, and can be duplicated and transmitted electronically which defies all borders, all pretexts, and all occupations'.

I've insisted, they're those of the courts, the police, and the military. The reason maps are so often turned to is because of their ability to replace, *to reduce the necessity for*, the application of armed force. For armed force maps substitute the force of the authority of the map, *but the map's authority cannot be separated from that of the state that backs it up*. Put simply, the authority of the map is only as great as the authority of the state that guarantees it and only in the rarest cases is a state about to guarantee maps securing land claims against it.

… But Not of Place

I think that's an unanswerable objection – international approbation and goodwill come to nothing in the face of an intransigent state determined to defend its authority (*vide* Israel) – but more critical to my mind is the misfit between the map and place when the place is Bingham-like. At the moment I'm thinking about Travellers. The classic examples are the Gypsies, the Roma, the Romani, but there are all kinds of Travellers. Government statistics would have you believe that most have been 'settled' but too many of them too often fail the signal test of an address, of a location you can point to on a map: when you go there to check it out … they're *not* there.

We're not talking about a couple of people either. Romani live all over the world. There may be none in Antarctica, but every other continent has its share, though what that share is is unknown, even poorly estimated; partly because it's unclear who should be counted (are the Yeniche Romani or not?), partly because few of them are eager to be counted in the first place. Estimates laughably range from two to 14 million for Europe and Asia Minor where perhaps most of them live in sizeable numbers in almost every country: the Italian Usari; the Roma, the Sinti of Germany, Austria and eastern Europe; the Yeniche, Jenische, the 'White Gypsies' of Germany, Switzerland and France; the Reisende, or Indigenous Norwegian Travellers, who may or may not be confused with the Tater, or Norwegian Travellers; the Finnish Kale, maybe a quarter of them living in Sweden; the half-dozen different Scottish Traveller groups; the various Tinkers or Irish Travellers; the Welsh Kale; the Romanichal of England and the Scottish Borders; and others still in Portugal, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, Turkey.

Besides these are Occupational Travellers: circus, carnival and fairground workers and their families; bargee and other waterway workers; migrant farm workers and other seasonal labourers. And isn't Bingham an occupational traveller. I mean, *what else*? Unlike the Romani who, whatever the varying national statuses of their claims, have undeniable ethnic identities, occupational travellers may not be marked this way, or may be comprised of mixes of many. Migrant farm labourers in the United States may be Mexican, but they may also be Jamaican, Guatemalan, Salvadorian, U.S. citizens of Hispanic origin, or U.S. citizens of other origins. They may have homes they intend to return to, homes they don't

intend to return to, or none at all. The lack of even the doubtful visibility granted by ethnicity makes these travellers all the harder to map.

Finally there are the growing numbers of New or New Age Travellers who, originating in the 'crusty' hippy-cultures of the 1970s, lack even a 'decent' pedigree and merge, via free-party sound-systems like DiY and Spiral Tribe, into the world-wide free-tekno and rave circuits. How many New Travellers are there? No one has a clue but wandering around the UK alone – some in their third or fourth generation – may be as many as 40,000. We *do* know in 1992 that, 40,000 New Age Travellers, gypsies, and ravers descended on the Castlemorton Commons for the week-long party that inspired passage of the Criminal Justice and Public Outdoor Order Act of 1994, an act that not only outlawed raves but vacated the requirement that local authorities had to provide campsites for Travellers of any stripe, New, Occupational, or Romani (Reynolds 1998).

Okay, these *are* embattled populations, but … *reclaim territory?*

They never had any territory to begin with which, I insist, doesn't mean they don't have a place. Furthermore, it's plain that very many of them *don't want* any territory. Like Ryan's, the place they occupy is anything but the sum of its habitats. Movement is what best distinguishes their place, that movement so anathemic to states with their fetishes for location, location, location.

If only these people would settle down!

Settlement has been the strategy adopted by nearly every state confronted with mobile populations like these: sedentarization together with what the Spaniards subduing the New World called *agrupación*, that is, not sedentarization alone, but sedentarization into aggregations large enough to efficiently control, tax, catechize, indenture, conscript, educate … It's what Israel's doing with the Bedouin right now. I suppose it goes without saying that they're severing the Bedouin from their flocks, evicting them from their tents (the Israelis bulldoze these), but they're also *aggregating* them to facilitate their control and exploitation as … *labour* (Meir 1997, Shoshan 2010: 380). The Jahalin Bedouin, for example, have not only been forcibly removed from the land they previously occupied where the Jewish settlement of Ma'ale Adumim now stands, but have been recruited to work as domestics *in* Ma'ale Adumim, and as labourers in its unceasing expansion.[8] No longer, if Israel has its way, shall cares, 'fold their tents, like the Arabs,/And as silently steal away' (Longfellow 1846: 80), but rather like the Jahalin, remain in their shipping containers next to the Jerusalem city dump which is where the State of Israel has settled them.

In this case, there *may be* territory to reclaim, though it remains unclear exactly what this might be or how to map it. Thus a Jahalin Bedouin, Abu Dahook, explained that when he and his family lived on *private property* in Anata and Abu Dis, 'No one bothered us. The people in our towns and villages are honorable

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8   It's maybe beside the point, but the conclusion in 'Arab Jahalin: from the Nakba to the Wall' (Hunaiti 2008) that the Israeli actions amount to ethnic cleansing is, I conclude after four field visits, incontestable.

Nomadic and Indigenous Spaces

people. If the land is empty, what difference does it make to the owner whether we live on it? On the contrary, when we live on the property, we protect it. That's how people looked at it. None of them ever asked the Bedouin to leave the lands they lived on' (Audeh 2008).[9] So … *what territory are we supposed to map?* It's not all that different from trying to figure what territory to grant New Age Travellers in, say, England: *what? include the entire country?*

There are conflicting problems here. The first is the one I've just alluded to: New Age Travellers, Gypsies, Bedouin, they all live on the margins, in the interstices, and they have a propensity for fading into the background and disappearing. Pinning them to a map can only mean posting their potential ranges which, as I pointed out about Bingham, means the *entire* geographical area containing suitable habitats. Given that range maps post neither locations nor numbers, what exactly is the point? Besides that they're just plain redundant. Again, on the map include what? *The whole West Bank? The entire continent of Europe?*

But the other problem is worse, for in our world where *the mapped alone is assumed to exist* – especially when it comes to occupation and/or legitimation – exclusion from the map amounts to, or foretells, some sort of disappearance. Some find this advantageous – not everyone is eager to exist in the eyes of the state – but if you want to exist, as the Bedouin emphatically do, then being excluded from maps is a liability, one that in the Bedouin case dates to the Mandatory British resurvey of Palestine (Gavish 2005). If the titles established for the *fellahin* at that time prove less secure than the *fellahin* might have assumed – and we'll ignore the loss of their common *musha'* lands – no titles of any kind were established for the Bedouin since the British, with their sedentary prejudices, surveyed only … the *settled* parts of their Mandate. The resulting absence, exclusion, oversight, is what fuels so much Indigenous counter-mapping today: in a world where maps matter, better to be on it than not (Wood 2010: 129–42)!

The problem with this is obvious. It's the same one that confronts animals – bears, elephants – when they stray across a park's boundaries; that faces kids playing in the street who are supposed to be – damnit! – in the playground (Wood 1977); that bedevils anyone, actually, who wanders off the reservation. Once you've been pinned to the map, that's where you belong, and let's have none of this nonsense about 'Bedouin moving around wherever there is food and water for the herds' (as Abu Dahook put it). *No! No! No!* Being on the map – having a location – means being settled. Being settled and having an address are just different ways of saying the same thing. Both are but different faces of a single project of the state. Ultimately this is the problem with the map for Indigenous, especially for nomadic populations (including New Age Travellers and students and Gypsies and young unemployed university graduates[10]): the very best the map can do is to transform

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9 Indeed ownership *per se* rarely seems to be an issue.
10 Here I'm especially thinking of China's 'ant tribe', so called because there are so many of them: young, recent graduates of universities unable to find work in the large cities

their places into *its locations*. When places can't be crammed into the tidy boxes of the state, maps are helpless.

Toward the Right to a Place in the World

There is a dawning recognition of this reality. Writing in 1999 as president of Australia's National Native Title Tribunal, Graeme Neate pointed out that surveyors need to understand that:

> The rights and interests of indigenous people in their traditional country will not necessarily accord with conventional legal notions of property;
>
> In some areas two or more groups of people may have mutually recognized traditional rights and interests;
>
> In some areas the boundaries of traditional estates may be clearly defined by reference to natural features, but elsewhere the boundaries are imprecise, permeable, and periodically negotiable.
>
> It may not be possible to plot traditional estates or significant sites by conventional cartographic means, or record them cadastrally. Rather than attempt to record such estates and sites by using cadastral boundaries, it may be better to note, by references to areas mapped for other purposes, which group has (either alone or with others) which traditional rights and interests. (Neate 1999)

Drawing on thinking like this Justice Robert French of the Federal Court of Australia, himself a former president of the National Native Title Tribunal, made a determination in a 2002 land-rights case that almost came to an appreciation of a people's *place* rather than its location. Accepting a *dish of sand* from the Martu Aboriginal people, French (2002) acknowledged that the 'symbolic gesture was a demonstration of the claimant's strongly-held belief in their ownership of their traditional territories'; and in his finding French came close to expressing regret about the necessity of reducing the claim to a map: 'Although the Court has to set boundaries in order to define the area of a native title determination, it is a fact that in the extremely arid regions of the Western desert, boundaries between Aboriginal groups are rarely clear cut. They are very open to human movement across them. Desert people define their connection to the land much more in terms of groups of sites, thinking of them as points in space not as areas with borders' (French 2002). French approvingly quoted from an anthropologist's conclusion that if the inhabitants recognized any sort of territorial boundaries then, due to the patchiness

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where they're landing. We're talking hundreds of thousands of unemployed, young adults. Most of these seem to be aiming for stability but …

and unreliability of the rainfall, that these boundaries had to allow people to cross them freely; and French went on to determine that indeed there existed *concurrent native title rights* of both the Martu and Ngurrara in the desert in question. 'It is particularly encouraging', he concluded, 'that each of these groups, consistently with their traditional law and custom, is able to recognize the interests of the other in a common area of land' (French 2002).

Despite the decision's inclusion of an endless list of the lat/long coordinates fixing the area of the determination, French's recognition of concurrent title rights, his calling into question 'clear cut boundaries', phrases like 'thinking of them as points in space not as areas with borders', and the grudging quality of 'although the Court has to set boundaries', suggest a focus on place at the expense of location. As does, in a wholly different context involving Occupational Travellers, the decision of the Brisbane School of Distance Education to have teachers travel *with* fairground, circus and carnival workers rather than force their children to attend school in a fixed location. Instead of disrupting the students' families, the school itself became mobile; that is, rather than dissolving the children's place, the school conformed to it (Danaher, Danaher, Moriarty 2003: 166–67). An approach in the United Kingdom permits dual registration for Traveller students, holding open an absent student's place at one or another school while recording absences as excused.[11] Here it's less an individual school conforming to a Traveller's place than the system as a whole. Helping kids stay in any school was the UK's 1968 Caravan Sites Act which, by requiring local authorities to establish caravan sites 'for the use of gipsies and other persons of nomadic habit', saw the creation of 400 new caravan sites across the country (Caravan Sites Act 1968).

Of course this was undone by the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Outdoor Order Act, but what I'm trolling for are hints, suggestions, models of things that have been or could be done to guarantee a person's *place in the world* against a minimal right to a *location on a map*. Of course the various rights enshrined in the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are fundamental, but without what Robbie McVeigh (1997: 7–25) has called an 'unambiguous acceptance of the right to travel', they come too little for people on the move, especially for people who, like Occupational and New Travellers, may fall into the category of what the UN act refers to as 'all other peoples' (United Nations 2007).[12]

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11   See, for example, the London Borough of Havering's Traveller Education Support Service (TESS), though all Local Education Authorities have something along these lines. While there is some visiting of students and parents on privately owned sites, fairgrounds, and circuses, as well in private and Council accommodations, a great deal of focus is put on materials that can move with students rather than on movement of the teachers.

12   Words including 'nomad', 'nomadic', 'travel', 'traveller', 'mobile', and so on do not appear in the UN's native rights declaration. Of course, phrases like 'distinctive spiritual and material relationship with the lands they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used' could be interpreted as including nomadism.

The right to travel – wow! hard to imagine in a world of borders – but it happens to imply … the right to park. I mean, *here's* a right we almost take for granted, all us people on the move who not only assume we'll be able to find a place to park, but that we have a right to it! We don't, of course, no matter the appearance; and on another scale it was precisely this lack of a right to park that the Caravan Sites Act addressed. A right to travel might also imply that government services are services for citizens, not just for sedentary citizens; and that this might mean *all* services that governments provide, including education and medical care, and here of course the Brisbane, UK, and other schooling initiatives are illustrative. Stir in the sorts of things Justice French was getting at in his decision – concurrent title rights, vague boundaries, spaces conceived as points in space rather than areas with borders – and I think we may begin to have some of the dimensions of a place in the world.

Could we think about these the way we think about niches? As dimensions of a multidimensional space to which we could … *grant title?* Why title? Because title-holders seem privileged in ways the possessors of mere rights don't (*vide* the Bedouin); and because I'm not thinking about grazing *rights* or *rights* of access or passage, but about complicated *bundles* of such rights (including the right to travel) combined with accesses to services and maybe even chunks of land (the maps for these attached as codicils), and all these bundled up together, the way banks bundle mortgages up into securities which people then buy and sell. I'm not thinking about buying and selling place titles – though why not? – but about governments granting them the way they used to issue land grants, granting them to people who have *places* but don't particularly need *territory*, or need territory but only now and then, in some sort of periodic or rhythmic way. And, okay, the grant would come with a 'place title number' attached to it, a kind of licence – we do live in a system of states after all – but this licence would guarantee its holder the right to have school absences excused, or to park, or to cross a border, or to graze animals.

I don't know. It's just a thought.

Acknowledgements

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