THE NOMAD AS THEORETICAL AND LITERARY MODEL OF ECOLOGICAL INHABITATION IN A GLOBALISED WORLD

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It has been a widely held conviction of the environmental movement that individuals' ties to place (i.e. the local area) are being increasingly eroded in modern society, and that we need to strengthen them in order to reduce environmentally damaging behaviour. Henry David Thoreau, Wendell Berry, Gary Snyder, Leslie Marmon Silko and Terry Tempest Williams are among the many proponents of local belonging and sense of place in American literature, and ecocritics including Lawrence Buell, Glen Love and Scott Slovic have written extensively on the potential of literature and the arts to contribute to *dwelling* and *reinhabitation*.[1] Through continuous inhabitation or punctual encounters, the argument goes, homes, landscapes and urban environments become associated with certain values, in processes initially involving individual persons and families, and later acquiring collective cultural significance. "For contemporary environmental criticism", Buell writes, "place often seems to offer the promise of a 'politics of resistance' against modernism's excesses" (Buell, *The Future* 65). While acknowledging the complexities and ambivalences of place, and stressing that not all forms of place-attachment are necessarily 'natural' or environmentally desirable, he holds that most are beneficial to the ethic of environmental sustainability, i.e. "prudent, self-sufficient use of natural resources such that environmental and human quality will be maintained (and ideally improved) with better human/human and human/non-human consideration" (ibid. 84f.).

[1] See for instance Buell, *The Environmental Imagination*, 252-79; *Writing for an Endangered World*, 64-78; *The Future of Environmental Criticism*, 62-96.

One of the most sophisticated theorists of place in the first half of the twentieth century was Martin Heidegger. Although his thinking is compromised by his leanings towards conservative-racist ideology, his conception of 'dwelling' has nevertheless been and remains a major source of inspiration for theorising our relationship with the natural environment. For Heidegger, dwelling involves not only *belonging*, but also *safeguarding* and *preserving* place. This means not so much nature conservation as kinds of inhabitation, cultivation and building which are sensitive to the environment: actions which enhance nature and 'bring it into being' rather than subjecting or 'enframing' it. Heidegger is of special interest to literary critics, because he also saw facilitating dwelling, and resisting the self-destructive forces of modern civilisation, as prime functions of literature (especially poetry).[2]

Heidegger's conception of dwelling is one of the principal foundations of the environmentalist philosophy of localism from which Ursula Heise distances herself in her book, *Sense of Place, Sense of Planet*. Traditional place-attachment has become an anachronism, she argues, and identity is more commonly defined in our day by relations to a multiplicity of places than to a singular place. 'Eco-cosmopolitanism' should be our goal: restoring individuals' sense of place is a "dead end if it is understood as a founding ideological principle or a principal didactic means of guiding individuals and communities back to nature" (21). Heise is justified in challenging the assumption that environmental consciousness is necessarily grounded in sensual experience gained through physical proximity (33). Quite rightly, she points out that our behaviour is also shaped by things which have nothing to do with place, or which derive from awareness of the connections between places rather than attachment to a particular place. But does this mean ecocritics can afford to ignore place as a cultural phenomenon and sense of place as a factor in environmental awareness? Heise writes that globalisation and the increasing connectedness of societies today demand that we "envision how ecologically based advocacy on behalf of the non-human world as well as on behalf of greater socio-environmental justice might be formulated in

[2] It is worth noting that the word Heidegger uses, 'wohnen,' simply means 'to live (in a place).' English translators have tended to render it as 'dwell,' foregrounding connotations of duration and harmony. Heideggerian conceptions of (ecological and poetic) dwelling are discussed at greater length in Chapter 4 of my book, *Nature, Technology and Cultural Change*, "Heideggerian Ecopoetics and the Nature Poetry Tradition."

terms that are *premised no longer on ties to local places*" (10, my emphasis). There is a danger here of going too far, and ignoring findings of environmental psychology and social anthropology concerning the role played by place in individuals' sense of well-being and collective identity formation.

In Germany, sense of place has not enjoyed the same prominence in recent literary criticism as in the United States. For decades after the Second World War, conceptions of local belonging remained discredited through association with the Nazi ideology of Blood and Soil. It was felt to be impossible to speak of *Heimat* (the homeland) without falling into one of the twin traps of sentimental escapism and lingering resentment over the loss of territory, power and status (see Blickle 1-24). However, since the publications of social anthropologists such as Hermann Bausinger and Ina-Maria Greverus in the 1970s, there has been a steady revival of interest in the concept of Heimat as a marker of affective ties with homesteads, landscapes, regions, towns and cities as places of habitation (if not necessarily of origin).[3]

Contemporary German interest in place-belonging, as reflected in the writing of Günter Grass, Jens Sparschuh and Bernhard Schlink, and the films of Tom Tykwer, Wolfgang Becker and Andreas Dresen, is no longer primarily driven by the trauma experienced by the millions of persons displaced during and after the Second World War, but by a newer concern with national identity prompted by the country's reunification, by waves of political and economic immigration, and, as in most other countries, by the general diminution of local cultural diversity in today's mobile, globalised society, in which physical displacement and fluid identities constantly under construction have become the norm. Place cannot serve as a haven permitting individuals or communities to opt out of progress and history, nor do nostalgic romanticisations of 'home' as embodying a lost harmony with the natural environment provide a viable perspective for the future. But *locatedness* and *embodiedness* have attracted new attention as desirable social and cultural goals.

Contemporary place theory draws on phenomenology, postcolonialism, and postmodern and feminist theory.[4] The first of these plays a central role in Edward Casey's book *The Fate of Place*. Casey

[3] See the introduction "Heimatdenken: Konjunkturen und Konturen. Statt einer Einleitung," in Gebhard, Geisler and Schröter (9-56).

[4] See Ball for a critical account of place-based literary criticism, and Wegner for a wider overview of spatial theory and its relevance for literary analysis.

examines a series of theoretical revalorisations of place as responses to the assimilation of place into space and the subordination of both place and space to time, processes which are widely regarded as defining features of Enlightenment modernity. He discusses the development of the phenomenological dimension of place and its significance for the constitution of the self in the thinking of Whitehead, Husserl (who first wrote of the construction of place by means of the experiencing body, and of walking as a primary activity through which we build up a coherent world out of fragmentary appearances), Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty (who consolidated the phenomenological conception of place as lived space and locus of intimacy). Casey also touches on the role assigned to literature and poetry in fostering inhabitation by Gaston Bachelard. The topoanalysis outlined in Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* (1957), a psychological study of the localities of our intimate lives drawing attention to the ability of place to direct and stabilise us, and tell us *who* and *what* we are in terms of *where* we are, suggests that textual imaginings and rememberings of intimacy with place (e.g. poetic images of house and home) can complement literal residing and facilitate identity construction. Finally, Casey discusses Deleuze and Guattari, whose conception of fluid, rhizomatic dwelling seeks to avoid the problematic aspects of the static concept of place.

These and other significant impulses in place theory which Casey does not discuss (e.g. the postcolonial theories of Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, and feminist approaches by Luce Irigaray and Doreen Massey), suggest that what is needed is less a wholesale debunking of place than a critical redefinition of our relationship with it, an adaptation to 21st-century realities and needs. Jonathan Bate and Kate Rigby have examined post-Heideggerian developments in place theory and sought to make them fruitful for literary criticism. In his book, *The Song of the Earth* Bate argues that Heidegger's association of dwelling with the ethnically or politically defined *Volk* or nation must be replaced by one with the inhabitants of a locality, province or region; that it is necessary to distinguish between ownership and belonging (poets who find their home in a specific environment often have an "imaginative, not a proprietorial, interest in belonging"); and that ecopoetic vision must be "inclusive, not exclusionary", i.e. open to outsiders and newcomers (Bate 280). In *Topographies of the Sacred*, Kate Rigby has modified Heideggerian dwelling in two further ways. Some form of loss or exile, she notes, is intrinsic to all dwelling, and we must encounter the absence or strangeness of a place before we can begin to attune ourselves to it. All belonging is thus a product of *re*-inhabitation. And secondly, we should conceive of

dwelling as "an achievement, something which we have to learn again and again, something which involves conscious commitment, not something that is in any sense 'in the blood'" (Rigby 11).

There are parallels here with the feminist geographer Doreen Massey's writing on place and place-identity. Though her book *Space, Place and Gender* is principally concerned with the gender dimension of space, one of her key propositions is that if we are to provide an alternative to the current problematic conceptions of static place-based identity, place must be conceived of as itself constantly changing. It must also be thought of as relational, i.e. defined by its links with what lies beyond it, rather than bounded by the counterposition of one identity against another (Massey 7). Problematic association of places with notions of an 'authentic' home to a particular population can be avoided through recognition of their multi-layering and openness to others. Space is in her words "an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification" (3), and place an undoubtedly significant, nevertheless only momentary stabilisation of its meaning. Like individual and national identity, which come into being over the years through a layering of interconnections with the wider world, the identity of place must be recognised as always unfixed, contested and multiple.

These are very significant shifts in our understanding of place-belonging. However, my concern here is with a different aspect of the redefinition of place, one associated with the term 'nomadism'. More than once in her book, Heise alludes to nomads as practitioners of a way of life which is inherently detrimental to the environment. Yet since the 1980s nomadism has become a central image in the consideration of alternative kinds of inhabitation by thinkers ranging from Deleuze and Guattari to the feminist thinker Rosi Braidotti, the theorist of everyday life Michel de Certeau, and the philosopher Vilém Flusser. Taking Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of nomadism and the rhizome in *A Thousand Plateaus* as a starting point, I will spend the next few pages exploring the theoretical understanding of inhabitation they are associated with – one foregrounding flux and hybridity, and embracing the mobility, multilocal belonging and polyethnic places typical of contemporary life – before illustrating its literary representation.

Nomadism, dwelling and smooth space in Deleuze and Guattari

The thinking of the philosopher Gilles Deleuze and the psychotherapist Pierre-Félix Guattari was a product of the uprising against established power structures and joyful overthrowing of the hegemony of analytical reasoning in 1968. Appealing to all who sought to change society, they absorbed ideas and vocabulary from a wide range of sciences and areas of culture, willfully reassigning meanings. Their 'figurations of thought', as they call them, sought to synthesise a multiplicity of events without effacing their heterogeneity. Their use of terms such as 'nomad', 'rhizome' and 'deterritorialisation' can be puzzling. The word 'deterritorialisation' was originally used by historians to denote the suppression of a country's socio-political and cultural structures by its conquerors – an action normally followed by a reterritorialisation through the imposition of new structures and ideologies. However, Deleuze and Guattari use it in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) to signify an emancipatory process rather than one of disempowerment, an activity undermining the repressive channeling of flows of desire into fixed units centred around regimes of sameness and place.

The vogue of the term 'deterritorialisation' in cultural theory dates from this usage, and is confusingly (at least for environmental theorists) at odds with its everyday understanding as either the traumatic severing of physical or emotional ties with place (e.g. place of origin) or the gradual weakening of ties between culture and place by the globalisation of cultural values. Equally confusing is Deleuze and Guattari's use of the term 'machine' (associated by Lewis Mumford and other historians and philosophers of science with reduction to function and oppression) in a positive sense, for a loose structure involving free volition. (In *A Thousand Plateaus*, it is used synonymously with the term 'assemblage'.)

This is, however, only one of the difficulties encountered by anyone seeking to adopt Deleuze and Guattari's terms for practical application in ecocriticism. Above all, the support which their vitalist echoes of Nietzsche's celebration of instinct and intensity over rationalism, and of the Futurists' cult of speed and violence, seem to be expressing for destructive behaviour appears problematic today. Their eulogy of the 'war machine' as a revolutionary vehicle of emancipation, a fluid antithesis of repressive State bureaucracy, an experimental dynamic surge witnessed to especially in myth, epic and drama, sounds inappropriate in our post 09/11 world. With these provisos, however, their radicalism and mischievous creativeness are hugely stimulating. The rhizome and the nomad, which are discussed chiefly in Chapter 1 ("Introduction: Rhizome") and Chapter 12 ("1227: Treatise on

Nomadology – The War Machine"), are particularly powerful and suggestive terms of relevance to ecocriticism.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the *rhizome* exemplifies nature's alternative to the dualism inherent in Enlightenment rationalism. Its multiple, lateral and circular roots are the opposite of a single taproot. The "indefinite multiplicity of secondary roots," and "flourishing developments" (5) of rhizomatic sentences, texts, and knowledge constitute a superior alternative to traditional 'arboreal' models of thinking. Principal characteristics of the rhizome are heterogeneity and multiplicity: any point can be connected to any other, facilitating constant change and reinvention. The subject is never fixed but engaged in a constant process of becoming. The rhizome allows free flow of desire, and what they call a 'becoming-animal.' Becoming animal means joining with other animals in a zone of proximity that moves us out our position of dominance and transforms us by dissolving our identities and the boundaries that we set up between human and animal, thus enabling us to interact in ways that allow both to thrive. As acentred systems with multiple entryways, susceptible to constant modification, rhizomes can be seen as a model of coexistence, co-evolution and mutual dependence. Applied to texts, the rhizomatic model signifies a collective assemblage of enunciation, with multiple narratives, semiotic flows, and experimental language. Rhizomatic writing establishes connections not only between semiotic chains, but also between the text and social and political struggles.

Deleuze and Guattari use the terms 'rhizomatic' and 'nomadic' almost interchangeably. Chapter 12 of their book focuses on nomadism as a form of political organisation and a way of thinking and living which found its most distinct expression in the thirteenth-century Asian empire of Genghis Khan. However, the sedentary principle of the State and the mobile nomadic 'war machine' contend with each other throughout history. The State is constantly trying to vanquish nomads, control migration, and establish rights over the 'exterior' (385), while nomadism seeks to break up states, hinder their formation and maintain the dispersal of groups. Deleuze and Guattari envisage nomadism as an indispensable mechanism for change. An irruption of the ephemeral, it is a constant source of social and cultural renewal, which harbours the potential for an alternative way of relating to nature, women and animals.

As a way of thinking, nomadism is subversive, emancipatory and transgressive. Coexisting and interacting with 'royal' (State) science, and resisting the separation of subject from object, form from content (369), it conceives of physics, for instance, in terms of flows, flux and

heterogeneity as opposed to identity and stability. Nomad thought is contributed to by writers, filmmakers and painters, inasmuch as they depart from beaten paths and shun representational conventions. *A Thousand Plateaus* is itself an exercise in the nomadic organisation of material, developing associative "lines of flight" rather than reasoned arguments. Each chapter is a plateau or sphere of deterritorialisation and destratification, breaking down thought barriers and opening up new perspectives.

The nomad is the deterritorialised subject par excellence. He stops to rest, eat and let his animals graze, or to do business with the local population, but every point on his trajectory is only a relay station, and his life consists of a series of *intermezzi*. For Deleuze and Guattari, the essence of nomadism lies in a different way of inhabiting space. They distinguish the *polis*, or enclosed space subject to the laws of the city state, from the *noumos*. The latter is open pasture land outside the city, which is traditionally allocated to individual families on an *ad hoc* basis for grazing. *Noumos*, which exemplifies custom and common sense as alternatives to formally codified legislation, is the origin of the word nomad. The space of the *polis* is described by Deleuze as sedentary, and striated (i.e. gridded, enclosed by boundaries and intersected by roads). It thus corresponds to the formally codified laws of the State and the abstract, reasoned discourse of *logos*, as opposed to the 'smooth', undivided space of the *noumos*, which is associated with customary rules and approximate forms of knowledge.

The form of inhabitation of the nomad is a dwelling while moving: "Even the elements of his dwelling are conceived in terms of the trajectory that is forever mobilising them." The nomad follows herds of animals, or in the case of itinerant artisans, moves in search of the raw materials he needs (e.g. wood or clay). He is at home *en route*, in a form of dwelling reflected in his being seated (e.g. on the camel's back) while moving, and in his arranging himself in open space as opposed to entrenching himself in a closed one: "The nomad distributes himself in a smooth space; he occupies, inhabits, holds that space" (381). The smooth space of the nomad (desert, steppe or ocean) is "localised and not delimited" (382). It is a space constantly changing, a haptic one, less visual than aural and tactile. Nomads therefore orientate themselves by observing wind, undulations of sand in the desert, of snow in the tundra, and currents, colours and temperatures in the water.

From Exile to Nomad: Rosi Braidotti

Rosi Braidotti's book, *Nomadic Subjects* is primarily concerned with a specifically feminist redefinition of subjectivity, but her study also has broader implications for ecocriticism. Most of her ideas apply to both sexes equally, and the nomad serves as a paradigm of the postmodern subject, providing a concrete focus for reflection on issues of class, race, ethnicity, gender, age and political agency. Though inspired by the experience of peoples who lead literally nomadic lives, nomadism stands in her thinking, as in that of her mentor Deleuze, for a critical consciousness which resists settling into socially coded modes of thought and behaviour. While acknowledging the problematic link between nomadism and acts of destruction and brutality, sacking, looting and killing (Braidotti 26), she suggests nomadic violence should be read as a response to State force, a toughness imposed by circumstances. Braidotti advocates a new positionality, a practice of strategic relocation in order to rescue what we need of the past and trace paths of transformation for the future.

An important distinction between the exile, nomad and migrant is to be found in Braidotti's introduction, 'By Way of Nomadism' (1-39). Exiles, she writes, are typically driven abroad by politics. They are often educated middle-class citizens. Migrants, who are usually from the class of the economically disadvantaged, also travel from one place to another for a clear purpose (22). The nomad by contrast is not homeless or compulsorily displaced, but "a figuration for the kind of subject who has relinquished all idea, desire, or nostalgia for fixity" (ibid.). The nomad is the prototype of the man or woman of ideas, habitually crossing boundaries regardless of destination. He or she resembles the rhizome as a root that grows underground and sideways, in a secret and lateral spreading. The life of nomads is not usually entirely devoid of structure, pattern, cohesion, and unity. They may not follow fixed routes, but are often guided by seasonal patterns of movement, and rhythmical displacement. Born in Italy, raised in Australia, educated in Paris, and working in the Netherlands since 1988, Braidotti describes herself as a migrant who has turned nomad (1).

The defining characteristic of the nomadic subject is being "in transit yet sufficiently anchored to a historical position to accept responsibility and therefore make [themselves] accountable for it" (10). This involves a conscious choice "to inhabit [the] historical contradictions and to experience them as an imperative political need to turn them into spaces of critical resistance to hegemonic identities of all kind" (ibid.).

Braidotti's book is itself a paradigm of such nomadism: parts of it were first conceptualised and formulated in French, then translated into English. However, in the process of translation the manuscript was extensively rewritten, so it effectively has no mother tongue original, but is the product of a succession of translations, displacements and adaptations. By nature polyglot and a specialist in the treacherous nature of language (8), the nomad acquires a healthy skepticism towards fixed identities and mother tongues. Being in between languages allows us to destabilize established forms of consciousness and deconstruct identity, and to recognise language as a "tenuous and yet workable web of mediated misunderstandings" (13).

As an "intellectual style," nomadism is then a privileged state between languages, places and texts, consisting "not so much in being homeless, as in being capable of recreating your home everywhere" (16). The nomadic writer constantly takes their bearings, makes mental maps, contextualises utterances, and exhibits a special interest in places of transient, partial belonging such as buses, stations, and airport lounges as "oases of nonbelonging, spaces of detachment. No-(wo)man's lands" (18f.). These open public spaces of transition are microcosms of contemporary society, and can even be privileged sites of creation for contemporary artists. Anonymous and clinically void, yet loaded with signification, they can become venues of inspiration and insight.

The exile, migrant and nomad correspond to different styles, genres and relationships to time (24f.). The *exilic* mode is one of an acute sense of foreignness and hostility in the host country. Loss and separation prompt a flow of reminiscence, and future perfect tenses are commonly employed anticipating return. *Migrants* inhabit an in-between state in which narratives of origin have a destabilising effect on the present. In their writing, which presents "a suspended, often impossible present," the past perfect (pluperfect) reflects nostalgia and blocked horizons (24). *Nomadic* consciousness resists assimilation into culturally dominant ways of representing the self, in a "rebellion of subjugated knowledges." Its preferred tense is the imperfect, suggesting activity and continuity (25).

An explicit link with environmental thinking is present where Braidotti writes of the need to oppose the philosophical canon with its humanistic tradition and linear thinking by means of a "passionate form of post-humanism, based on feminist nomadic ethics" (29). "The nomad's relationship to the earth is one of transitory attachment and cyclical frequentation; the antithesis of the farmer, the nomad gathers, reaps, and exchanges but does not exploit," she writes (25).

How then do writers reflect this new understanding of our relationship with place, what images and narratives do they provide as concrete equivalents of the theorists' abstract conceptions? For that matter, what role have they played in the past in imagining identities involving alternative relationships with place – relationships promoting identification with and care for the natural environment, while conceiving of place as a basis for *solidarities* (to use Massey's term), rather than *differences* between individuals and peoples?

One way of approaching these questions would be to look for examples among the writings of first and second generation immigrants, in whose work hybrid identities and multiple national and cultural allegiances play a prominent role. The central theme of Emine Sevgi Özdamar's autobiographical novel, *Life Is a Caravanserai* (1992) is making oneself at home in different places. Elizabeth Boa has pointed out that Özdamar's image of the caravanserai, or inn courtyard where caravans of travellers settle temporarily, evokes the idea of nomadism. She has examined the novel as a contribution to post-Heimat reflection "on the embodied subject who (still) inhabits places, however sequentially" (Boa and Palfreyman 205). Sketching "an ideal of identity continuing through time and from place to place," Özdamar evokes "a sustaining base of selfhood in communal networks or connections, but also the capacity to move on and deal with change, and not to be simply submerged in communalism, in other words a mobile sense of Heimat" (207).[5] The book is, however, untypical of German migrant literature in that it focuses on a childhood and youth spent moving around different parts of Turkey, rather than describing emigration to Germany.

I have chosen to illustrate literary nomadism with reference to a poet. Poetry is for Heidegger both a model for human production and the prime medium through which we explore our connection with and dislocation from the earth. Its crucial function is to enable us to *dwell* on the earth (Heidegger 218). Nature poetry, a key site of traditional representations of place, is commonly regarded as a bastion of opposition to modernity, and has frequently been a vehicle for escape from it. Yet

[5] Adalgisa Giorgio, to whom I am indebted for drawing my attention to Rosi Braidotti, has shown that the Neapolitan novelist Fabriza Ramondino is another writer who depicts journeys which constantly construct and undo the boundaries of place and self as a result of confrontation with new others. Her protagonists find in space and the act of writing which recreates places anchors which hold life together – see 'From Naples to Europe.'

precisely here, I would argue, there is a 'minor' literature worthy of attention. The themes of vagabondage, migration, exile have long been recognised as central ones in the work of the Austrian Theodor Kramer, who write from the 1920s to the mid 1950s, but his prefiguration of nomadism has not so far attracted the wider attention it deserves.

The 'Jewish' nomad in the vagabond poetry of Theodor Kramer

Son of a Jewish country doctor, Kramer was an unusual figure in the Austrian literary scene of the 1920s. While writing in the tradition of Heimat poetry, and expressing deep emotional attachment to his homeland, he identified above all with those on the margins of society, wandering figures passing through landscapes to which they had no claim of ownership. He combined, in his person and his work, what was called at the time native German *Bodenständigkeit* (rootedness in the soil) with Jewish ethnic otherness and rootlessness (see Strigl 13-47). In Germany and Austria between the World Wars, 'Jewishness' was not merely a question of race, but a signifier in the conservative press for a chain of negatives associated with rootlessness and unsettledness of character, ranging from decadence to Bolshevism. Restlessness, fickleness and baseness were linked with homelessness in the figure of Ahasver, the wandering Jew. In medieval legend, Ahasver taunted Jesus on the way to his crucifixion and was condemned to walk the earth without rest until the Second Coming. (There is a parallel here with popular stories of Cain as having been punished for his brother Abel's murder by having to wander the earth, never stopping long enough to reap a harvest he had sown.)

A literary genre particularly associated with 'Jewishness' was the vagabond poetry and song which flourished in Germany in the early years of the twentieth century, partly inspired by new translations of the early modern verse of François Villon. The unsettled form of existence depicted in the texts of Hugo Sonnenschein, Jakob Haringer and the early Bertolt Brecht, which was offensive to right-wing cultural commentators, is reflected in many of Theodor Kramer's poems from the twenties and thirties. In 1926, he published a volume entitled *Die Gaunerzinke* (The Gypsy's Mark). The poem from which the title of the volume derives describes a Gypsy, traveller or tramp (Kramer does not distinguish between these) leaving a secret mark at the gate of a farm whose owners have treated him badly. Later travellers will know what reception to expect. The tramp fantasises they will take vengeance and burn down the

farmhouse. Kramer is principally remembered today for his verses depicting the lives of simple people with unaccustomed realism, giving voice to their worries and longings. Anarchic vagabond songs only make up a small part of his poetry. However, many poems are written in the personas of travelling tradesmen and apprentices, seasonal labourers, the urban unemployed, tramps, peddlers and ex-convicts. Though these socially marginalised figures are driven by necessity, they nonetheless embody an element of utopian freedom as rebellious outsiders.[6]

Kramer's poems about travellers and the homeless reflected social reality, especially after the Wall Street Crash, when unemployment in the German Reich rose to 5 million and some 300 000 people are estimated to have been homeless. However, they also drew on traditions of artistic Bohemianism, and celebrated personal freedom, authenticity and a natural way of life. What is important to us is that Kramer lays claim to a special relationship with the land and with poetry on behalf of the brotherhood of travellers and tramps:

> We are an ancient race, chased by dogs,
> Lying, thieving, lazy, driven by hunger,
> Yet many a song's from the lips of the vagabond,
> Bright with grace and dark as the soil it springs from.[7]

One reason why Kramer felt this empathy with vagabonds and migrant workers is that he was a keen walker, who gained self-awareness and a sense of emotional ownership of the country from long hikes in the hilly countryside South-West of Vienna, and the more prosperous farming country to the North where he was born. The hiker is presented as superior to the sedentary farmer:

The hills and fields are made for us
and not for them; in his cramped space
the farmer sits, but we're not bound:
we roam with pack and stick across the land.[8]

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[6] See Strigl, Chapters 5 (especially 95-115) and 6 (especially 186-95).

[7] "Wir sind ein alt Geschlecht, verbellt von Hunden,/ Verlogen, diebisch, zuchtlos, hungertoll,/ Und stammt doch manches Lied von Vagabunden,/ Der Gnade hell und dunkler Erde voll." (Kramer 1: 48)

[8] "Für uns geschaffen sind Gefild und Hänge/ und nicht für sie; es sitzt in seiner Enge/ der Bauer selbst, uns aber hält kein Band:/ wir ziehn mit Stock und Rucksack über Land." (2: 349)

Though Kramer wrote poems celebrating farmers as custodians of the land, the landscape of his poems belongs as much to those of no fixed abode as it does to its longstanding owners: in 'Vagabund' (1: 47) those who manure and plough, protect and maintain the land and those who merely cross it restlessly are described as sharing a common love of the country. The farmland, which is described as open to the winds which sweep across the field boundaries, retains an element of unapproachable strangeness, autonomy and otherness. Nature's ability to resist and undo human work, erasing human traces, prevents the landscape from ever being fully domesticated, settled or taken possession of. Kramer's wide open landscapes are typically described in terms of geology and the changing seasons, conjuring up the image of a world before man (see Strigl 67-72). They are in Deleuze's terms smooth space, permitting an equal belonging for those who traverse them without owning them.

Kramer's Jewish background and leftist political inclinations thus led him to develop an important alternative to the blood and soil understanding of place-belonging of many of his contemporaries, including in his verses urban as well as rural migrants, and the *demi-monde* of seasonal workers, tramps and prostitutes alongside respectable farming folk. In the poems from the 1920s and 1930s, the leaning towards nomadism and celebration of independent, unvarnished, this-worldly existence predominate. After he was forced into British exile in 1939, the balance shifted towards the rooted and settled, in countless poems conjuring up the lost Heimat from memory. At the same time, distance from the physical experiences which had informed his early work is reflected in abstraction, and an extension of his bond with the Austrian provinces he knew so intimately to a more conventional love of the country as a whole. It was to be left to younger poets such as Johannes Bobrowski and Michael Hamburger to achieve the transition from exile to nomad outlined by Braidotti. Developing Kramer's conception of mobile, non-proprietory inhabitation in new ways, these writers were to contribute to the poetic representation of nomadism by incorporating recognition of the transience of our place-belonging and the need to share place with others, and by demonstrating how reimplacement is possible, even after traumatic loss of place in exile, by walking the "ownerless earth."[9]

[9] See Goodbody, *Nature, Technology and Cultural Change* 59-67 (on Bobrowski), and Goodbody, "Ownerless Earth" (on Hamburger).

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