The cipher of smooth space

Etienne Turpin
University of Wollongong, eturpin@uow.edu.au

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The cipher of smooth space

Abstract
Etienne/Steven Turpin, via Israeli architect and theorist Eyal Weizman's essay The Art of War', contend the impossibility of an inherently 'progressive,' 'radical,' or 'emancipatory' philosophy; and, drawing on Deleuze, re-considers the images of thought, resistance and adaptation which condition our collective political imagination and potential for political struggle. (1) the impossibility of an inherently 'progressive,' 'radical,' or 'emancipatory' philosophy; and, (2) the adaptation and integration of non-hierarchical models of organisation by dominant powers (primarily the State and corporate firms) as means of furthering their powers of control. The former concern highlights the importance of embracing a pragmatic opportunism as a practice of resistance in order to further develop strategic potentials for intervention within a specific context; the latter concern provokes a discussion of philosophy, the event, and its unfolding in relation to militarism and occupation. Both concerns return us to Deleuze and Guattari's cautious remarks at the end of A Thousand Plateaus - "Never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us" (500) - and beckon us to re-consider the images of thought, resistance and adaptation which condition our collective political imagination and the potentials for political struggle.

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Israel architect and theorist Eyal Weizman’s essay “The Art of War” outlines the emergent danger of the Israel Defence Forces’ (IDF) adaptation of contemporary philosophical theory as a basis for a dangerous new practice of warfare. Despite the extensive discussion provoked by Weizman’s article, the significance of his analysis remains somewhat obscure. In this paper I explain, following Weizman, how theoretical frameworks (primarily those of Guy Debord and the Situationist International, Baudrillard and Deleuze) have been taken up within the traditionally hierarchical organization of the IDF. That is, by adopting a temporary structure of collective behaviour and itinerant deployment, the IDF has managed to create a space for its own radical mutation and thus creating a deadly new method of counter-insurgency. Expanding on Weizman’s analysis, my aim is to consider the IDF’s military operational theory as provoking two additional considerations which carry important political consequences:

1. the impossibility of an inherently ‘progressive,’ ‘radical,’ or ‘emancipatory’ philosophy; and,
2. the adaptation and integration of non-hierarchical models of organisation by dominant powers (primarily the State and corporate firms) as means of furthering their powers of control.

The former concern highlights the importance of embracing a pragmatic opportunism as a practice of resistance in order to further develop strategic potentials for intervention within a specific context; the latter concern provokes a discussion of philosophy, the event, and its unfolding in relation to militarism and occupation. Both concerns return us to Deleuze and Guattari’s cautious remarks at the end of A Thousand Plateaus – “Never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us” (500) – and beckon us to re-consider the images of thought, resistance and adaptation which condition our collective political imagination and the potentials for political struggle.

Etienne/Stephan Turpin, University of East London, U.K.