

# ANT

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It's some dry laws of doing that dictate the pitter and patter of our getting by. Dragging then to now, we bring the day on, six-legged and strong, yet remain at least inconspicuous. Running old roads and breaking new, sniffing and pulling and tugging at everything on our way; nothing we drag up in our time could possibly overwhelm or disappoint us. But what is truly our due, our belonging, our place? We would not quibble over it, would not dream to be some place else in our breathlessness.

'Farm', of course, is the standard term given to this sort of place although it's not the word we ever use. In fact we have no one common or generally acknowledged expression by which we refer to it. You might even say that in our rush to get on, we never talk about our 'habitat' or our 'territory' in the strictest sense. But only if you're not really paying close attention. I guess you'd have to be looking out for a whole jogging on of verbal effects and references. More than that – our actual bodily movements would have to be observed

and noted: the way we nod our heads at certain times, point a feeler here or there, rub an arm across our brow. On the other hand, although you could with such an interpretative approach, arguably construct a case that we were always nosing around the same object without actually naming or explicitly indicating it, you'd still be unable to specify what exactly we *mean* by that nosed-thing and what it means to us.

Here we are none-the-nosed-less. For most of us, the reasons why, and mode of how, we got to be here, and the political consequences of current arrangements for the future settlement of our sort, are of negligible daily value. Our lives in general are characterised by an impulse of conscientious sobriety: no milk and honey fantasies for the future, no heady claims to prodigious genealogy having stage-managed our

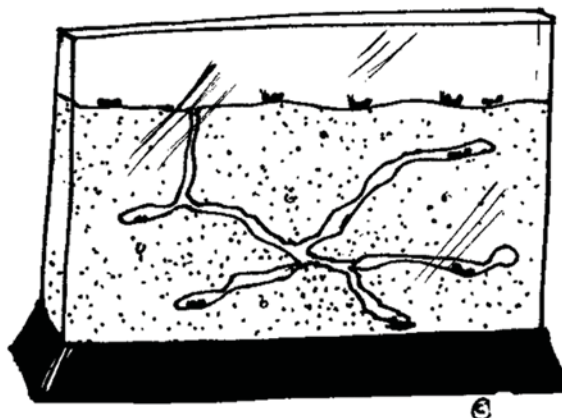
history. 'Here' as the song says, 'am I sitting in a tin can.' Except *here*, we are in some sort of glass box. And we never just sit in it. There are apparent limits, I mean to say, to every form of social organisation; it's just that the order and regularity with which we customarily go about our business might make our society seem to be organised in an especially explicit, transparent, formal, and legalistic way.

So the 'here', whatever it be, although it may have actual material boundaries, is fundamentally defined for us by how we occupy and exploit it, and not by any territorial or physical within or beyond. That may seem a sniff arrogant, or even a feeler too far into the hubristic: that the value

of the gift-horse depends entirely on our own jockeying skills. But what if the gift – whatever it is – were intended as no prize, and had been sent rather as a trial? How could one know? And by lying low on this given turf, by humbling our brows, and prostrating ourselves before a putative and hoped for bounty, what

could be achieved? At worst, social collapse. And as for the best – well who knows what is best, except that it's best to keep manoeuvring for the better.

So you see, it's not necessarily the case that we operate under a taboo as regards 'here' and what it actually is. We're just working, and what after all, would be gained by assigning one name to a condition whose truth is for us ubiquitous and perpetual, but in the same unbounded time suffers no agreed and firm understanding and offers a different set of meanings at every bat of an eyelid and turn of thought? If some people can't live without such naming, then their tongue must be a burden to them. How can they breathe under the weight of some words? Either they are so stony, callous and dumb to their world that a bullish sense of the importance of



their own sentence will never be crushed, or, and even worse, they are just criminals, forever blagging anything that comes their way, and flogging it off cheap at the chatter-market. And that, in general, is our attitude to the definitive and settled designation of how things are.

But utterance of such statements does tend to leave the feelers twitching. There are thousands of us here, can we all be leaning with the same dry weight of opinion? That collective disposition of our anthood also – just as much as a general prostration before the putative prize – sounds like a prescription for social collapse. Yet what matters to us, is that we dispose of our physical weight (our each and every individual weights, which must in the great scheme of existence be considered – with our armoured three-part torsos, our six legs, and our ovoid heads – to be precisely ‘the same’ for each unit) in permanent activity. Through this work, an infinite probing of possible points and angles carried out with variable force and velocity, our very bodies ensure that the paradox of a definitive lack of definitiveness does not arise – or at any rate does not hinder us. I’m scurrying along behind my fellows, every step I take with or against them contributes towards our endless elaboration of this given space.

So are we afraid of attempting to make conclusive statements about our situation ‘here’, as it were? The truth is that it doesn’t matter what we think our ultimate mental attitude to be, or how we verbalise it. – the sheer exhaustlessness of materials and forms we dig up makes of our situation a veritable no-place: our bodies continually launch us into every which corner of nowhere. We shake our heads at it. But truly, the only thing we can say without either fear of contradiction or expectation of a sufficient answer is ‘what?’. Can it be a last word? What? Our only word, what?

