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Non-Place

Representing Placelessness in Literature, Media and Culture

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CONTENTS

THE ABSENCE OF PLACE AND TIME: NON-PLACE AND PLACELESSNESS

*Mirjam Gebauer, Helle Thorsøe Nielsen, Jan T. Schlosser
& Bent Sørensen*

In the opening chapter of his book *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (1995), Marc Augé pictures the experience of smooth contemporary travel, using the example of a French businessman. He describes common operations such as drawing money from a cash machine, driving a car on the motorway and checking in to a flight. None of what is depicted will surprise readers. On the contrary, they will recognize these actions as integrated parts of the practices of daily life around the world. Still, to Augé what comprises the experience of the 'non-place' is exactly this uniform practice of following predetermined procedures, often communicating with a counterpart which is a machine or a person wearing a uniform and fulfilling a job function – rather than communicating with persons who are perceived as unique fellow human beings. Thus, by non-places he means places which facilitate significant aspects of modern life, but do not allow for their user to satisfy important human needs. In this way, a highway is a highly functional place of transit built to facilitate smooth movement. At this location, human beings are supposed to coexist side by side without interacting. Every user of the highway is pursuing his or her respective destination, whereby avoiding making contact with each other guarantees the effectiveness of the place. Normally, social contact at this place occurs mostly involuntarily, for instance as a result of a crash. This

example can to a certain extent be transferred to human behaviour at other transit places such as the train or airport where the respective contact between passengers might be perceived as almost as unwanted as a rear-end collision accident. At least, it would break the conventional code of behaviour at these places, according to which we are supposed to aspire to our respective goals without interacting more than absolutely necessary with each other.

Although it has been claimed that the notion of the non-place, as it was put forth and framed by Augé, embodies the view of a melancholic modernism, it quickly became arguably one of the most influential concepts in the debate of place and space in supermodernity. Also, over the last two decades, non-places and phenomena related to them have only proliferated as for instance the number of airlines and destinations, parking lots and gigantic shopping centres has significantly increased. The emergence and dissemination of new kinds of mediated places, such as cyberspace or other virtual realities has created new possibilities in the production of space and place and a new field to engage with and investigate in terms of the analysis of space and place. Nevertheless, the issues of non-placeness seem not to have been resolved by this. At best, it has added new dimensions to the issue, and in Augé's view it has even exacerbated the issue, as non-placeness now has penetrated the very heart of where the individual is rooted and builds its primary relations – the family home:

> Today, TVs and computers have taken the place of the fireplace in the center of the domicile. […] Also the individual has experienced a decentring of itself. It is equipped with instruments which bring him constantly in touch with the most distant outside world. (Augé 2010, 124, our translation)

This point still seems valid today, however it is only half the truth as mobile streaming devices and services have increased in numbers as well as gained huge terrain in terms of providing a serious sup-

plement and alternative to more traditional viewing and production practices; Netflix here being an obvious example. This in turn has consequences for humans' mediated relations to space and place and for their sense of near and far, homely and functional, place and non-place. As the distinction between places and non-places is blurring, the issue of non-placeness becomes unavoidable. In this way, Augé's concept of the non-place has not only shown its fruitfulness in the past, but has even gained more currency in the present. In a small way the present anthology is a symptom of just that.

When discussing Augé's definition of the non-place, one reservation that should be made is that the notion of the non-place does not exclusively revolve around concepts of spatiality and place. In fact, a non-place does not actually exist except through human interaction with it, and the sense of absence or shortcoming evoked by this type of place is not always originally caused by the features of certain places themselves, but rather by a discomfort in a certain way of life equally related to the human perception of time. Non-places and their existence as such are not the heart of the matter for those concerned with their negative influence on people's lives and feeling of self. The real issue is the proliferation of the non-places across the world and the attendant continuously increased amount of time people spend moving through and around in functional places of transit. An extreme example such as Jason Reitman's film *Up in the Air* (2009) shows how people who spend considerable amounts of time in airplanes, at airports and facilities related to travel experience non-places as such when meeting the difficulties in the attempt to manage private parts of their lives which are usually related to the home. In our accelerated modernity, many feel that life is increasingly unfolding in provisional circumstances and uncertainty. A demand of almost unlimited mobility and multitasking entails a fragmentation of life, uprootedness and anonymity. In this way, it might be argued that the melancholia provoked by high-functional transit places such as airports, highways and shopping malls may be ascribed to the fact that they have come to symbolize certain disconcerting developments and tendencies in a society directed to-

wards frictionless efficiency. In this obsession with speed and the steady acceleration of all kinds of processes, humans and their need of time to establish relations to place and their fellow human beings become unintended obstacles. They are getting in the way just like the human emotions local employers are trying to avoid in *Up in the Air* when hiring someone from the outside, the character of George Clooney, to come in and fire their employees. He does the job effectively, communicating in stereotypical phrases with people he has never seen before and never will see again afterwards.

For Augé, the crisis of space is related more directly to phenomena of placeness and their change in the course of globalization. While globalization, characterized as an economic term for the accelerated movement of goods and services, reinforces the ties between places on a global scale, it simultaneously erodes their status as local places and entails a standardization of space. As a consequence of this, many faceless places such as offices, terminals and supermarkets are produced all over the world. The result – a dislocation of the human being – was shown with brilliant wit in Jacques Tati's *Playtime* (1967), one of the earliest examples of the dramatized non-place in film. The film's protagonist moves through an area of high-functional places and buildings, but has serious trouble finding his way. Here the high-functional places turn into a labyrinth for the individual, because of the uniformity of the buildings and interiors and the delusive mirroring of many surfaces. Thus, we have a comical critique of the frictionless environment, as what is intended to facilitate smooth movement, in reality becomes the biggest obstacle for the individual. In addition, the contrast between the supermodern, faceless metropolis and the old city centre of Paris is foregrounded, symbolizing the loss of the historically grown and of cultural diversity and their displacement by the provisional and standardized.

In order to realize the ongoing relevance of Augé's approach and not to dismiss it too easily as a nostalgic or too singularly negative position, merely looking backwards towards regional rootedness and tradition, one has to see it in relation to the important de-

bates in social and cultural sciences in recent years. Clearly, on the one hand, the concept of the non-place seems to find its antonym in the discussions of the last decades of cultural hybridity and migration where different kinds of mobility are highlighted as a potential of freedom and emancipation. On the other hand, in recent debates of climate change, sustainability and the concept of de-growth, the cultural critical perspective inherently in the concept of the non-place can be said to have gained renewed actuality. This anthology predominantly places itself along the cultural critical line drawn by Augé, though it also contains articles that take a more neutral or even positive position in regard to the non-place phenomenon and its representations in art and culture. Primarily this material points to different kinds of creative counter-strategies. Films such as Steven Spielberg's *The Terminal* (2004) make their central point in showing how transit places might be used in other than merely functional ways. In other art forms, the loss of distinctive features of the non-place becomes a field of potentiality and the possibility for new beginnings. For example, for the music label Nonplace Records it stands for the creation of new, as yet undiscovered soundscapes. Also physical non-places such as metro stations, motorway service areas, waiting rooms have become places of creative productivity enabling new forms of identification.

AUGÉ'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE NON-PLACE

The first to use the notion of the 'non-place' was the urban planner Melvin M. Webber in his 1964 paper "The Urban Place and the Non-Place Urban Realm" in which he proposed that modern cities were best understood as clusters of settlements, or communities where physical propinquity is not the leading principle anymore, but instead the principle of accessibility. With this he was taking into account that present day communities on different levels of society are linked together through transterritorial networks. Augé's use of the term is indebted to Webber, but it extends the use of the term urban planning and beyond cityscapes. While for Webber the 'non-place

realm' is a neutral notion indicating the mere dissolving from place-ness, for Augé, the ideal seems to be the place-based community. Most of Augé's non-places are in fact transitional places which facilitate the accessibility to all the places and social functions, which in the traditional organization of the city are situated close to each other. In the modern and supermodern society, these functions are increasingly fragmented in space and time, and, in this perspective, many of Augé's non-places might be regarded as a kind of fill-ins between real places. As the individual spends more and more time at these kinds of pseudo-places, its identity is scattered between places and in this way dislocated. As such with his concept of 'non-place' Augé not only points to a proliferation of a specific kind of functional places and a specific way of life related to this process, but inherently makes the case, that this proliferation is bringing about what with a popular concept could be termed a new 'structure of feeling'. This structure of feeling is characterised by inherent dislocation of the individual from time and place – as humans have traditionally known and understood these – and a general notion of uneasiness, rootlessness, and otherness following the sense of dislocation.

In his own formal definition Augé identifies the non-place as the inverse of the "anthropological place", a place which "can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity". The non-place lacks these features, as it is "a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity" (Augé 1995, 77f.). While this sounds like a straightforward binary opposition, Augé in fact complicates the dialectic between his two types of sites, as already signalled by the mentioning of the word "historical" which indicates that temporal relations and developments must be incorporated in the distinction: "Place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased; the second never totally completed; they are like palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relation is ceaselessly rewritten" (Augé 1995, 79). This means that, given enough time, the individual tends to mould the non-place into a place. But this only seems to apply for time spent at the same place. Any movement tends to form

the place into space, which for Augé functions as a kind of synonym for the non-place. This concept is based on the distinction between place and space by Michel de Certeau, for whom "space" is a "frequented place" (Augé 1995, 79). Through movement places become passages, creating non-places: "To walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of an appropriation". De Certeau describes this famously by example of a walk through the city whereby he considers "the city itself an immense social experience of lacking a place" and "a universe of rented spaces haunted by a nowhere or by dreamed-of places" (de Certeau 1984, 103). De Certeau's characterization of the city as a specific new type of place or, as one might put it, displaced place, does not seem far from Webber's "non-place urban realm". Still, it seems noteworthy that this definition of place and space departs from and virtually reverses that of place theorists such as Tim Cresswell, who along with most phenomenological thinkers about place, valorizes human agency in the creation of place, and in fact defines place as space encountered and transformed by human perceptions, knowledge and memories of its (initially potential, subsequently realized) use and function. Other cultural geographers such as Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph agree with Cresswell that 'sense of place' is a required ingredient to make place meaningful for humans. Echoing old notions of *genius loci*, Relph argues that human emotions attach themselves to places through the interaction between humans and spaces, in what can be regarded as an investment of labour and subsequently a narrative of sense, infused by humans into place. As also Anne Marie Mai and Dan Ringgaard note, Michel de Certeau's use of the word 'space' is quite close to the meaning of what is more prevalently called 'place', whereas de Certeau reserves the word 'place' for what is usually simply called location or locality (see Mai & Ringgaard 2010, 19-20).

DIFFERENT TYPES OF PLACELESS PLACES

The notion of the non-place forms the conceptual center of this anthology. In addition, other more or less familiar forms of placeless-

ness are being investigated. The term was famously used in 1976 by Relph in his book *Place and Placelessness*. He diagnoses the loss of identity of distinctive and authentic places and their substitution by standardized, anonymous and exchangeable landscapes, spaces and environments (see Relph 1976, 143). Nevertheless Mahyar Arefi has claimed, the "loss of meaning" which is implied by this notion of placelessness "not only indicates a major paradigm shift in urban form but also reflects how people's perception of attachment to place has transformed over time" (Arefi 1999, 183). Tim Edensor argues explicitly against the rather one-sided understanding of non-places put forward by Augé: "[D]aily travellers on the Santiago Metro impose their own rhythms of sociability, reverie, relaxation, and independence inside the carriages, within a familiar spatial context enclosing fellow travellers, fixtures and signs". Thus, a state of: "embodied, material and sociable 'dwelling-in-motion' emerges […] as place is experienced as the predictable passing of familiar fixtures under the same and different conditions of travel […]" (Edensor 2010, 6).

With reference to Tim Cresswell (2004, 31) Edensor notes that: "This stretched out, mobile belonging diverges from accounts that suggest that 'places marked by an abundance of mobility become *placeless* […] realms of detachment'" (Edensor 2010, 6). With Edensor we too are questioning simplified definitions of various kinds of placelessness. In the context of this book the notion of placelessness is furthermore understood openly as different kinds of absence of placeness which is dealt with in (mostly) aesthetical negotiations. These absences might concern the physical form of the place (the locale), the location or the sense of place, which according to Tim Cresswell are the three dimensions of the place (Cresswell 2004).

The broadening of the concept of the non-place with a more general sense of placelessness takes into consideration that the notion of the non-place, sometimes confusingly, has been used differently, either for highly functional transit places or, for instance in urban design and photography, for almost the opposite, namely places which have lost their function, for instance urban fallow land

without aesthetical value. In this anthology, one could roughly distinguish between the following specific types of placeless places: 'transitional places', 'restricted places' (such as gated communities), 'lost places' (forgotten, abandoned or in some other way marginalized places), 'mediated places' and 'imaginary places'.

Transitional places in this context are highly functional places, which are standardized and not meant for housing or only for temporary housing. Their supply, maintenance and function are often of high importance, in some cases even militarily guaranteed. These places have no historical identity. Signs, brands and architecture are supposed to give them face and identity and are necessary for the user to find their way through this kind of place. These non-places have come to represent the acceleration and fragmentation of life, and their representations in films are used to question the possibility of social interaction in our globalized supermodernity (see for instance *Lost in Translation* (2003)).

Restricted places such as gated communities, prisons and concentration camps share some characteristics with some transitional non-places and other functional places such as airports, trains and hotels where users have to confirm their identity and access is limited. To discuss the meaning of restricted places, Michel Foucault's notion of heterotopia, bringing specifically attention to deviation and processes of exclusion and standardization in modernity, seems most appropriate. The notion of heterotopia implies that the 'other', which also might be persons in situations of crisis or transformation, is being allocated at specific restricted places reducing diversity in 'normal' places. Augé himself seems to see some kind of relation between heterotopia and the non-place when he gives a catalogue of places including both classical non-places and classical Foucaultian heterotopian places, speaking of our society as a "world where people are born in the clinic and die in hospital, where transit points and temporary abodes are proliferating" (Augé 1995, 78). Sometimes the heterotopia is as temporary as the transitional non-place.

The notion of the non-place is furthermore often related to what one could call 'lost places'. This is a version of placelessness

that seems to be particularly addressed in the field of photography, as for example in the exhibition *Lost Places – Orte der Photographie* held at Hamburger Kunsthalle in 2012, which displays the term explicitly in its title, and in the world touring exhibition *Places, strange and quiet* by Wim Wenders (latest in CpH, 2014). It makes sense to subdivide lost places into forgotten and abandoned places. Those marginalized places have gained the interest of photographers as well as artists and film makers in recent decades.

As forgotten places one might regard some provincial and suburban areas. These areas are characterized by a limited supply of goods, services and activities, including cultural events. Regarded as the periphery, or at best, points of passage between the urban centers of supermodernity, these spaces and their inhabitants struggle for the recognition of their small places as places in their own right. In these places, often an abundance of space, time and social relations is to be found, but there is a sense of the overall insignificance of this kind of 'parallel societies'.

Other kinds of lost places are abandoned places, places which represent history and loss. These places once were relevant for the overall system, but succumbed in the struggle of dominion (for instance dead cities such as Detroit). Originally, some of these places were intended for temporary use only (for instance destroyed landscapes or factories), whereas others were abandoned because supply and maintenance have stopped at some point, and they are no longer regarded as part of the overall flow of goods. In this way they are skeletons or ghost places, but they have a certain historical identity which is interesting for artists. This artistic quality is clearly evident in the work of Wim Wenders (for instance in the films *Paris, Texas* (1984) and *Don't Come Knocking* (2005)).

Mediated places can also be perceived as non-places that human beings spend considerable time interacting with, for instance by watching films and TV, playing computer games or participating in virtual reality simulations. The setting of such media constructed scenarios often draws upon real non-places such as ruins, factories, ports, and other pieces of (often abandoned or dilapidated) infra-

structure. However, as soon as we touch upon mediated places, we find ourselves already in the realm of represented or notional place, rather than in physical, tangible space. A similar observation can be made with regards to the possibility of imagined (fantasized, dreamt or envisioned) places. These places can seem subjectively real to the dreamer, fantasist or visionary, who 'walks between worlds' and can be represented very successfully in literature, film or other texts and media, and this is indeed the only way in which they can be shared between human subjects. The imagination of non-places is indeed greatly aided by representations of such mediated sites, often pre-existing and almost archetypal or generic, although not mimetic of 'real' places.

PLACELESSNESS REPRESENTED AND REPRESENTING PLACELESSNESS

In this book, the fundamental methodological approach to the non-place concept as well as phenomenon is the analysis of textual representations. The anthology primarily consists of revised papers from the research seminar "Non-Place in Literature, Media and Culture" which was held at Aalborg University in May 2013 for members of the interdisciplinary research group IRGiC – The Interdisciplinary Research Group in Culture under the Department of Culture and Global Studies. As textual representations are central we challenged the participants of the research seminar which preceded the framing of the book, to consider a set of questions, created by the encounter between humanist scholars and a sociological/anthropological approach such as that of Augé. These questions included the following: To which degree do you think that non-placeness is relevant to analyses of representations of reality? In Augé's perspective, non-places are probably both real phenomena and their textual representations, but since all textual representations of place and non-place create at best 'mediated' realities, how can we employ the notion of 'real' non-places? Rob Shields articulates exactly this point:

> A clear distinction must be made between research into people's existential participation in their environment and research into the culturally mediated reception of representations of environments, places, or regions which are 'afloat in society' as 'ideas of currency'. (Shields 1991, 14)

Most scholars in the humanities will have a hard time navigating this field around representation or textuality vs. 'phenomenon' as the relation between the two in so many ways seems to be both plain simple and extremely intricate. It is clear that there is no easy way of answering the question of the nature of this ontological relationship and often one will hear the argument that we do not have any other avenue of access to reality than through textual representations of it. So how does this ultimately relate to the anthropological approach of Augé's book – starting as it does by reflecting on an experience of a motorway and an airport? Is non-place as reality a notion that humanist scholars can somehow make fruitful in their analysis, or is it just troublesome?

We also invited further inquiries into time and medium of the representations of non-place: To which degree is the phenomenon of the non-place specific to a certain period (does it belong to modernity or supermodernity, or possibly what is termed in other traditions, postmodernity)? Is the object of your analysis an example of a standard application of the notion of non-place, or do you expand the notion, for instance intending it to be used on earlier periods? Is the concept of non-place adaptable of all kinds of media representations? Are there specific problems related to the application of the notion of non-place to film, art, music, literature etc.?

The individual contributions each have a specific set of answers to these questions and they engage with the questions in different ways. Some leave their answers implicit, while others contribute to the on-going meta-discussion of Augé's work. Furthermore the articles engage with various kinds of texts and textual representations in regard to media, genre, time, topics etc. As such the anthology

consists of a number of highly diverse yet interlinked perspectives on and applications of the concept of non-place. It is our hope that this collection as a whole is a clear attest to the value of the concept of non-place for the analysis of literature, cultural and media texts.

ANTHOLOGY OVERVIEW AND INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS: CONNECTIONS AND DISCREPANCIES

In terms of the organization of the articles in this collection many principles were considered, such as organizing them according to the national context of the representations engaged with in the individual articles. However, as Augé and his concept of 'non-place' is a strong shared foundation and focal point in the contributions, we have organized this anthology into groupings determined by the nature of their specific engagement with and relation to Augé.

This has spawned the following thematic article clusters: 1) Theoretical considerations and engagement with the concept of non-place; 2) Performing non-place; 3) Actualizations, revisions and extensions of Augé; 4) Historical retrofitting of Augé to texts from older periods, which in some cases entails what could be called 'metaphorical' use of Augé. It goes without saying that this structure is by no means an expression of any absolute, finite borders between the clusters, nor is it an expression of any hierarchic logic. It is our hope that this structure will make connections and similarities between the individual articles' perspectives on Augé and the notion of placelessness clearer and, finally, that it creates a sense of wholeness to the anthology.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE CONCEPT OF NON-PLACE

Dan Ringgaard's article "The Newest Place is a BMW X3 in Lagos: Contemporary Notes on Marc Augé's Non-Lieux" is the first of three contributions with a specific theoretical engagement with Augé's concept of 'non-place'. Ringgaard takes as his departure the

fascination of the non-place expressed by Augé in 1992 examining two forms of this fascination in dialogue with Augé, drawing on examples from music, film and literature: the pleasurable non-friction of the transit experience and a fascination concerning the relation between the non-place and the name. He argues against Augé that the transit experience is connected to experiences of modernity and furthermore makes the claim that the term non-place needs to be criticized by alternative contemporary experiences of place, pointing specifically to two: the 'post human place', i.e. place as a biologically and technologically stratified space where the separation of body, consciousness and surroundings are weakened; secondly what has been called a "cosmogram", a global state of hybrid spatiality, an unending number of temporary, overlapping and heterogeneous localisations that stand in contrast to the functional non-place. Ringgaard discusses whether these two experiences of place actually do not correspond more with the present state of place than Augé's non-places. Ringgaard's main point is that as a mode of fascination non-place is a part of an aesthetics of non-resistance, but as a diagnosis of our present relation to place it has its shortcomings.

Aldo Legnaro, in his sociological take on non-places, likewise engages in critical dialogue with Augé in his article titled "In Search of Place-ness: Non-Places in Late Modernity". Legnaro as Augé, however, strictly concerns himself with non-place as 'real' phenomenon. He takes as his departure that non-places, as defined by Augé, are urban spaces lacking any identity, relation, and history whatsoever (although they have predecessors going back a century and a half). Legnaro challenges this notion with regard to identity and relation and argues that in this view, non-places do not lack placeness to the extent that Augé suggests, and that sometimes they are even, to some extent at least, interchangeable with places. Legnaro points to certain peculiarities of non-places: They are not allowed to grow old, and they are characterized by techniques of control and of governing, and therefore mirror an important aspect of liquid modernity and of present society.

Anthony W. Johnson in his article "No Place Like Home: Marc Augé and the Paradox of Transitivity" acknowledges the historical importance of Augé's work for critics from a wide range of domains but undertakes an investigation into the small print of his characterization of 'non-place' focusing on the relation to Popper's first, second, and third worlds and from a philological position on some of the semantic differences and collocations generated by the term 'non-lieu' in French rather than English. Johnson concludes this part of his article by pointing to an inherent contradiction within Augé's work, namely that "although it predicates itself on a binary opposition with what he conceives of as the relational, historical and identity-forming nature of traditional place, 'non-place' for Augé is simultaneously and paradoxically contiguous with that which it seems to deny". In the second part of the article Johnson sets out to make Augé´s conceptual apparatus more rigorous by suggesting – as one possible solution – that we might remediate non-place as a grammatical, philosophical, and mathematical manifestation of what he calls the paradox of transitivity: namely that, in discourse, "to transit non-place seems, paradoxically enough, to be spoken of as a non-transitive experience, while travelling through even the same space as a place is to open up one's affective (and transforming) relation to that which is being transited." Johnson suggests that the discourse of non-place appears to flag up what we could call an intransitive attitude to the space around us, while that of place is more transitive in orientation.

PERFORMING NON-PLACE
From these theoretical investigations and conceptual discussions we move on to five articles which in different manners build on, supplement and expand Augé's concept in the analysis of various texts and phenomena that could all be perceived as more or less classical performances of non-place.

We are beginning this section of performing non-place articles in the field of literature with Bent Sørensen's article "From Hell or

From Nowhere? Non-Places in Douglas Coupland's Novels". Sørensen sets out with the argument that Augé's terminology of non-places, especially when fused with the related Foucauldian notion of the heterotopia, generates a fertile way of discussing 'placeness', both in actual, experiential life and with regards to our representational or textualized encounters with place. Sørensen draws on bibliographical knowledge of the Canadian writer Douglas Coupland's life, pointing out that Coupland is nominally a Canadian author, though he was born overseas on a NATO base in what was then West Germany. He has spent considerable time in other countries including the US, Japan and various European locations. He is thus no stranger to a wide variety of both places and non-places. Pointing to the expression that nowadays everyone and everything seems to be either "from nowhere" or "from Hell" (used in Coupland's first novel *Generation X*), Sørensen makes the case that placeness is thus from the beginning a central concern in Coupland's writing. In the article Sørensen examines the literary topography of Coupland's story worlds in the two novels *Generation X* and *Hey Nostradamus!*, pointing out that the tension between presence and absence in this topography is palpable, and that these plots involve characters trying to cope with living in a world consisting nearly entirely of non-places. In such a 'Life After God' (the title of a short story collection by Douglas Coupland), strategies for replenishment of meaning and belonging can be hard to come by – yet every Coupland story offers up hope for such strategies succeeding.

Turning from literature to film, but also acknowledging the Foucauldian concept of heterotopia, the next article by Wolfram Nitsch, "From the Roundabout to the Carousel: Non-Places as Comic Playgrounds in the Cinema of Jacques Tati," addresses the iconic representation of non-place in especially *Playtime* from 1967. Nitsch points to the fact that Marc Augé's term 'non-places' is used in various disciplines and has been subjected to modifications by Augé himself and by critical readers. The concept has been clarified in terms of time, history and perspective: temporally, a distinction has been drawn between 'hot' and 'cold' places that merge by adding

or losing energy; historically, case studies examine places such as the Paris metro, which is undergoing accelerating transformation from a 'site of memory' to a 'non-place'; in terms of perspective, different impressions of the same transit space and different ways of using it are juxtaposed. He argues, that such modifications tend to occur when 'non-places' provide the settings for films. While this is often the case in recent French cinema, it was already apparent in the films of Jacques Tati, especially in the visionary *Playtime*. Nitsch's thesis is that in this film, unlike in Tati's *Mon Oncle* (1958), hyperbolically charged 'non-places' are no longer set in opposition to 'counter-sites', but are transformed into comic playgrounds. A striking example is the roundabout that appears at the end of the film: an exemplary urban transit space, it nevertheless acquires the characteristics of a carousel, and thus refers to the emergence of the film medium from the street performers' heterotopia.

The next article stays within the realm of film but addresses a more recent example of cinematic performance of non-place. In his article "Non-Representational Place: Nicolas Winding Refn's Drive" Steen Ledet Christiansen draws on the Deleuzean concept of 'any-space-whatever' alongside Marc Augé's concept of 'non-place' to show the way the film generates a particular sense of affective experience through its staging of cinematic space. Christiansen points out that *Drive* is dominated by transitory places such as motels, restaurants, and convenience stores that speak to a city under dissolution. One significant aspect in creating these anonymous non-places where no real social structures are in place, Christiansen argues, comes from the driving scenes of the film. The constant movement through the city gives us a feeling of anonymity and being swallowed up by a larger entity. These slow, meandering scenes stand in stark contrast to the scenes of intense violence which punctuate the narrative and help form what Gilles Deleuze refers to as any-space-whatever – where the cinematic image takes on expressive form. The article traces how space is not only extensive but also intensive – space as a felt relation. It is this felt relation that slowly deteriorates and collapses between Driver

and Irene, underscoring that non-place may also be where violence takes place.

A relation between violence and non-place is very much pertinent in the following article as well. In "Non-Places and Separated Worlds: Rodrigo Pla's film *La Zona*" Pablo R. Cristoffanini directly bridges the divide between the cultural phenomenon of 'gated communities' and the aesthetic cinematic representation of this phenomenon in Rodrigo Pla's *La Zona* (2007) in the narrative of which violence plays a significant role as both general condition and singular event. Cristoffanini treats gated communities as a specific kind of non-place by drawing on Augé and Zygmunt Bauman. The central argument in this article is that film is a major source of condensed knowledge about significant social and cultural issues in late modernity. The goal of the article is to gain knowledge about the proliferation of non-places as an important feature of supermodernity (Marc Augé) or liquid modernity (Zygmunt Bauman). Cristoffanini argues that gated communities can be studied as non-places as suggested by Augé, that is, as spaces whose identity cannot be defined by their relational character or by their history and which are indistinguishable from non-places elsewhere in the world. Bauman has developed and elaborated the content of non-places. In his terminology, non-places are one type of non-civic space. They are thoroughly controlled, clinically designed and predictable spaces which promote what Martin Buber has termed "mismeeting", because functionality dominates instead of sociability. As they are either hostile or have consumption as their main purpose, they encourage action rather than inter-action. What unites Augé and Bauman's understanding of non-places according to Christofanini is the use of space in the city in supermodernity or liquid modernity.

With the fifth and last article in this section we return from film to literature while also balancing on the line between a discussion of a real cultural phenomenon and the representations thereof. In "'Between us and Weimar lies Buchenwald' – Places in European Holocaust Literature" Ernst-Ullrich Pinkert addresses representations of

lived experiences in concentration camps during The Second World War. The article investigates some of the best-known concentration camp survivors to describe their experiences and sufferings in the camps, whether in documentary or fictionalized form: Imre Kertész, Elie Wiesel, Ruth Klüger, Jorge Semprún, Primo Levi and Jean Améry. Pinkert draws on elements from Augé as well as from Foucault in order to describe the concentration camp as a specific kind of place with certain characteristics from the non-place and the heterotopia. In these authors' works the concentration camps are not represented as 'non-places' in Augé's parlance, but have rather more in common with what he terms 'spaces'. Some of the characteristics of what Michel Foucault has termed 'heterotopias' are also applicable to the concentration camps described in the witness literature. But while for Foucault heterotopias are part of society, one cannot say this about the camps, since in this case the prisoners are not there to be disciplined and subsequently reintegrated, but rather to be annihilated sooner or later, Pinkert argues. Through the witness literature the camps are represented as places that are unique in the history of the world, and therefore resist an unambiguous characterization either through Augé's or Foucault's categories, the article concludes.

ACTUALIZATIONS, REVISIONS AND EXTENSIONS OF AUGÉ

From these relatively classical performing non-place contributions drawing on and often supplementing Augé with primarily Foucault (but also Deleuze and Bauman) we now move on to what we may still to some extent understand as performing non-places, but in a more actualized, revised and/or extended manner.

In the first article in this section "Non-Place and Anthropological Place: Representing the M25 with Special Reference to Margaret Thatcher, Gimpo, and Iain Sinclair" Jens Kirk takes his point of departure in Augé's distinction between anthropological places and non-places. The article discusses representations of London's Or-

bital Motorway (M25) by Margaret Thatcher, Gimpo, and Iain Sinclair. Kirk shows how they agree, though in very different ways, in reconstituting the concrete reality of this non-place of transition as a meaningful anthropological place. The three examples discussed suggest that non-places not only subject the individual to their principle of solitary contractuality; they also unleash the possibility of interpretations that are relatively free of constraints. Hereby Kirk makes the case for a subtle revision of the Augéan dichotomy between non-place and anthropological place, both in terms of problematizing their tendency to have boundaries and their function, by allowing for intentional artistic intervention.

From the M25 of Great Britain we move on to a Norwegian Motorway – and the landscape just next to it. In "The Monstrosity of Non-Places: *Troll Hunter*" Jørgen Riber Christensen examines the role of locations in the Norwegian film *Trolljegeren* (2010). The article's hypothesis is that it is the particular construction of the meeting ground between human activity and nature with its folkloristic connotations that produces the monstrous and horrific in the film. Through a quantitative analysis of the film's locations these locations are measured against Augé's concept of non-places in order to seek to establish a connection between them, the monstrous, and the film as cultural critique and social satire of contemporary Norwegian society and culture. The quantitative content analysis of the film's locations has the result that Augé's non-places and his anthropological places must be supplemented with places that are characterized by Edmund Burke's concept of 'the sublime'. In addition to the supplementation of Augé with Burke the article is of methodological interest as it demonstrates a coherent movement from quantitative content analysis to cultural analysis.

Similarly to the first article in this section the next article "Provincial Non-Places in Moritz von Uslar's Pop Reportage Novel *Deutschboden*" by Mirjam Gebauer also ultimately questions the dichotomy between non-place and anthropological place – specifically in terms of Augé's fundamental valorization of the terms, and like the previous article, however in a more explicit manner, it orients

itself toward the meeting of urban non-places with what is allegedly a specific kind of anthropological place – namely the provincial place. Marc Augé's concept of the non-place is seen against the background of the urban vs. provincial divide by example of Moritz von Uslar's pop reportage novel *Deutschboden. Eine teilnehmende Beobachtung* ["German Soil. A Participatory Observation"]. In the analysis, it is shown that a dichotomy between the urban space with its accumulated objective culture and numerous non-places, on the one hand, and provincial spaces with a stronger individual culture with more anthropological places, on the other hand, as suggested by Augé, cannot be sustained. Inhabitants of provincial spaces develop their own specific use of places and non-places. Also, the use of urban and provincial spaces is characterized by a constant mutual transfer of meaning, ascriptions and revaluations shaping the relation between these two types of spaces. Through her analysis Gebauer shows that the yearning for the authentic, the individual and the historical is developed in the urban context and projected onto the provincial space. In the provincial space, for its part, classical transitory non-places are preferred and non-placeness is even simulated, because they represent the alignment with modernity and progress.

Following Gebauer's article is "Northern Jutland as an Intertextual Location: Hyperrealities in Peripheral Denmark" by Kim Toft Hansen and Jørgen Riber Christensen. Their article also engages with the provincial place – specifically Northern Jutland. Hansen and Christensen challenge the absolute status of non-places by reminding us of the role of media in relation to the status of place. With the region of Northern Jutland as a concrete case, the discussion about peripheral areas in Denmark is contextualized in Augé's concepts of anthropological place and non-place. His theory is expanded constructively and critically with the concept of 'intertextual locations'. The hypothesis is that places can appear not only as places in their own right, but also as locations in media contexts at the same time, e.g. from being used in films. More generally, places may also appear as stereotypical location topoi. E.g., underground car

parks are recognized from innumerable crime films and thrillers as a dramaturgically perilous location, and not just as an Augéan non-place. They are not just places to park. In the same sense, already in 1981 in his treatment of hyperreality Baudrillard claimed that America in itself was a sign, as America could only be recognized from media and films and not cognized in itself. The article views Northern Jutland in this light, and places in Northern Jutland from the Skaw (pictorial art and film) through *Nordkraft* (*Angels in Fast Motion*, film), Mariager Fjord with the cement factory from Hans Kirk's novels *Daglejerne* (*The Day Laborers*) and *De ny Tider* (*New Times*) are cases that seek to verify and illustrate the hypothesis of the article. The aim of the article is to suggest how Northern Jutland can be regarded as a location potential of this kind, which can promote film and media production in the region. An important point in this connection will be that there may be a local and peripheral wish to become an intertextual location because this may lead to regional development if successful, as interviews carried out for the article with key regional executives demonstrate. This article points to the tension between virtual intertextuality and anthropological place in a way not prefigured by Augé's categories and terminology.

HISTORICAL RETROFITTING OF AUGÉ

The final group of articles in this anthology also all display extended and revised use of Augé in a manner we have named 'historical retrofitting of Augé'. What they have in common is that they all either exclusively or partly apply the Augéan concept of non-place to texts created before 'supermodernity'. These texts are usually conceived of as exponents of modernism and as conveying experiences of modernity. As such the articles in this group may be said to stretch the scope of the non-place concept beyond the common understanding of it. These articles clearly attest to the creative potential of the concept of non-place in expanding the concept to also include an imaginary, metaphoric and symbolic dimension.

The first of these historical retrofitting articles is Jan T. Schlosser's article "Berlin: Place and Non-Place in Ida Hattemer-Higgins' *The History of History*". Schlosser focuses on an analysis of the city of Berlin as literary subject. The idea of non-places is defined on the basis of Augé's theory, and the article operates within the common understanding of this concept, but it is expanded in its historical scope in order to include representations of Berlin from both before and after the period addressed by Augé. The premise for the article is that in order to update Augé's idea of non-places in the context of urbanity after the millennium it is necessary to analyze a new fictional text dealing with places and non-places in Berlin. Berlin is a city that changed and developed remarkably since the early 1990s. Schlosser makes the point that it is evident not only to focus on non-places as a phenomenon of supermodernity in Berlin around the millennium. The reading of Ida Hattemer-Higgins' novel *The History of History* (2011) opens the way for expanding Augé's idea of non-places to a central text from the interwar period: Walter Benjamin's *Berlin Childhood around 1900*. Both Benjamin's prose miniatures and *The History of History* are examples of texts reflecting non-places as a real phenomenon of urbanity and as textual representations. It follows that this phenomenon-representation relationship is inherently present in Schlosser's article as is the case with several of the previous articles in this anthology.

The second article in this section, though, is more singularly focused on representation, and it is furthermore the only article in this section addressing filmic texts. In "Imagined Places – Location in Lars von Trier' films in the perspective of Carl Th. Dreyer and Andrey Tarkovsky" Gunhild Agger analyzes the role of location in films by Lars von Trier drawing lines back in film history to respectively Carl Th. Dreyer and Andrey Tarkovsky. Agger is inspired by Augé's notion of non-place and expands it into what she terms 'imagined place'. The article takes it point of departure in the fact that in recent years, cinema studies have experienced a 'spatial turn' in the sense that film scholars have begun exploring in detail different aspects of space, place and location in film. On the background of

these theories and Augé, the concepts of 'non-places' and 'empty spaces' are pursued in the article. With the purpose of illustrating the concept of 'imagined places' in Lars von Trier's films, two of the most influential sources of inspiration for Trier – Dreyer and Tarkovsky – are implied. Location in Trier's *Medea*, based on a manuscript by Dreyer, illustrates the spatial destabilization typical of his oeuvre. With its mythical, timeless character, location in *Antichrist*, dedicated to Tarkovsky, comments on the mental destabilization of the characters – another characteristic feature in his oeuvre. Both films investigated in the article highlight the role of imagined places and the article's main point besides developing the concept of imaginary place from Augé's concept of non-place is to connect these imagined places intertextually to Dreyer and Tarkovsky.

The next article takes us back to literature and is yet another example of an article inherently balancing between phenomenon and representation with its topic of representations of the Danish welfare state. In "The Welfare State as Non-Place in Danish Literature: Anders Bodelsen and Lars Frost", Jens Lohfert Jørgensen analyzes the relationship between the non-place and the welfare state in two modernist short stories by Anders Bodelsen; namely "Success" ("Succes") and "The Point" ("Pointen"), which both appeared in the collection *Rama Sama* in 1968. Putting this analysis into perspective, he finally discusses how the relationship appears in a contemporary work, Lars Frost's novel *Unconscious Red Light Crossing* (*Ubevidst rødgang*) from 2008. Lohfert argues that the concept of the 'non-place' has a pronounced pertinence to the literature of the welfare state in a Danish context; that is, literature written during 'the golden age' of the welfare state between 1950 and 1980 that has the development of society in this period as its theme. Lohfert further argues that in this literature, the abstract features of the non-place appear as the result of a specific, political practice which marks the consolidation of the welfare state. With the concept developed by Ernst Cassirer, Lohfert conceives of non-places as symbolic forms; that is, as historically and culturally determined mental models that make it possible to create a picture of reality. In this manner Lohfert

stays loyal to Augé yet backdates the significance and proliferation of non-places somewhat, as well as suggesting that non-places as symbolic forms to an extent are transhistorical.

Anker Gemzøe addresses the topic of modernity and modernism in relation to Augé's concept of 'non-place' head-on in his article "The Snowy Desert in Kafka's 'A Country Doctor' and Other Non-Places in Modernity". The article discusses Augé's reservation of the concept of non-places to supermodernity. This could imply a striking underestimation of the importance of non-places in modernity and modernism, furthered by a simplified dichotomy between hypermodernity and modernity. Unfolding a number of counter-images, examples of non-places in modernity and modernism, the article focuses on the desert as an important metaphorical non-place. Special attention being given to this (un)topos in the late Kafka and most particularly to a comprehensive reading of "A Country Doctor" ("Ein Landarzt") in a historical and literary context. The article also points out striking examples of the desert as a non-place in modernity in e.g. Goethe, Tolstoy, Nietzsche, Spengler and T.S. Eliot. Other than by challenging that non-places are singularly linked to supermodernity, Gemzøe's article contributes to the Augé-discussion of this anthology by suggesting the desert as a type of metaphorical non-place, thereby expanding the non-place concept altogether.

Along the same lines though even more radical in the expansion of the non-place concept is the last article in this anthology "Walking between Worlds: Yeats and the Golden Dawn" by Camelia Elias. In the article Elias expands the non-place concept to encompassing a notion of purely mental and mythological place. She proposes to look at W.B. Yeats's construction of a non-place through his take on the idea of the writer as a walker between two worlds, the world of logos and the world of mythos. She is interested in the esoteric idea of the transcendent space and its relation to how we mediate the non-place through making sense of the vertigo that modern culture throws us into. The central argument of the article is that, for Yeats, transcendence itself constitutes a physical non-place

simply because it is analogous with a modern form of heterogeneity. Place and non-place in this article are thus cognate with purely conceptual, non-representational place.

In the course of this anthology we begin with direct conceptual discussions with the Augéan concept of non-place. We then move on to various examples of classical performances of non-place followed by expansions, revisions and actualizations – finally ending with the historical retrofitting of non-place and its radicalization into imagined, non-representational place. The different perspectives on non-place as well as the various text types, media types, genres, periods and national contexts addressed in the span of articles here, which is illustrated by the structure of our anthology – though merely touched briefly and selectively upon in this introductory article – speaks to the actuality as well as great potential of Augé's conceptual work.

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THE NEWEST PLACE IS A BMW X3 IN LAGOS: CONTEMPORARY NOTES ON MARC AUGÉ'S *NON-LIEUX*

Dan Ringgaard

When Marc Augé coined the term *non-lieux* or non-place in 1992, he didn't just call attention to a certain kind of place that had become more and more dominant, he also admitted to an ambivalent fascination of these places. I will examine two forms of fascination attached to non-places in dialogue with Augé and with examples from music, film and literature. The first is the pleasurable non-friction of the transit experience; the second has to do with the relation between the non-place and the name. Furthermore I will argue that the transit experience – which to a large degree defines non-places – contrary to what Augé claims is connected to experiences of modernity, and that the term non-place needs to be criticized by alternative contemporary experiences of place. Here I point to two: First what we might call the post human place, place as a biologically and technologically stratified space where the separation of body, consciousness and surroundings are weakened; secondly what has been called a "cosmogram", a global state of hybrid spatiality, a unending number of temporary, overlapping and heterogeneous localisations that stand in contrast to the functional non-place. The question is whether these two experiences of place don't correspond more with the present state of place than Augé's non-places. As a mode of fascination non-place is a part of an aesthetics of non-resistance, as a diagnosis of our present relation to place it has its shortcomings. The article conducts this twin examination.

THE NON-PLACE

Marc Augé frames his book *Non-lieux* with a description of a man gliding through the various stages of air travel. The path through the airport is a ritual and a blissful experience of unhindered movement. The man recognizes and cherishes every stage. He is taken care of by invisible forces, guided through almost automatic procedures. Everything is laid out for him, and being on the top of his game he might feel a paradoxical freedom because no choices are forced upon him. Not only are the demands of having to make a choice and to act fairly weak, also the pressure on the senses is mild because of the transparency and the predictability of the place, and because the elements that make up the airport are carefully chosen. An updated version of this quiet ecstasy, this bliss of transit might be the title sequence of Jason Reitman's 2009 comedy *Up in the Air* with its tribute to the wheeled suitcases that dance swiftly and with great ease across the airport terminals as well as the screen.

In *Non-lieux*, Augé calls attention to non-places such as the airport, the motorway or the shopping mall, places where we seem to be spending more and more time. The opposition between place and non-place is categorical, not realistic. None of them exist in pure form out there. Place as a closed and self-contained world, as something that holds a meaningful history, as the nexus of identity where one has built up familiar relationships with people, buildings and landscapes, are, according to Augé, a myth. So is the dream of the non-place that Augé's passenger incarnates. (We all know that being at an airport is far from being an experience of unhindered passage.) The non-place, Augé writes,

> never exists in pure form; places reconstitute themselves in it; relations are restored and resumed in it […] Place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed; they are like palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten. (Augé 1995, 78-79)

The uniqueness of non-places is among other things that they lie scattered and by themselves. We work at one place, live at another, do our shopping at a third place, etcetera. They lie in the periphery and not in the centre that in many cities in the world consists of buildings from different historical periods. The non-places are not connected to the history of the place. Furthermore they are specialized and functional, equipped for one purpose only, be it production, consummation, transport or any other specific thing. They are also highly mediated. At non-places we do not orient ourselves by way of memory, local knowledge, and certainly not with the help of the stars, but through screens, maps, signs and loudspeakers, various kinds of symbols. For the sake of functionality the non-places are uniform; they all look alike. No matter where we go in the world we must be able to recognize and find our way around an airport, a motorway or a shopping mall. Finally we tend to be by on our own in these places, and even if we are not, people we do not know surround us. To the melancholic temperament of Augé the end point of this separation from history, identity and community is solitude. Nevertheless he frames his book with this fascinated stare at the airport traveller.

When reading Richard Sennett's *Flesh and Stone* (1994) about the body and the city in Western civilization it becomes clear that Augé's non-places have a history. The particular fascination of the non-place belongs to modernity and not to what Augé terms supermodernity. Sennett demonstrates how city planning in the 19th century used the metaphor of the city and its streets as a body crossed by arteries and veins to create an ideal about rapid and non-hindered movement. The boulevards of Paris as well as the London Underground were created in this image. The purpose was, among other things, the free movement of the individual. The key words were speed and comfort. Both isolate the traveller from the community, and make the space that he or she travels through abstract and anonymous. The body is isolated from its surroundings and made passive. According to Sennett the bombardment of the senses, so often connected to urban modernity, is in fact a reduction of percep-

tion into the free circling of the individual's disinterested gaze at its surroundings. It is a bereavement of the senses.

We are left with two moderations of the non-place. First Augé's own observation that place and non-place fluctuate into one another; secondly Sennett's reminder that the transit experience of the non-place is the dream of modernity, not supermodernity.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO A PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE NON-PLACE

Sennett underestimates the sensuality of place in modernity, just as Augé overestimates the solitude that it produces. Augé's traveller enjoys having his body transported through the airport. It is a description of quiet ecstasy. The non-place has a phenomenology of its own. In the chapter "Driving the City" from his book *Non-Representational Theory* Nigel Thrift develops such a phenomenology. The title of the chapter hints at Michel de Certeau's famous chapter "Walking the City" from his book *L'invention du quotidien* or *The Practice of Everyday Life*. What we need, Thrift suggests, is a phenomenology that realizes that the human body cannot be isolated from technology. Here the driver becomes a more adequate example of contemporary human perception than the pedestrian. With the newest technology, driving a car is characterized by three things: 1) The software and ergonomics turn the car into something that is wrapped around the body. The result is less friction between the body and the car. 2) The car becomes a world of its own; all that the heart desires is in the car, and the connection between the car and the surroundings is highly mediated. The result is less friction between the body of the car and the surrounding world. 3) The position of the driver can be localized both by the driver and by others. The result is less friction between the body of the car and the topography; one can hardly get lost, and even the risk of collision is minimized by sensor technology.

In a later chapter, "From Born to Made: Technology, Biology and Space", Thrift elaborates on the philosophical aspects of the

argument. "[W]e can begin to see", Thrift writes, "the rise of a new layer of active object environments which constitute an informed materiality in which the activity of the world will be continually mediated, threaded together and communicated" (Thrift 2008, 164). Before we proceed, we might ask what such an "object environment" might look like. A more up to date version of Augé's airport passenger than George Clooney in *Up in the Air* could be Tom Cruise in Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report* from 2002. In an already famous scene Cruise passes through a partly virtual shopping mall.

His pupils are scanned so that the articles he might be interested in buying, can be projected on the walls; it might even be possible for him to take them down from there using the touch screen method demonstrated elsewhere in the film. He is moving through an environment that is different from the other costumers (they are surrounded by their own individually tailored projections), but more basically the boundary between physical space and imagination, locality and sense of place – the two things the traditionally constitute the concept of place (Cresswell 2004, 7-8) – are blurred and put into question. The scene deals with real merchandise, but it opens to a more radical experience where virtual but perceptible objects excavated from an imaginary repertoire are layered on an almost empty physical space. Memories, dreams, emotions, a whole range of elements usually connected to the sense of place, can be shown and perceived on the actual physical place. The scene is paranoid. One cannot separate projection and outer world. But maybe we can get used to that. The space in *Minority Report* is a post human space, one where nature, man and technology are entangled, and that is a far more drastic change in our experience of place than the one caused by the non-place.

There are two ways to reflect upon this new state, Thrift writes. Either as yet another step towards a "rationalized dystopia", or as "another layer of vitality, of 'not-quite-life', which will both punctuate each event with additional information and will link each event into networks with much larger spatial extent which are under-

pinned by particular forms of conceptuality" (Thrift 2008, 165). The experience of place that Thrift encircles is

> suffused by a metrical space made up out of an army of things which provide new perceptual capacities […] we are moving into an 'a-whereness', one in which what was called 'technology' has moved so decisively into the interstices of the active percipience of everyday life that it is possible to talk about a new layer of intelligence. (Thrift 2008, 166)

Thrift compares this new layer of intelligence with writing and predicts that it will be naturalized the same way that it happened to writing. Thrift's idea of an experience of place that is "suffused by a metrical space" seriously questions the distinction between space and place and the prioritizing of the latter that lies at the basis of so much phenomenological place theory (Tuan 1977; Casey 1993 and 1998).

The question is whether Augé's airport passenger doesn't already point towards this sense of being wrapped in a discrete atmosphere of high-tech; whether he and the non-place do not constitute a world of their own, one that is easy to locate and to navigate? In other words: does the movement through the non-place not have something in common with the way the modern driver or Tom Cruise – pardon the pun – cruises through place? Or the other way around: does Thrift's draft of a post human phenomenology of place not in effect throw light back on the fascination of the non-place as it is incarnated by the passenger? One can of course discuss the degree of science fiction and with it the credibility in Thrift, and even more so in Spielberg, but they both point towards an experience of place that occurs in the still more technologically manipulated interim between the body and the world, and by doing that they call attention to terms such as atmosphere and affect. Atmosphere is that which cannot be reduced to body, consciousness or things, but – according to Gernot Böhme – may be looked upon as the ecstasy of things, an

outward orientation towards dynamic relations between things as opposed to identity as autonomous form. The atmosphere, etymologically the fog globe, is what surrounds a body just as the meteorological atmosphere surrounds the globe, an in-between space of connections. A particularly productive point of view on affect, in our perspective, is Brian Massumi's concept of microperceptions, minuscule stimuli that function on frequencies that are not yet stabilized as feelings or in an object-subject opposition. They go on in the gaps between body, consciousness and the surroundings; they are tiny twists and jerks of the atmosphere, continuous exchanges between the things and our selves that continually push our state of being in new directions.

The sense of being wrapped into something or being thrown into a magnetic field of a kind found its musical expression when Brian Eno launched his ambient music along with the 1978 album *Music for Airports*. Ambient music does not demand the undivided attention of the listener; it is discrete and goes unnoticed. Its purpose is to function as a kind of developer for the atmosphere of the place. The pleasurable space of contemplation that it creates is processed by an exquisite, flawless sound. In the cover notes for his fourth ambient album, *On Land* from 1982, Eno writes that the musical techniques that he has developed, and that often use loops and other time manipulative effects, are supposed to avoid that the landscape becomes scenery for something else: "Instead, everything that happens is a part of the landscape. There is no longer a sharp distinction between foreground and background" (Eno 1982). Humans no longer stick out at the expense of the environment; instead we are a part of it. Eno's music for airports delivers yet another layer of discrete technology to close the gaps, and it makes sure that the space bends towards Augé's passenger.

THE PLACE AND THE NAME
Thrift compares the new bio-technological mediations of place with writing, and adds that where the revolution of writing was cogni-

tive, this new overturn is precognitive. One could object that the technology he speaks of is digital and therefore a kind of writing, since all programming is based on signs, and by doing that re-opens a semiotic space and direct attention to a different and more cognitive dimension of the fascination of the airport passenger, one that is underexposed in Augé: the fact that the passenger is not just underway, he is travelling towards a place and a name. The poster from *Up in the Air* shows the typical large airport windows facing the planes, three people staring out of them and a huge sign that instead of the name of the destination bears the name of the film, making the film the much longed for destination of our dreams. The huge planes on the other side of the immense gate windows as well as the mountains or the skyline on the other side of the landing area work their magic. The view is the visual prolongation of the timetables and departure screens, a promise of places and pleasures. Airports are "gateways to the infinite possibilities that only the sky can offer", J.G. Ballard writes in the essay "Airports" (Ballard 1997).

In *Un ethnologue dans le métro* or *In the Metro* from 1986, Augé, in a Proustian vein, contemplates the relations between the name and the place: "Isn't the first virtue of personal recollections, inspired by a somewhat dreamy consultation of the subway map, that of having us sense something like a feeling of fraternity?" he asks (Augé 2002, 10). A collective memory seems to rise from the map and its names, and it is from this mutual pool of meaning that the personal memories can begin to emerge. To Augé the metro is the place from where the life of every Parisian unfolds; it is a melancholic underworld criss-crossed by the routines of everyday existence. The names and connections of the metro carry a history, but – as he reminds himself in the following passage – maybe these names are starting to become extinct and without meaning:

> The train threads its way through our history at an accelerated speed; relentless, it commutes without fail and in both directions, among great people, high places, and great moments, passing without delay from Gambetta to

Louise Michel, from the Bastille to Étoile or from Stalin-grad to Campo-Formio and back again. Taking the sub-way would thus mean, in a certain way, celebrating the cult of the ancestors. But obviously, this cult, if it exists, is unconscious; many station names say nothing to those who read or hear them, and those to whom they have something to say do not necessarily think of the thing when they pronounce the name. If there is a cult, one could say that it is a death cult: far from confronting soci-ety today with its past and the individuals that mold it to their own history, subway trips disperse to the four cor-ners of Paris men and women who are in a hurry or tired, dreaming of empty cars and deserted platforms, occupied by the urgency of their everyday life and spotting on the map they are consulting or the stations they go by nothing more than the less rapid flow of their individual duration, estimated only in terms of being ahead of or behind the schedule. (Augé 2002, 17-18)

It is tempting to interpret the passage as an anticipation of *Non-lieux*. Considered as a locus for the metabolism of place and non-place the metro is something that once was a non-place, but as it got its legends, memories and dreams, as de Certeau would term it, it became a place. On the other hand it is also a place that has be-come a non-place to the extent that it has lost its relation to history and instead has become a place of transit for anyone but the melan-cholic anthropologist for whom the lack of connection between the names and the places makes it even more destined and place-like. The place-names of the metro work as quotes, just as they do in non-places. Here place is just something that is referred to, Augé writes in *Non-lieux*. As when a sign on the motorway by way of text and image refers to a town or a sight that the highway once went through. In Jacques Tati's *Playtime* from 1967, Monsieur Hulot tumbles around in a piece of Paris that is a non-place of modernistic architecture, and where the Eiffel Tower only exists as a mirage, a

mirror image on the glass doors. The green buses of the old city pass by outside as a reminiscence, they stand out as quotes from a place with a completely different slowness, a world of memory and materiality. This makes it nostalgic, thus confirming that place, as Augé defines it, is a myth.

In the airport and on the motorway one is always in the power of the name and heading for a place. This is how travel works, hence the historical connection of the airport and the motorway to ships, trains and railway stations, horses and inns. Still the airport and the motorway are special. Not only because the place names, in this place-free universe of mediations and symbols, are right in one's face, but also because they do not just cut through space, but rather make up growing sprawls in the place-world. Ballard's essay, "Airports", is a hymn to the transit zone as a place in its own right. He praises the whole airport area, the motorways surrounding it, the parking houses, the car rental-zones, a continually growing architecture whose sole purpose is to facilitate the movement of people. In the airport the individual is defined by the place it is going, not by where it comes from.

The destination, not the home place, is the purpose of life, the token of happiness. Ballard makes the airport the quintessence of modernity, the essential impulse of modernity being the annulment of history in order to establish an unprecedented present. The paradox of this enterprise is of course that rupture presupposes the continuity that it denies (de Man 1986). Ballard knows that also non-places will be caught by place and history. But for the present the airport is the future to Ballard. London Airport, not the rundown claustrophobic historical centre of London: "the great airports are already suburbs of an invisible world capital", he writes, "a virtual metropolis whose faubourgs are named Heathrow, Kennedy, Charles de Gaulle, Nagoya, a centripetal city whose population forever circles its national centre, and will never need to gain access to its dark heart" (Ballard 1997). The people of the airport have left their own place, but they have not yet arrived at the foreign place or vice versa. Not only do they exist between places or on prelimi-

nary places, the airborne human is in the non-place and under the influence of the name, the abbreviated name on the ticket that is the token of one's wonderfully preliminary existence. One is in transit between the non-place and the name.

This is also the case in Danish director and poet Jørgen Leth's film *Erotic Man* from 2010. In it an aging poet, played by Leth himself, travels the world in order to reconstruct the love affairs of his life. The arrival to each new exotic place takes the form of a series of skyline stills stamped with the place name, followed by airports, taxis and hotel rooms. On the beds of the hotel rooms more or less naked women are smoking cigarettes, staring into thin air or reading Leth's poems out loud. These series are Leth's homage to the transit of the non-place. The by definition nameless non-place marks one extreme in the eroticism of the film; the name and the exotic locations are the other. And where cold and heat meet energy is created. As long as the polar tension is maintained, there is still hope for the protagonist. As the planes are substituted by trains, and Europe takes the place of the Tropics the film collapses and brings the eccentric project of its protagonist along with it. In Leth it is obvious that non-places emerge from their opposite. The sluggishness of place, symbolized in the film by the tropical river as something that is blissfully penetrated, is the prerequisite of the non-friction of the non-place that finds its expression in the cool anonymity of the hotel room and the perfect resting shape of the female ass in cosmopolitan backlighting – an unending reproduction of the opening scene in Sophia Ford Coppola's *Lost in Translation*. Place as exotic myth and non-place as air-conditioned anonymity are interdependent.

COSMOGRAMS

One can criticise much of globalization theory for reproducing the transit experience as a form of fascination. In her book *For Space* (2005) geographer Doreen Massey objects to the modern idea of space as a something timeless and empty. Influenced no doubt by Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre she instead speaks about space

as a network of always preliminary and numerous criss-crossing movements and actions. In this spatial setup place becomes a node:

> If space is rather a simultaneity of stories-so-far, then places are collections of those stories, articulations within the wider power-geometries of space. Their character will be a product of these intersections within the wider setting, and of what is made of them. And, too, of the non-meetings-up, the disconnections and the relations not established, the exclusions. All this contributes to the specificity of place. (Massey 2005, 130)

By considering space as "a simultaneity of stories-so-far", Massey claims that there is no pre-given space in which we can place things, things such as places. Space, according to Massey, is produced by actions that occur and the connections they make. This is not a Cartesian or Kantian space, but it is still an abstract space. At a point in her article "A Global Sense of Place" she looks at the globe from a satellite perspective as if enveloped in the flows of money, information, images, people and goods that define globalization. The flows circle at different speeds and on various levels, they accumulate and they leave empty spaces (it is these "non-meetings-up" etcetera that Massey speaks of as "power-geometries"). This gaze at place from the point of view of globalization defines it as something that things run through, something horizontal. If vertical place is something that has developed or grown through history, family, production and the daily routines that were attached to the soil, then horizontal place is place as transit and therefore to a large extent non-place.

The non-place of Augé, the post human driving of Thrift and Massey's global sense of place all deal with place as transit. They share what I would like to call an aesthetics of non-resistance. They are not uncritical towards this aesthetics, but they nevertheless ground their drafts for a new experience of place on this low-friction movement, on the idea of a *homo ambulans*. This is related to what Peter Sloterdijk has called the neutralisation of space. In an

interview in the book *Cosmograms* he says that mass communication and rapid transportation have had "the capacity to synchronize consciences in a very large semiosphere" (Royoux 2005, 226). In antiquity, according to Sloterdijk, living meant bumping into things. History is what we call the development where the technologies of man have overcome whatever stood in the way. Now that there are no more obstacles, history is over. The paradox is that this overcoming of space has let us back into space. Once time as development and progress has dissolved, we are thrown back into the space in which we lived before history, back into "the reign of series and routines interrupted by micro- and macrocatastrophes" (Royoux 2005, 229). If one can bear with Sloterdijk's somewhat idiosyncratic use of the word history, then he points at a kind of entropy created by a situation where the train of history – the one that carries the ideas of modernity and among them the idea of progress – has stopped, and this vector that secured an at least seemingly uniform world has been replaced by an unending number of interfering and overlapping spaces.

This idea, which is the generating idea of *Cosmograms*, is a critique of the theories of globalization for not being able to sufficiently integrate resistances, conflicts and differences. It is also at the core of Sloterdijk's three volumes of *Sphären* where he replaces temporal notions with the spatial metaphors bubbles, globes and foam. In another interview in *Cosmograms* Bruno Latour argues along the same lines using the image of the satellite for a completely different purpose than Massey. Globalization has taken the globe away from us, he claims. This is because the satellite perspective has made it clear that there is no god-like view from the outside, but only "situated points of view" (Royoux 2005, 216). The globe is still there but is no longer makes up a system of representation by way of longitudes and latitudes onto which everything can be located. Without the historical continuum created by modernity, the globe is multiplied in a dizzying amount of globes. Living in this world demands a considerable skill to localize oneself and to map things, to build a world of one's own from where I am standing, one that continually

interferes with and is disrupted by other worlds. The cosmogram is the term for this mapping of simultaneous, heterogeneous and preliminary spaces.

The book *Cosmograms* takes Melik Ohanian's video installation from the São Paolo-biennale 2004, *Seven Minutes Before*, as its starting point. The video installation consists of seven screens that each shows a route through a valley. The seven routes begin at the same time and place, at one spot along the way they cross each other, and they run together in the end of the film in seven different perspectives on an exploding van. One of the editors of the book Jean-Cristophe Royoux, the other one being Melik Ohanian, writes about these simultaneous routes, that "it is no longer the point of view or the vanishing point that matters, but the coexistence of points in space, the space of their meeting" (Royoux 2005, 262). Regarding the explosion he says, that "rather than showing the accident through a temporal succession of points of view, the seven points of view are visualized in a simultaneous space – across the horizontality of the film's seven screens" (Royoux 2005, 263). After this meeting the routes spread out once more. *Seven Minutes Before* is a cosmogram because it – as opposed to a cosmology – doesn't come up with a complete idea about how the world is spatially organized; instead it offers a preliminary representation of simultaneous, but heterogeneous spaces, a localisation of equally possible trajectories.

My reason for pulling the cosmogram into a discussion of non-place is to question the *homo ambulans* that passes through the prologue and epilogue in Marc Augé's *Non-lieux*. He shares a fascination of transit that is central to modernity and globalization, but he is not the only truth about our present involvement with place. He is an expression of what I termed the aesthetics of non-resistance that is as old as modernity and still very much influenced by its rationality and temporality. This is an aesthetics that, however fascinating, marginalizes a radical and hybrid spatiality that is an equally, to say the least, important insight into 21st century experience of place. It is a spatiality that is present in Ballard's extension of the airport to the airport zone, and it has traits in common with

the generic city of Rem Koolhaas as he describes it in *S,M,L,XL*. This city also shares the fascination of non-friction with Augé, Thrift and Massey, but Koolhaas' ideas about the non-centred and aimlessly self-generating city pulls it in the direction of Sloterdijk, Latour and the cosmogram. And even more so if one adds Koolhaas' work on world cities like Lagos in *Mutations*. Lagos is chaotic and full of friction, but just the same it is urban avant-garde. We read that Oshodi, the Lagos centre of traffic and trade, "somehow works" against all odds:

> Tentative and even occasionally temporary, Oshodi's "incomplete" layout in many ways increases the number of things it can do. Taking advantage of the interplay between two different traffic-patterns – a fast-moving upper-level overpass, and the slow-moving pedestrian along the rail line – many services and amenities have colonized the off-ramps and roundabouts. Taken together these form a complex overlap of programs: a train station, urban and suburban bus stations, hauling stations, several different markets, auto garages, a school, at least one church, and hundred if not thousands of service stalls. Left incomplete, the intersection has a deleterious effect on metropolitan traffic "ride-times". But when measured in terms of efficiencies other than speed, the intersection is enormously functional: its no-go turns congestion into destination. (Koolhaas 2001, 693)

My question is whether the non-place, including the melancholy and the critique of civilisation that it contains, isn't an expression of a worn out discourse of modernity that instinctively and with all the purposefulness of its rationality tends toward the uniform and towards non-friction? (In that case Tati's almost fifty-year-old film *Playtime* is the epitome of the non-place). Aren't the more hybrid experiences of place such as Thrift's post human amalgamations of biology, technology and body or the creolized and radically spatial

thinking about place characteristic of the cosmogram more adequate expressions of contemporary place? The hypermodern car and the megatropolis of the so-called third world may say more about our future places than the airport, the motorway and the shopping mall, all inventions of mid 20th century. The newest place is a BMW X3 in Lagos.

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IN SEARCH OF PLACE-NESS: NON-PLACES IN LATE MODERNITY

Aldo Legnaro

CONCEPTIONS OF NON-PLACES

What do we mean when we talk about non-places? The term seems to be a paradox in itself, because a place is a place is a place, as 20th-century American writer Gertrude Stein would have said. Taking the term at face value, a non-place seems to deny the place-ness a place possesses by its very existence, as conventional wisdom will have it. Anyway, the term suggests that a non-place is actually the counterpart of a place. The notion is not as new as one might think, actually the term 'non-place' was coined by Melvin Webber in 1964 and marked a state of planning in which accessibility has become superior to proximity, as exemplified by modern motorways and turnpikes – a definition that resembles the thoughts of Marc Augé thirty years later, although Augé does not mention Webber. But before Augé, Michel de Certeau wrote about *non-lieux* or non-places in his influential book *Arts de faire*, the first part of which was translated into English as *The Practice of Everyday Life*. De Certeau regards non-places by no means as the antithesis of places. In his view, non-places are not strictly opposed to places, but represent another and different appearance of place-ness. In this perspective, places are, you might say, what people make of them. This resembles theoretical arguments stressed by the Belgian philosopher Henri Lefebvre. In his book *La production de l'espace* from 1974, he insists on the fact that "space is a (social) product", and that "a social space is consti-

tuted neither by a collection of things or an aggregate of (sensory) data, nor by a void packed like a parcel with various contents". In fact, he says, "every society […] produces a space, its own space" (Lefebvre 1991, 26, 27, 31).[1] In the given context of non-places, his term of "representational spaces" seems especially meaningful: by this he denotes the concrete experience and the concrete usage of space – sometimes wilful, playful, and against the intentions originally connected with the arrangement. In particular, Lefebvre had in view the events of May 1968 in Paris. Another striking example would be hoisting a revolutionary flag on Tom Sawyer Island in Disneyland, as occurred in August 1970 (Real 1977, 71). Rare as this might be, people use space and places in their own fashion and to their own liking, sometimes they transform non-places to places,[2] and it might even be possible vice-versa. So places and non-places are, to some degree at least, interchangeable in the view of de Certeau and Lefebvre. Focussing on the interaction between space and its users, both of them have a dynamic conception of how to construct place-ness.

Marc Augé has a totally different view. The term 'non-place' figured prominently in his homonymously titled book Non-places (Augé 1995).[3] A cultural anthropologist at Collège de France, Augé sees a non-place in strict opposition to a place. While a place is characterized, he says, by identity, relation and history, a non-place is a space without any history and without any identity, no relations whatsoever connect this space to its surroundings. These character-

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1 Soja's conception of *thirdspace* (1996) refers to Lefebvre as well as to Foucault (see fn 6).

2 Transforming a non-place into a place may happen spontaneously, as is illustrated by the examples mentioned above. But this will not normally be the case. Actually, the act of transforming will require some demonstrative and symbolic labour deliberately set in action. In this respect, the case of the M25 is rather significant, see Kirk in this volume.

3 The original French version (*Non-lieux. Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*) was published in 1992.

istics – or should we say non-characteristics – transform the non-place into a non-anthropological space missing all the anthropological qualities a place, a real place, is endowed with. Non-places, in this view, do not convey any meaning; they lack any auratic quality. In Augé's eyes, they seem to be characterized by a generalized 'absence of'. Hence, 'sense of place' – a concept widely used in cultural studies (see Convery et al. 2012) to denote the relationship between people and place – is lacking altogether. It is this assessment that constitutes Augé's general nostalgia about places and today's placelessness. These are definitely "narratives of loss", as has been stated (Arefi 1999), and examples are easily found: the new railway stations especially built for high-speed trains, airports, shopping malls, leisure parks, worldwide hotel chains4 – in short, places of mobility, places of standardized accommodation and comportment, places not nobled by a long-standing tradition and history. As it seems, first of all Augé simply wanted to say: I do not feel comfortable in places like these. Comparing his conception of non-places with the small book he dedicated to the metro of Paris (Augé 1988), this is all too obvious. In this book, he luxuriates in names of ancient battlefields and in personal remembrance called forth by the names of metro stations. As he demonstrates, a whole history of France or an individual Parisian biography could be written by using metro names only and connecting them chronologically as a personal thread through space and time.

NON-PLACES IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Leaving aside the metro, which was a chain of non-places in itself in former times, I would like to explore the meaning of these seemingly meaningless places a little further. Augé defines them in the negative only, as Buddhists define nirvana. But there are some other aspects to consider. What, then, is the difference between Star-

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4   In this respect, the motel is a very special case, see Bégout (2013).

bucks and a traditional coffee house in Vienna or the Caffè Florian in Venice, which was founded in 1720 and even nowadays looks as if Casanova had just left it? Starbucks certainly does not raise any historical feeling, but leave it unchanged, and in twenty years or so it will look like a historic site. But non-places are not allowed to grow old, their *raison d'être* is embedded in rapidly changing life styles, insofar as they are in complete contrast to traditional places, and if Starbucks still exists 20 years from now – one cannot be all too sure of that – the cafés will have been radically altered. So, this is the first and most simple answer: non-places are new places satisfying new needs, and they can and will acquire the charm of an anthropological place as time goes by. This is too simple an answer, to be sure, but it is not completely wrong, as will be seen by looking at two examples both figuring prominently as today's non-places: the railway station and the shopping mall. One and a half centuries ago, the first railway stations were built, and they were celebrated as cathedrals and palaces of a radically new character, as gates to strange experiences to come. In the view of their most admiring observers, these stations told of progress, of velocity – in short: of modernity. From the very beginning, they stimulated the imagination and had a corresponding narrative connected with the feeling of the time in a positive way. There were sceptic contemporaries, and the industrialization of movement and the factory-like outlook of railway stations did not go unnoticed, but on the whole, the railways and their stations were triumphantly greeted as the signs of a new era (see Schivelbusch 1977). In fact, these stations were regarded as the modern equivalent of the mediaeval town gates (see Röll 1912-23, vol. 4, 303 (→ "Empfängsgebäude")), and the comparison with other architectural forms like cathedrals and factories seems to be significant. By these comparisons, the non-places of the time were made familiar to the public – they did not appear as non-places, but as new places designed for modern times. And – this is very important – their modernity only extended to the structure of buildings and the new manner of movement; they did not jeopardize the class structure of society as a whole. The new railway system mirrored

exactly the class structure of the time, in stations and carriages, with at least three and sometimes four classes strictly separated in their own waiting rooms and travelling in their own carriages with very different levels of comfort. Railway use was for all, but no gentleman had to meet the peasant; so the mixing of classes was effectively avoided and, in fact, the class structure reproduced. Furthermore, trains all over Europe had a separate ladies compartment for ladies travelling alone without male escort, so the moral order was equally preserved (see Röll 1912-23, vol. 5, 204 (→ "Frauenabteil")).

In a similar way, the new department stores, the 19th century predecessors of the shopping mall, were mostly not viewed as nonplaces, but hailed as a new era of urban living and consumption. An abundance of goods sold at fixed prices offered a new world of urban entertainment and life styles. Au bonheur des dames, the department store Émile Zola described in his 1883 novel, was modelled after Le Bon Marché in Paris: the splendour, the light, the luxury of its interiors were overwhelming, and this was also the case in the department stores built all over Europe. They were met with resistance from small shop owners, who could not compete with the low prices, and some considered morality to be in danger because women now appeared in public and shopped by themselves (see Lenz 2011, 139 and following pages). But on the whole, the department stores were regarded as a sign of modernity, and they played a considerable part in forming a culture of consumption. Actually, they initiated a collective process of socialization in being a consumer and learning how to behave like one. The shop windows formed desires and wishful dreaming, and the new paradise of goods had enchanting effects on the public. In his book The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism (1987) – the title alludes ironically to the work of Max Weber – Colin Campbell stresses the significance of "imaginative pleasure-seeking" and of "daydreaming" for the development of modern consumerism, which goes along with an introspective and sentimental attitude and is rooted in a romantic view of the world. A romantic view, however, that feigns opportunities and options which for most people do not re-

ally exist, a point highlighted by Ernst Bloch in his famous book on The Principle of Hope:

> [...] there is the window display, to stimulate elegant wishful life. [...] And no one knows better when it comes to this sort of dream than the dresser who arranges the displays. He does not only set out commodities, but also the enticing image which arises between men and commodities; he builds with happiness and glass. And the passerby continues to build on this capitalist enticing image in a purely human way, even though it exists close by slums or cheerless streets of bourgeois conformity, presupposes these and is supposed to make us forget them. (Bloch 1986, 342-343)

THE NARRATIVE OF NON-PLACES

To sum up and to make a long story short, the functional equivalents of today's non-places were accompanied by a narrative, and, no wonder in an era when progress was a conception universally agreed upon, it was a narrative of progress. Modernity at its very beginning was met with much enthusiasm despite the social problems that arose. In contrast, concerns about contemporary non-places seem to be that they lack a narrative: no meaning apart from a technical and functional one can be ascribed to them, and no imaginative ideas are attached to them; as Augé states: no identity, relation and history. But is this really true? Looking back in history, this cannot be denied, although the non-places of today did not appear out of a void but have evolved in a span of at least 150 years, which should not be completely ignored. But today's non-places do have a narrative in my opinion, since they come along with a dream, promising pursuit of happiness, the great promise of the US Declaration of Independence. In a commodified way, to be sure, but nevertheless it is a happiness a lot of people welcome. Non-places are

then, first of all, places of conspicuous consumption: conspicuous consumption of goods, conspicuous consumption of mobility, conspicuous consumption of life style, and, in fact, conspicuous consumption of space itself – space of urban or global centrality. They link, one might say, two kinds of spaces, the "space of flows" on the one hand, and the "space of places" on the other. Years ago, Manuel Castells defined these two spaces; "space of flows" meaning social practices that work through flows, flows of data, goods and people, while the "space of places" consists of the local life in its traditional style (Castells 1996, 376 and following pages). Both spaces converge in a non-place like a shopping mall, thus connecting the local and the global: the flow of goods, mostly in chains you will recognize regardless of where they are located, is on standardized display, even for those who live locally and can only have a glimpse into the luxury of the world.

This fusion of global and local aspects comes along with a simulated fusion of social differences. As an observer remarked with regard to malls: "[…] the mall embodies the utopian desire for a purified community of social harmony, abundance and classlessness" (Dovey 1999, 133). Classlessness is obviously a myth and an illusion, as is harmony. While places of old highlighted class differences, class structure in today's non-places is veiled by denying its very existence. Non-places are open to everybody, seemingly, but in fact the public is a strictly selected one. Especially malls are places where distinction can be celebrated, and distinction has become more and more important in times of crisis and uncertainty. It is one of the means of self-reliance and assurance, and establishing one's own distinction may very well serve as a substitute for the certainty lacking in social and economic affairs. In my opinion, this is one of the most meaningful functions of non-places today: they are places

of assurance,[5] places where the "vertigo of late modernity", as Jock Young (2007) put it, has come to a halt (see also Chaney 1990 and Backes 1997). And besides assuring the public, they have a rather practical function, because shopping and entertainment are closely related, and while waiting for most Europeans is a very tedious, boring and even exhausting acticity – or non-acticity, as you might say – shopping copes effectively with waiting time, as is the case in airports and very modern railway stations (Lloyd 2003). So the mall is a place, a place indeed, for entertainment, experience and exhilaration, where "shopping for subjectivity" (Langman 1992) can take place.

THE PLACE-NESS OF NON-PLACES, LATE MODERN STYLE: CONTRACTUALIZATION AND SECURITY

If this is true, to some extent at least, then non-places perhaps do not lack place-ness as suggested by Augé, but are rather characterized by a sense of place of their own. Nevertheless, managers of non-places sometimes feel the novelty and the lack of tradition, and for this reason they try to give their establishments roots – so malls participate in local feasts and try to fit in local traditions, airports are given the name of a local or national hero, railway stations are given a name to suggest their long distance connections, like the station of Lille in France called Lille Europe. These are attempts at branding, attempts to transform non-places into familiar ones with a touch of place-ness – successful in many cases. So, the notion that non-places

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5   In this respect, Foucault's conception of *heterotopia* (see Foucault 1990; 1994) is in part rather similar. These are places of otherness, and whereas today's non-places have nothing in common with the *heterotopia* of deviance (Foucault's examples are prisons and asylums), they can be described as a blending of the *heterotopia* of illusion (his example being the brothel) and compensation (the colonies of Puritans and Jesuits in North- and South-America, where a new order was established). Insofar as non-places of today try simultaneously to establish an order of dream and a model of social order, they unify illusion and compensation.

are not anthropological places, as Augé suggests, does not seem to be justified. Indeed, they are: built for human actions, certainly different from older places, buildings and accommodations but intended to serve comparable needs although in a markedly different way. But it is the difference which Augé so notably irritates, for two reasons, and which will now be discussed. The first reason relates to the social relationships formed at and by non-places; the second to the importance of security and the means to achieve it. Considering the social relationships first: they have changed, Augé argues, from "collective contractual obligations" to solitary ones, and are no longer based on shared values and beliefs. In this view, places generate a kind of organic social life, while non-places form a solitary form of contract, possibly even between a human and a machine. Then codes and 'how to' instructions shape the individual's behaviour and obligations instead of tradition, and individuals react to a set of predetermined instructions programmed for carrying out certain activities. To take money from a cash machine, to log in to an internet account, to enter an area secured by biometric techniques – these are examples of a contract between me and a machine, solitary, no doubt, but far from being not social. These interactions are preconditioned by social and cultural assumptions about normality, and these assumptions are encoded in the machine's algorithms. An expectation is inscribed on its data processing, the expectation of a correct PIN code, the expectation of a prescribed succession of acts, the expectation of adapted behaviour. No bargaining, no deal with a machine – if you do not conform, you will be denied money, access or whatever, but a social act it will always be. Furthermore, although we know a computer is not human, most of us will already have spoken to it if it does not work as it should … so even from the user's point of view, the situation has a social aspect.

Nevertheless, Augé is certainly right to assume a new quality in these solitary contracts we are regularly engaged in. But it seems a gross exaggeration to extend the argument to non-places of travel, traffic and shopping alike. These are, as they have been called, "spaces *for* consumption, places *of* experience" (Miles 2010,

164, author's emphasis), and the social aspect is rather more obvious in non-places of this kind. These are not necessarily places of communication, insofar as they can be considered as solitary places, but visitors share collective values and beliefs by all means. They share the pursuit of happiness by gazing and shopping, by browsing for outfits and things to fit in with their own appearance, personality and self-conception, and they share the belief that all this can be done by purchasing consumer goods. In a traditional view, this sounds pretty trivial and a bit ridiculous, and this seems to mirror Augé's opinion. I would not disagree with him, but nevertheless you have to acknowledge the popularity of shopping, being a significant aspect of modern life and life style and even of today's governance, an aspect I shall turn to later. In any case, it certainly marks a change.

The general public recognizes traditional places to be unlike non-places, but people use them both with different intentions and different expectations. An empirical survey compared a shopping mall and the High Street and found that the mall is seen to be more convenient for the car park, to be cleaner, more compact, is seen to have a more friendly atmosphere, is more relaxing with less expensive shops, is safer for children, quieter and less crowded (Uzzell 1995, 306), in sum, "an ordered space" (Falk 1997, 183). By contrast, shops in the High Street are more expensive and have a greater variety and quality. So the mall may not be regarded as an extension or replica of the High Street, the mall does not simulate the city, but both are different types of places used differently – spaces of different quality.

One obvious difference between most of today's non-places and the old places is their character as constructed and carefully planned settings, while urban surroundings as a rule have grown, sometimes over centuries, and often are not the result of any plan at all. This constitutes urban vitality and urban diversity, but it constitutes urban disorder too. In contrast, non-places are built to avoid any kind of disorder. And apart from convenience, the celebration of recent modernity, the sensation of being indulgent with oneself,

today's non-places have an attraction no ordinary place of old could boast of – and was in need to boast of – and that is the promise of security. Most non-places today, especially shopping malls and airports, excel in what might be called a scopic regime: CCTV installed everywhere, security personnel watching and gazing around, the entries closely observed. Techniques of surveillance are not confined to non-places, however, traditional places sometimes are equally guarded. For example, Bluetooth technology was used in the zoo of Aalborg to find out which animals were most popular with the visitors: they did this by giving people so-called blue tags and measured the time people paid attention to a certain enclosure (Gilliom and Monahan 2013, 15). This sounds pretty harmless, to be sure, but in most non-places such technologies are means of control. This is the second issue in Augé's analysis which, in my view, is of great importance. In a certain way, he says, visitors of non-places permanently have to prove their innocence. This is obviously the case if you have to demonstrate your identity, by password, by your fingerprint, by your passport or whatever, but even more subtly, this is the case in non-places without controls of identity but controls of appearance, comportment and potential group identity. Do you look like an idle shopper or like a loiterer without money and no intention to buy anything, do you look like a citizen indulging her or his spare time or like someone who may be a nuisance, do you look like someone who belongs to a dangerous group or do you look innocent and harmless, as someone who will behave according to the rules of conformity? These are the considerations governing the gaze of the security staff, and not only their gaze but also their actions. So non-places are places of sorting, places to establish rules for being in and being out – revealing the myth of classlessness as an absurd one. On the contrary, most non-places, not only malls, are zones of high security, carefully selecting and supervising the visitors. This is so although they seem to be public places, open to everyone. As one observer notes: "difference is fine, so long as it is surrendered at the gate" (Flusty 2001, 659). For that reason, establishing a setting of control and surveillance offers a first-class method to

transform a place into a non-place – it would alter its character and its structure of feeling, therefore being a very suitable first step for transformation.

NON-PLACES AS PLACES OF CONSENT

In fact, this seems to be one of the attractions of non-places: you do not have to mingle with everyone, poverty and social problems of all sorts are excluded, and so is the usual urban crowd. Diversity is homogenized, visibility strictly controlled, comportment standardized. All this is a promise of security, except for pickpockets and other petty crimes. But surveillance is not perceived as such, it is mostly welcomed as a means of creating a safe and secure environment, and in non-places a blend of surveillance and consent is generated, which seems a central feature to me. So non-places are places of governing – governing behaviour and life styles, governing definitions of conformity, governing its border with deviance and marginality, and they serve as a medium of adjusting people to current standards of society. This is, in effect, no real difference to their predecessors, such as traditional railway stations or the great department stores of the 19th century. But they are embedded in a completely changed structure of society, and so there is a great difference in the means to achieve conformity. At the very beginning of the 19th century, people had to learn how to deal with new ways of shopping, travelling and moving in cities. The public had to get used to the new urban supply of entertainment and shopping, new rules had to be learnt, a new normality had to be established. At the same time, the function of urban places – and nobody would have thought of them as non-places – was the demonstration of bourgeois culture and the embodiment of modernity. Today, non-places do not serve as places of education in modernity any longer, we no longer have to learn how to be consumers; instead these are places for governing us by means of environmental stimuli, by visual magnets, the architecture of light, by smells, music and sensory overflow in general. Nowhere can this be experienced better than in one of the

Disney theme parks all over the world (see Legnaro and Birenheide (2005)) – the non-places of all non-places, so to say. Nothing is left to chance in these landscapes of simulacra, visitors are carefully directed, nothing is accidental, and fairy tales, films and the fantasy characters of the Disney universe like Mickey Mouse and the like are transformed into three-dimensional reality, an overwhelming reality in its own right. What Baudrillard termed "hyperreality" comes to life in this setting, and for that reason I prefer to speak of a "reality machine". Here reality is generated – artificial, no doubt, but at the same time overwhelmingly real – which conquers all the senses and leaves visitors stunned. In fact, Disney's theme parks are total artworks, the 'Gesamtkunstwerk' Richard Wagner dreamt of. In Disney-speak, they call it 'imagineering', a word composed of 'imagination' and 'engineering', and they do this admiringly well, but in effect the parks are shopping malls specialized in Disney paraphernalia – places of entertainment, all the same.

NON-PLACES IN URBAN AND GLOBAL CONTEXTS

Theme parks are a world apart, but the urban setting is influenced decisively by non-places as well. Today's focus on entertainment and shopping and the new significance of brands to demonstrate individuality and personal style will change the structure of cities and even their meaning. Marketplaces they have always been, but now they are transformed into "culture industry cities", as Steinert (2009) remarked, turning citizens into tourists and favouring exclusionary politics to marginalize non-desirable people, outlooks and neighbourhoods – a strong motor of processes of gentrification. In a global competition for investors, developers and visitors, non-places not only serve as an attraction, but help to create an image. Not surprisingly, non-place marketing has become a branch of city marketing, and non-places serve as "gateway, flagship and symbol" (Warnaby 2009, 216).

And now they are counted among the constructed amenities of cities, which are said to drive urban growth and urban wealth

by attracting visitors and developers (Clark 2011). If non-places are drivers of urban growth, they are, in a certain way, drivers of urban cleavages as well, by cleansing physically and socially parts of the city and relocating the poor in the periphery. Although this is not really a new trend – some places of identity, relation and history in Paris or London we nowadays appreciate once were built by expelling people living there (see for London Allen (2008)) – but in the 19th century it was restricted to some European capitals, whereas today it is a worldwide phenomenon. This puts today's non-places into a global context.

Likewise, the global context is obvious with respect to that which you might call the dark counterpart of glittering urban non-places; these are the true, the authentic non-places, namely the camps for refugees and asylum seekers, scattered all-over Europe in some forlorn regions. There is a hidden relationship between the two because, in a certain way, they both serve the same needs. Both visitors of urban non-places and migrants detained in quasi-prisons want to realize their conception of a good life or a life worth living, and both, you might say, are in search of place-ness. Most visitors and most migrants will be disappointed in the end because conspicuous consumption only grants happiness for a short while, and, as most migrants soon come to realize, Europe is far from being a paradise. As Gertrude Stein, to mention her once again, wrote about Oakland, California, where she spent her childhood: "there is no there there." But this will hold back neither visitors of urban non-places nor migrants. The search for place-ness goes on.

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NO PLACE LIKE HOME: MARC AUGÉ AND THE PARADOX OF TRANSITIVITY

Anthony W. Johnson

> "We are made of stardust"
> (Gribbin & Gribbin, 2000)

> "The dust blows through
> A diagram of a room"
> (Ashbery, [1979] 1981)

NON-PLACES

There is no getting round the fact that Marc Augé's ideas offer extremely productive insights. Even reading *Non-Places* ([1992] 2008) lightly, we can hardly help catching the gist of what he means. I know of old winding roads in the North of Finland which used to force you to drive slowly and take on the nuances of the terrain as you went, and understand how the direct imposition of motorways with all their paraphernalia have replaced such pleasures by a more strongly mediated experience of the same environment. I understand, when the "Sat-Nav" tells me to continue straight for 200 Kilometres in an iconic region like Lapland – or for 60 miles passing into the English Lake District – that the space between now and the next point is, conceptually speaking, irrelevant ("Turn right at Grasmere"). I get it, too, that having been forced to disclose their identity at passport control, Augéan travellers may find themselves inhabit-

ing a relatively homogenized and non-individualized few hours in an airport: an experience which may sometimes be intensely boring yet occasionally strangely liberating. Further still, as a denizen of the railway system, I used to love the freedom which the experience offered (at least, before the tyrannies of the social network kicked in) to step out for a while from the cares, pressures, and commitments of everyday life (as did Augé safely aboard his aeroplanes). And yet, it is difficult to avoid the thought (in agreement, apparently, with a number of papers in the present volume) that there may neverthe-less be something amiss in the small print of Augé's description. If (famously) Augé marks non-places as sites in which the concern with social relations, history, and local identity – all of which are constitutive of "anthropological place" – simply don't pertain (2008, 63), then the negation setting his term up as a binaristic alter ego to place is in trouble. For we all know that Augé's "non-places" would not qualify under that name in, for instance, any of Popper's first, second or third worlds (Popper 1978).

After all, viewed in the terms of Popper's first world, "*non-lieux*" *are* places: physical sites with social, spatial, and temporal co-ordinates. To think of them, then, in the most banal of material sens-es, as "non-places" would be inaccurate. If we were to try to imagine "real" non-places lacking the social dimension we might do better to think of the challenging conditions and extreme environments that are found beyond normal human habitability. The submarine volcanic vents, perhaps, where (against the odds) living communi-ties of a range of species collectively known as *extremophiles* have been found, may qualify in these terms as (at least) non-places for humans. Or those often anaerobic environments in which, as an increasing possibility, *weird life* appears to have gained a foothold through the agency of creatures such as *Hesiocaeca methanicola*, the methane ice-worm which has been found living on the floor of the Gulf of Mexico. (As almost goes without saying, such environments have only come to our notice as a result of the technologies made available by supermodernity.) Stranger still, we may also consider environments hosted by apparently weird life, such as that sheen

known as "desert varnish" which is found on the walls of Capitol Gorge in Utah: a substance which is not precipitated from chemicals in the rock below and appears to be biological yet cannot currently be explained by any known biological process. Beyond the unplaceable places shadowed by this example we may perhaps, if we are to attempt to follow Augé rigorously, also search for dematerialised forms of real non-places in outer space, and try to comprehend them in terms of, say, the dark matter which forms a major determinant for the grounding which we accord to place. (Non-places on comets would be another viable possibility at the present time.) Or, where the material world fails us, almost anything in Science Fiction may also come to mind as hypotheses for further enquiry – from Fred Hoyle's *Black Cloud*, Robert L. Forward's *Dragon's Egg*, or Hal Clement's *Mission of Gravity*, to David Lindsay, Stanislaw Lem and countless others.[1] Reading Augé's non-requirements of social relation and history in terms of the subjective experience which is connoted by the second Popperian world, it becomes equally clear that there, too, we may start to flounder. Not least because an airport or the inside of a car (for that matter) are meeting places in which we may thrive, continuing histories with people we haven't seen before, listening to the world on the radio, mobile phone or iPad (and speaking back to it); interacting with friends or associates who work in the airport, trams, trains, or bus service; getting to know strangers, and so on. In the third Popperian world of the institution, naturally enough, problems also arise. For airports, motorways, railways and the like are institutional products having, as Jens Kirk shows so clearly in his article in this volume, their own histories, not to mention their own identity-forming, local, glocal and social agendas.

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1   For these examples, see David Toomey's fascinating – but ultimately somewhat uncritical – book from 2013, *Weird Life: The Search for Life That is Very, Very Different from Our Own*.

Clearly enough, Augé is (and has long been) well aware of all this, acknowledging that neither place nor non-place "really exists in the absolute sense of the term" (2008, viii), so that the series of *differentia* he sets up appear to be more in the manner of a suggestive empirical check-list than a tight formulation. In all fairness, too, it might also be important at this juncture to admit that my own reading of *Non-Places* was in English and that I got as far as note six on page eighty-two before realizing that "*non-lieu*", in French, derives from jurisprudence and connotes a situation in which there is "no case to answer" or "no grounds for prosecution": in all, as Augé's translator puts it, "a recognition that the accused is innocent".[2] Yet even here, however, it seems difficult to comprehend what is connoted for non-place by the "unanswerability", the lack of prosecutional grounds, or the *innocence* connoted by Augé's terminology. In fact, it is characteristic of the non-places mentioned in his works that they are institutionally legitimised sites (often deeply engrained in questions of culpability, legal contestation and answerability), and that they are often without any presumed innocence at all.[3] To sum up, then, we could say that without wishing to question the achievement of Marc Augé's conceptualisations of "non-places" – and their inspiration for researchers within cultural studies, geography, literature and the social sciences – the present paper has begun by acknowledging the ambivalence of Augé's formulation (not least in its English translation). For although it predicates itself on a binary opposition with what he conceives of as the relational, historical and identity-forming nature of traditional place, "non-place" for Augé,

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2   Adventitiously, though, we may note that within English the legalistic phrase *in lieu of* – connoting some sort of substitution in place of something else – appears to carry at least some of Augé's meaning across the semi-permeable membrane which links English to French.

3   A familiar case in Finland is the ongoing tale of Ryanair's machinations with respect to (or perhaps lack of respect to) the various Finnish populations on which they have foisted (or unceremoniously dumped and deserted) their airport sites.

is simultaneously and paradoxically contiguous with that which it seems to deny (Augé 2008, 63, 83).

As a way of highlighting some of these discontinuities it may be helpful to recall Stephen Spielberg's 2004 film *The Terminal*. Based on the true-life case of Mehran Karimi Nasseri (who experienced a 17-year wait in the Charles De Gaulle Airport) and relocating the story in New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, this is a work which plays out the Augéan paradoxicalities of place and non-place in an almost text-book way. Just through the doors of the Terminal in the movie is "Place" with a capital "P": New York, the Big Apple – symbolised explicitly enough by the little red apple which the airport's director, Frank Dixon, brings into the Terminal in his lunch-box. Trapped in a state of arrested development – or is it actually "unarrested" development: as he is free to live within the airport's transit lounge areas (though not to leave them)? – is Viktor Navorski, the Tom Hanks character, whose visa has been revoked on account of a coup back in his native Krakozhia which has dispossessed him of his nationhood while in transit. Innocent, but not allowed to go forward or back, Navorski almost classically becomes non-lieu in the legal sense, as there is no place in the law by which he can be assessed unless he violates the legal system by criminal behaviour (which he resolutely refuses to do). As a study of arrested transit, the two-hour experience which the film offers its viewers documents the ways in which Viktor triumphs over his situation: converting the non-places of waiting into the placeness of living – developing social bonds and solidarity with the airport workers, re-negotiating his identity by creating a history of small but remarkable (and even, sometimes, heroic) acts, individualizing his sleeping-place at Gate 67; and entering into a transient relationship with Amelia Warren (played by Catherine Zeta-Jones). Herself a case of arrested emotional development (though permitted transit through the terminal rather than being condemned to containment within it), Amelia has spent more than half of her existence as a flight attendant in non-places, and herself appears to have fallen down the fracture line which this has caused in her life – pursuing an intermittent airport

relationship with a married man at the same time as she encourages him to go into therapy with his wife (an activity that she refers to as supporting the "home" team) in the more normative world of spatialized relationships outside the terminal. Amelia having fallen down through the cracks from the outside and Viktor having slipped through a gap on the inside, *The Terminal* starts to develop beyond the binarism of place versus non-place and even, perhaps, beyond the interstitiality which forms the common ground between them, to suggest that they are not so much like optical isomers of one another (the trans- and cis- of molecules moulded at different places in the world), as part of a fold between two forms of the same. This is how Augé puts it in a passage cited in Christopher Schaberg's smart book on *The Textual Life of Airports:* "What is a place for some may be a non-place for others, and vice versa. An airport, for example, does not have the same status in the eyes of the passenger who hastily crosses through it and an employee who works there everyday." (Augé (1999, 166), cited in Schaberg (2013, 18)).

The implied gradient between these two positions is matched in the film itself by the fact that when Viktor is eventually allowed into New York to get Benny Golson's autograph – in fulfilment of a promise that he made to his dying father in Krakozhia – the Ramada Inn setting in which the celebrated saxophonist is performing seems an equally heterotopic non-place to the airport in which most of the film is set. It is as if, having reconciled himself to the *unheimliche* qualities of the hostile world in which he has found himself, Viktor is finally able (as the closing lines of the film remind us) to go "home" with an expanded sense of what that word entails.

TRANSITIVITIES

How, then, could we make Augé's checklist a little more rigorous: how could we begin to clear out the Augéan stable? One possibility – and I mention it here only as a thought experiment – might be to remediate non-place through the concept of *transitivity*. After all, what Augé's later texts really seem to be telling us about is *transi-*

ence: impermanence, movement *through*. (*Sic transit gloria mundi*.) Grammatically, at its simplest, the intransitive is, in an almost Heideggerian sense, the state of rootedness, the stativeness of being. For as Heidegger demonstrated – most famously in his essay on "Building Dwelling Thinking" ([1971] 1975, 143-161) – the old Teutonic words for historical, personalised, localised existence (*bauen*, *buan*, *bhu*, *beo* etc.) all reclaimed a deeply rooted connection between being, dwelling and building. To build was to create the dwelling-place for sustainable being (see Heidegger ([1971] 1975, esp. 147). Unlike the place/non-place binarism, however, the divide between intransitivity and transitivity is a gradient. That is to say, that there is some degree of latitude between verbs connoting existence with an apparent minimal effect on the things around them, and those verbs which act on the outer world (hybrid forms such as the ditransitive or especially the ambi-transitive demonstrating that, even without morphological change, we may feel how the attribution of agency facilitates the creation of a bridge between the ways in which our verbs work). Such an interstitial presencing of agency (with its concomitant shift of ethical responsibility) is perhaps as near as language comes to what is perceived of as the enharmonic in music: something changing key or direction without seeming to change at all (the same notes being occupied by a different intention). This tells us something, I think, about the way we talk of place and non-place – the presence of such terms in our discourse denoting a change in our subjective relation to (as well as our attitude towards) the material in which we dwell or through which we transit.

All of which brings us to the *paradox of transitivity* itself. Almost as a default, it would often seem that our subjective experiences of transiting space, of travelling – experiences which may often be accompanied by high velocities and a significant expenditure of energy (thus appreciably affecting the world around us) – are realised in our discourse in intransitive ways. In English we tend, for instance, to "travel", "go", "fly", "move", or "transit". We "drive" (or as part of the object we are inhabiting, "drive our car"), whereas (altogether elsewhere, yet sometimes in the same space) nomads, usually at a

slower rate, "drive their herds" across the terrain. In other words, grammatically speaking, to transit non-place seems, paradoxically enough, to be spoken of as a non-transitive experience, while travelling through even the same space as a place is to open up one's affective (and transforming) relation to that which is being transited. Language, of course, is endlessly flexible, and there is no way in which I am claiming that we only use non-transitive verbs in our evocations or conceptualisations of non-place. Nor am I maintaining that we only use transitive verbs in our traversing of place (indeed, the fact that we may use the same intransitive verbs for both activities is necessitated by the enharmonic relation of both spaces). Rather, I am suggesting that the discourse of non-place appears to flag up what we could call an *intransitive attitude* to the space around us, while that of place is more transitive in orientation.

Adapting our terms from Alain Badiou's essay on transitive multiplicities within set theory we might, further, even wish to figure the relation between place and non-place in terms of formal transitive relations of sets in which elements are also parts. In the end, non-place is always unavoidably a part of place and *vice versa* (the difference between them being one's perception of the personal, social and historical occupancy of the place rather than the fact of its physical formation). Rather like the empty set [ϕ] connecting the odd and even positive integers (Badiou ([1990] 2008). For as Bartlett and Ling put it in their translation of Badiou's *Mathematics of the Transcendental*, within the Zermelo-Fraenkel set theory (ZFC) elaborated and interrogated by Badiou, a set

> has no "essence" other than that of being a multiple; it is determined neither externally (nothing constrains the way it seizes another thing) nor internally (a set is entirely indifferent to what it collects). Meaning a set, thought in itself, *in-consists* – it consists (or is composed of) nothing – its sole predicate being its multiple nature. To this end a set literally *is* inconsistent multiplicity. Moreover, every element of a set is itself a set, meaning every multiple is it-

self a multiple of multiples, without reference to any unitary element. So a set *qua* inconsistent multiplicity is radically without-One; it is, in its essence, uncounted multiple multiplicity. (Badiou 2014, 4-5)

Thinking of Augé's work in this way it would appear to turn out that the place/non-place dyad is a non-reciprocal relation because the singleton of non-place has no closed directionality in relation to any specific place. In terms of set theory, then, the relation of place to non-place is presumably an intransitive one.

As an example of how the paradox of transitivity might work in practice, one could do worse than to compare a by no means unrepresentative passage from Augé's work on *The Metro* with a specimen from a recent travel-book, Tom Fort's: *The A 303: Highway to the Sun*. Here (in translation) is Augé on the underground:

For subway lines, like lifelines on the hand, meet and cross – not only on the map where the interlacing of their multicolor routes unwinds and is set in place, but in everyone's lives and minds. It happens, moreover, that they intersect without criss-crossing, as do the wrinkles of the palm: by making a point of being unaware of these superb and monochrome lines, linking once and for all one point to another without being distressed by the more discrete ramifications allowing whoever borrows them to change direction radically. In the vocabulary of the subway rider, to do this "you have to change twice." Thus it would suffice for the rider, leaving Ranelagh or Muette, who might be afraid to go to Strasbourg-Saint-Denis, to change successively at Trocadéro and Charles de Gaulle-Étoile to get back to better kempt neighborhoods where he or she started out, in the direction of the Porte Dauphine or, to the contrary, heeding the call of some mischievous or working-class rogue, to embark in the opposite direction toward Pigalle or Jaurès. (Augé 2002, 6)

As the shortest distance between two points, the line is in some respects an iconic image of what is called into play for readers wishing to engage with this passage. Lines may be aerial – as in the trajectory of a plane through the sky (Augé 2008, 95); rooted (or routed) in a Deleuzean manner – like the *chemins de fer* which constitute the railway system; or grounded – as in Augé's plethora of images concerning roads and motorways. From railways to songlines, from sightlines to lifelines (as well as even, perhaps, beyond), the idea of the line may be taken as a means of interrogating and explicating at least some of the richness articulated by Augé's work. Lines, of course, are what circumscribe the transit. But for our purposes here, let us examine the experiential qualities of Augé's rhetoric. If one asks where the verbs are which are really acting in this passage – or whether there is any sort of transitive engagement here – it immediately begins to become noticeable that Augé is speaking through some sort of screen or filter. His rhetoric is, admittedly, beautiful in this opening chapter of *In the Metro*, and it is a language of reflection which tells one much. But it does not really engage with the thing itself. It is as if Augé is miming out the point he is making about non-places: giving us the experience of non-place in his own rhetoric. And it is an effect which is carried over from the original French.[4]

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4   "Car les lignes de métro, comme celles de la main, se croisent; non seulement sur le plan où se déploie et s'ordonne l'entrelacs de leurs parcours multicolores, mais dans la vie et la tête de chacun. Il arrive d'ailleurs qu'elles se croisent sans se croiser, à la façon des lignes de la main justement: en affectant de s'ignorer, superbes et monochromes, traits reliant une fois pour toutes un point à un autre sans s'inquiéter des ramifications plus discrètes qui permettent à qui les emprunte de changer radicalement d'orientation. Dans la terminologie de l'usager du métro, il convient pour ce faire de 'changer deux fois'. Ainsi suffirait – il à celui qui, parti de Ranelagh ou de la Muette, s'effraierait de rouler vers Strasbourg – Saint-Denis de changer successivement à Trocadéro et à Charles de Gaulle – Étoile pour regagner des quartiers plus assortis à ses origines, du côté de la Porte Dauphine, ou au contraire, cédant à l'appel de quelque démon coquin ou ouvriériste, d'embarquer en sens inverse vers Pigalle ou Jaurès" (Augé [1986] rpt. 2013, Chapter 1). Notice how even the transitivity of verbs such as "se déploie" or "s'ordonne" work at one remove from the lines themselves as they refer to a topological map rather than the material reality of the metro; and how verbs of movement in the first half of the passage actually apply to a static diagram which is being imaginatively travelled. (I am very grateful to Dr Brita Wårvik for her advice on Augé's French.)

With its maps and routes, there is every reason why readers might want to view Tom Fort's A303 book, likewise, in terms of non-place. But, in terms of engagement with the materiality of place, the text could hardly be more different from Augé's. The book starts with the rather moving experience of how the author used to love travelling along a road for his family holidays, as many of us have done in our childhoods, measuring off the landmarks: the pub-signs, post-boxes and other cryptic mnemonics of the route, travelling towards the place we love and have been to before as a child:

> As children we probably didn't have the dimmest idea of where to find the road on the map. But it was as familiar to us as the way upstairs to bed. We knew the landmarks that measured its progress: maybe a pub sign, a red post-box, a[n] old, sagging stone wall weighed down by ivy; a church steeple, a big, ancient tree. In our hearts we embraced each as it passed. Each delivered the same message. *Nearly there now.*

Notice how markedly transitive, engaged, and affective this rhetoric is. The hearts of the onlookers *embraced* each landmark that they passed while, in turn, the landmarks *measured* the progress of the road (in actuality, this was the subjective experience of the children on the road) towards their desired destination. The prose is given a tangibility in which even the manner in which a stone wall is *weighed down* by ivy can promote excitement. Although, then, the initial experience may necessarily have been massively intransitive in our first transiting of such spaces in childhood (as is obviously the case if one is travelling in a car) it seems that, in our recollections, what is important is transitivity: how we acted upon these impressions and how they acted upon us. At any rate, this is what Tom Fort notices in his continuation of the passage, "The special place *stirred* something very deep inside us. It *offered* adventure, excitement, a particular kind of intense happiness" (italics mine). By finding his way back from the intransitivity afforded for sensory input towards a

memory of the ways in which subject and object are affectively and reciprocally perceived, Fort has reconstituted his childhood journey along the A303 as a record of engagement. In a sense, to acknowledge this is to acknowledge the crossing of lines: the entanglement and intertwining of place and non-place: a skein of connectedness which – as the spatial correlate to a temporal idea – is reminiscent of Leo Frobenius' old anthropological notion of the *paideuma* (the cultural commonalities of background that tie a generation together, in a manner of speaking, through the everyday likeness of their experience).[5] To make this connection is to recognize that *pace* the "supermodernity" which Augé presupposes for his analysis of non-place, the empty set of transition by which non-place occurs, has always already had a history and a role in human life.

LINEARITIES

The "pre-history" of non-place – and the ways in which, under Augéan eyes, it could be retrospectively read through literature – is of course, *in potentia*, an all-embracing project and it would take a lifetime even to begin to trace its presence as an empty set in conjunction with, say, literary dystopias, eutopias and utopias from Atwood to Plato as a possible first port of call in such an undertaking.[6] Perhaps more useful than any totalizing survey, however, is a sense of the possibilities that Augé's thinking may open up for anyone trying to read *non-lieux* back into the history of transit (even in the most fleeting of circumstances). One obvious starting point which comes to mind is "In Transit" (1950): a poem in which – as is symbolically attested by its positioning at a hinge-moment in his *Collected Shorter Poems* – Auden (who had erroneously believed that he was the first major poet to embark on a commercial trans-Atlantic flight)

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5   See especially Frobenius (1921).

6   For non-places and utopias, see Augé (2008, 90).

records a journey between the two main catchment areas of his life in America and Europe. In its capacity as what we could think of as a "pre-Augéan" text, this addresses the subject of stopping to refuel in an unspecified mid-Atlantic place: a meeting at the intersection of "two fears", and a point "never invaded" by "cartesian doubt" (Auden [1950] 1966, 237 ll. 1-4). Though half asleep, Auden's persona is quick to notice, in this post-war period, the segregated nature of the new space into which he is arriving, and the ways in which institutions (the military, the airline staff) – or the boundaries separating himself "in transit" from the land in which he is standing – cut him off: allowing him access to some things but not to others (such as an enticing limestone hill – viewed through "modern panes" – which he has "no permission to climb" (ll. 12-13)). Moving beyond his sensory impressions and reflections about the smell of gender, he toys with thoughts about the world he has left behind in America and the one that he's facing in Europe: fantasizing the glance of "an ambitious lad" who is staring back into his non-place through the glass, "Dreaming of elsewhere and our godlike freedom" (ll. 15-16). As the speaker registers in this most distanced, and intransitive, instantiation of the experience of being in transit:

> Somewhere are places where we have really been, dear spaces
>
> Of our deeds and faces, scenes we remember
>
> As unchanging because there we changed, where shops have names,
>
> Dogs bark in the dark at a stranger's footfall
>
> And crops grow ripe and cattle fatten under the kind
>
> Protection of a godling or a goddessling

Whose affection has been assigned them, to heed their
needs and

Plead in heaven the special case of their place.

(ll. 17-24)

Already, in 1950, Auden is registering that sense of decentredness
that Augé has characterised as being central to our experience of
the supermodern world: a decentredness which is almost always
accompanied by an increased desire for sacralisation in an existence
where, as Augé would have it, Hestia, the Greek goddess of the
hearth, is increasingly replaced by Hermes: god not only of commu-
nication, but also of the threshold (Augé [1992] 2008, viii).

Moving from flightlines to railway lines in about the same pe-
riod, Elizabeth Bishop's "Chemin De Fer" (written earlier, but pub-
lished in 1948), likewise traverses an arc which extends from the
technological to the mythological. Perceptibly running against the
Augéan flow, its opening explores rails as images of networking
and non-place in a peripatetic slow motion which foregrounds the
site from which railways arise:

Alone on the railroad track
I walked with pounding heart.
The ties were too close together
or maybe too far apart.

(Bishop [1948] 1991, 8 ll. 1-4)

Rather like Auden's poem, "Chemin De Fer" very much reflects on
issues of identity and the yearnings of the heart. But in Bishop's vi-
sion, the place to which we are returned is compromised and tech-
nologized – a sort of debased Walden – a territory into which one
enters on peril of an encounter with the armed hermit who lives
there:

The scenery was impoverished:
scrub-pine and oak; beyond
its mingled gray-green foliage
I saw the little pond

where the dirty old hermit lives,
lie like an old tear
holding onto its injuries
lucidly year after year.

The hermit shot off his shot-gun
and the tree by his cabin shook.
Over the pond went a ripple
The pet hen went chook-chook.

"Love should be put into action!"
screamed the old hermit.
Across the pond an echo
tried and tried to confirm it.

(ll. 5-20)

To approach a more traditional poem like this is, of course, to
prompt the question as to how far considerations of Augéan non-
place may enrich our reading of it. But in the present context it may
be worthwhile to recollect that Thoreau's aesthetic soundscape was
one in which the clamour of a steam-train could be likened to the
scream of a hawk. In other words, built into his transcendentalism is
a desire to resist the separations wrought by technology and rather,
actively to re-constitute their meanings within a domain which is at
once "human" and "natural". Much the same goes for the climactic
scream of the Hermit in the closing stanza of the poem. To be sure,
a large number of readers have heard the word "shun" in "act*ion*"
as the word echoes round the pond (the echo's failure to confirm
action underlining all that is at stake between what we have called

transitive or intransitive attitudes to our experience of the land). Yet additionally, from an Augéan perspective, I think it is also important for us to realise that (in Ovid, at least) the figure of Echo herself in mythology represents a body dissolved in place (the ephemeral voice, if you like, of non-place itself) a transient being whose existence is contrasted against the fatal rootedness of Narcissus at the same time as she emulates him. It seems that once we start to read the world in terms of non-place, it becomes clear that throughout history and myth there have always been ways of factoring it in as place's spectral cousin.

Perhaps it is not entirely coincidental either that the dimensional collapsibility which disembodies Echo results in a myth which is founded on the voice. For there is undeniably an acoustic element which may sometimes be brought into play as a transitive element in the demarcation of place and non-place through the use of songs, rhymes and rhythms – *songlines* as they are known in some aboriginal and fishing cultures.[7] As the mathematico-philological theologian Edwin Abbott hinted in his celebrated geometric romance, *Flatland* – most explicitly in his chapter on "Lineland" (Abbott [1884] 1962, 57-58) – songlines are, for instance, the key to communication in a two-dimensional world, and the harmonious sounding of the voice constitutes the action by which the consummation of love is achieved. Hence, the restricted nature of the King of Lineland's world is described as follows:

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7   It is, perhaps, important to emphasize that songlines do not pertain solely to Aboriginal culture. As the singer Chris Wood put it in an interview for Nathaniel Handy of *Songlines* Magazine: "When the songlines thing came out that really wound me up! … People freaking out at this amazing Australian Aboriginal thing where they don't have a map, they just sing the song and then they know where they are. Norfolk fishermen have been doing the same thing for generations. There's a song that tells you all the compass bearings and the land marks that you would need to navigate from Yarmouth up to Newcastle. It's no different, but because the songlines happened in Australia, everyone is into it. The concept of anything so beautiful and rich and wonderful and canny happening here in our own country is just too much for people to get their heads around" (Wood 2010, 39).

His subjects – of whom the small Lines were men and the Points Women – were all alike confined in motion and eyesight to that single Straight Line, which was their World. It need scarcely be added that the whole of their horizon was limited to a Point; nor could anyone ever see anything but a Point. Man, woman, child, thing – each was a Point to the eye of a Linelander. Only by the sound of the voice could sex or age be distinguished.

(Abbott [1884] 1962, 55)

Certainly, as Bruce Chatwin argued in his celebrated book, *The Songlines*, such phenomena – as the cypher of the nomadic – may represent in their Aboriginal incarnation a dreaming into being of the multi-dimensioned reality which surrounds us. In light of knowledge gleaned about the author since his decease, twenty-first century readers may perhaps be justified in returning to Chatwin's descriptions of Aboriginal culture with a greater scepticism than originally greeted the book regarding the actual presence of the author / narrator in a number of the events described (not to mention the details of his sometimes faked or second-hand "observations" about Aboriginal life).[8] But to approach him with transitivity in mind is to see how, some four years before the original publication of *Non-Places* in France, he is already very much in tune with this aspect of Augé's agenda. Chatwin puts it this way in one of the quasi-philosophical discursions which freight down the second part of the volume:

I have a vision of the Songlines stretching across the continents and ages; that wherever men have trodden they have left the trail of song (of which we may, now and then,

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8 For a sympathetic but incisive reappraisal of Chatwin see Rory Stewart's 2012 Blog in the *The New York Review of Books*, "Walking with Chatwin".

catch an echo); and that these trails must reach back, in time and space to an isolated pocket in the African savannah, where the First Man opening his mouth in defiance of the terrors that surrounded him, shouted the opening stanza of the World Song: "I AM!".

Let me go one step further. Let us imagine Father Adam (*homo sapiens*) strolling round the Garden. He puts a left foot forward and names a flower. He puts a right foot forward and names a stone. The verb carries him to the next stanza of the Song. All animals, insects, birds, mammals, dolphins, fish and humped-backed whales have a navigation system we call "triangulation". The mysteries of Chomskyian innate sentence structure become very simple if they are thought of as human triangulation. Subject – Object – Verb.

(Chatwin [1987] 1988, 282)

Of course, it is central to the idea of such triangulations not only that the subject-object-verb relation (the stuff of non-place) helps us to get a bearing on our environment; the same relation also configures the basic transitive dynamic by which we come to know (as well as becoming known by) our world. For in what the West thinks of as the Aboriginal myths of the Dreamtime the whole point is that tjuringa tracks (i.e. songlines), record the ultimate transitive process: the means by which (having sung themselves into existence), the totem ancestors of the Australian First Nations sang place into being. Hence, the preservation of the tjuringa tracks and their songs also constitutes – and this is a central tenet of Chatwin's argument – a preservation of the transitive relation between people and the land. Likewise, based on a respect for the ways in which we seek to impact on the land is a complementary appreciation (key to the environmental ecology of the present time) of the dangers that may accrue should the environment's resources fail to support the non-

chalance of humanity towards such matters. Perhaps, it was for this reason that, arriving in Kastrup Airport, Copenhagen, to deliver the paper which has become the present chapter, I found the rotating imagery of an "Aborigine" in the advertising non-space enclosed by a baggage carousel to be so disconcerting (see Figure 1, below). It was not so much the tired stereotypifications of Australian wildness; or its exposition via the apparently "humorous" juxtaposition of a black and white image of an "Aborigine" against a glass of colour-heightened red wine; or the unconvincing credentials of historical trustworthiness ("since 1991") which were the problem. Rather, the poor taste of this feeble pitch for a "fine dining" venue emanates from a staggering disregard for the histories, abuses, and platitudes on which its imagery was predicated.

This: the photo-shopped image of an image of Australian culture secreted in a non-place on the other side of the globe from the main source of its visual and historical referents precisely illustrates the fact that – because of its dislocation from clear positionality (or, some might say, responsibility) – non-place is capable of enabling varieties of cultural amnesia which constitute a significant element within what Hannah Arendt called the "banality of evil".[9] But that is not to say that all positionalities afforded by the Augéan perspective necessarily move constitutively in the same direction. For instance, it is by no-means clear that any sort of Heideggerian "rootedness" need be preferable to the ostensible "rootlessness" of the nomadic life. In fact it could be argued that the nomadic lifestyle figured in *The Songlines* may be one in which nomadic peoples following the seasons and transiting through ephemeral stays in the series of fixed points which we tend to take for homes are, in fact, always "at home" because they are always in the right place at the right time.

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9   "'What the fuckers don't understand', drawled Titus, 'is there is no such person as an Aboriginal or an Aborigine. There are Tjakamarras and Jaburullas and Duburungas like me, and so on all over the country'" (Chatwin, [1987] 1988, 289).

It is one of Augé's felicities that this is already implicit in his work: most particularly in his idea that the human sense of place (along with its inextricable empty subset), is so firmly grounded in the huge variety of functions – religious, monumental and so on – which are associated with the human body. As Augé has it in his discussion of shrines: "This magical effect of special construction can be attributed without hesitation to the fact that the human body itself is perceived as a portion of space with frontiers and vital centres, defences and weaknesses, armour and defects" (Augé 2008, 49). Like Frobenius, much of Augé's earlier career as an anthropologist was taken up with studying the subtleties of African ritual and religious life, and in this light it is understandable that he should take his examples from the Akan civilizations of present-day Ghana and the Ivory Coast for whom "the body becomes a collection of religious places" with zones being set aside for "anointment or purification" (Augé 2008, 50). In this way non-place as well as place may be seen to be integrated within the human body, and for this reason it may accompany the nomad or singer of songs as well as dwelling within communities which enjoy a more sedentary existence. Where there is bodily non-place, there is space for the divinity to take possession within the human form.

Contained within the human form, songlines may traverse considerable distances, as in the case of those North-West African religions which were transferred as an accidental by-product of the slave trade to the American continent. One case in point is Shopona, a Yoruba deity in Africa who re-emerges in Brazilian Candomblé as the self-concealing God Omulu, and presides over the containment or release of infectious disease, most specifically smallpox (see Voeks 1997, 79-80). Along with other Candomblé deities (*orixás*) Omulu has his own territory: a temple (*terreiro*) sacred to him, a day (Monday), and an element (Earth) which is his special domain, along with his own foods, rituals and propitiatory rites, many of which are summoned by songlines and rhythms. For Candomblé is a religion in which, at high-points in the ceremony, the Godhead possesses the body of a devotee and manifests on earth as part of

Figure 1. Advertisement on Baggage Carousel, Kastrup Airport, Copenhagen (photo A.W.J.)

a sequence of events in which song, rhythm and dance are of crucial importance, the "turning wind" (*barravento*) being one of the rhythmic ingredients which help induce trance. Once the godhead has entered the body it has its own sacred rhythms which may be invoked, one associated with Omolu being the *opanijé* (a 2/4 pulse created by two simultaneous patterns in which "*x*" may be taken to represent a semiquaver and "–" to represent a quaver):

<div align="center">

Opanijé

</div>

    xxxx xxxx   x–x xxxx

    xx– xx–   x–x – x

In such a trance state, or transit, the human subject has vacated a space within itself for occupation, and those who are in a trance do not recall the experience. To submit to possession by the God – to let oneself be occupied by another being – is to straddle the flip point

between placeness and non-placeness. This is a significant situation in which to find – or lose – oneself (and is often regarded as the supreme privilege by devotees). Of course, etymologically speaking, transience is also related to trance, and in light of the fact that the Middle English word "traunce" connoted being in a state of extreme dread, a swoon or a daze, it may perhaps also be worth remembering that the "passing" between states could mean a passing towards death, and that Omolu is the one who receives his suppliants into the ancestral twilight of the Candomblé religion. Not that possession is exclusively Brazilian or Yoruban. It may be a sustainable argument, as Gregory Shaw has shrewdly noted (2007, 59-87), that Greek philosophy took the notion of theurgy on board to an extent which has often been ignored by contemporary scholarship. The transitivities or (as Badiou might call them) the "*in*"-transitivities of non-place have always had the capability of serving the sacred as well as the profane.

CONCLUSION: *SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI* (OR: BEDE AND THE BEYOND)

In his *History of The English Church and People* the Venerable Bede famously recounted a touching parable from one of King Edwin's councillors in 627 AD who was trying to persuade him to accept the Christian religion. "Your Majesty", he asserted:

> … when we compare the present life of man on earth with that time of which we have no knowledge, it seems to me like the swift flight of a single sparrow through the banqueting-hall where you are sitting at dinner on a winter's day with your thanes and counsellors. In the midst there is a comforting fire to warm the hall; outside, the storms of winter rain or snow are raging. This sparrow flies swiftly in through one door of the hall, and out through another. While he is inside, he is safe from the winter storms; but after a few moments of comfort, he vanishes from sight

into the wintry world from which he came. Even so, man appears on earth for a little while; but of what went before this life or of what follows, we know nothing. Therefore, if this new teaching has brought any more certain knowledge, it seems only right that we should follow it.

(Bede [II. 13] 1968, 127)

Here, avian flightlines become the determinant of Edwin's eventual decision to embrace Christianity. But the power of the passage emanates from something else: the contrast in Bede's text between the space which is warm and which we call home and the fact that, although the transiting creature belongs unequivocally to another place, its passing transitively impacts on the those in the hall below – smuggling in, as it were, a transformative alterity into their world picture. Likewise (though from a less Christianized perspective), Augé describes how, when an international flight crosses Saudi Arabia, "the hostess announces that during the overflight the drinking of alcohol will be forbidden in the aircraft. This signifies," he says, "the intrusion of territory into space. Land = society = nation = culture = religion: the equation of anthropological place, fleetingly inscribed in space" (2008, 95). As the precepts of those in Bede's hall had been occupied by a being in the air, so Augé's beings in the air are occupied by the precepts of those on the ground.

Ultimately, then, it seems that the paradox of transitivity is a consequence of the ways by which we came to live in the world. And that the experience of non-place is perhaps in this sense at its best a function not of ironic or callous detachment, but an acknowledgement of the intractability of the non-living within ourselves. (The enharmonic line, perhaps, which enables us to distinguish between the self and the other.) It is an intractability which, at its deepest levels, takes its power from the trans-human empty set which necessarily inhabits all the living cells of our being and plays itself out in our everyday discourse.

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FROM HELL OR FROM NOWHERE? NON-PLACES IN DOUGLAS COUPLAND'S NOVELS

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Marc Augé's terminology of non-places, especially when fused with the related Foucauldian notion of the heterotopia, generates a fertile way of discussing 'place-ness', both in actual, experiential life and with regards to our representational or textualized encounters with place. If the non-place in its bare definition is a place a person or a character only spends transitional time in, or a place which encourages only transitory engagement, then one might suggest that a literary text's affective qualities can to some extent be measured by the frequency of non-places being used as settings. Similarly, if a heterotopia, or space of otherness, in Foucault's parlance is a place whose use-value to an extent is determined by the users' counter-tactics to the place's strategically designated purpose (cf. de Certeau 1984), such places can offer very enticing possibilities for use as fictional canvases or settings, especially in post-modern or neo-transcendental writings dealing with the clashes between the ordinary and the sublime. This article postulates that Douglas Coupland is one such author, whose fictional canvases draw extensively on non-places and heterotopias with the exact purpose of experimenting with transcendence for characters caught in the postmodern condition, but not necessarily victims thereof.

Douglas Coupland is nominally a Canadian author, though he was born overseas on a NATO base in what was then (1961) West

Germany – a biographical fact which to an extent shapes his career as a migratory author, creating characters who are preoccupied with location and place. He has subsequently spent considerable time in countries other than the one he is a citizen of, including the US, Japan and various European locations (his favorite Danish place is, in fact, Legoland – a heterotopic, affectless simulacrum of Denmark). A seasoned traveler, perhaps even a one-time member of what he himself termed "the poverty jet-set" in his debut novel *Generation X* (1991), Coupland has spent more than his fair share of time in non-places such as airport lounges, hotel and motel rooms, generic franchise bars and restaurants, as well as shopping malls, long-distance rail compartments, etc. etc. These non-places recur throughout his fictions as settings for his characters' existential musings, nervous breakdowns and crying fits, and as springboards for their epiphanies.

In other words, the object of this article is to examine the literary topography of Coupland's story worlds in *Generation X* as well as in more recent novels, of which particular attention is given to *Hey Nostradamus!* (2003). The tension between presence and absence in this topography is palpable, and several Coupland plots involve characters trying to cope with living in a world consisting nearly entirely of non-places. In such a 'Life After God' (also the title of his first short story collection, 1994) strategies for replenishment of meaning and belonging can be hard to come by – yet every Coupland story offers up hope for such strategies succeeding. Does this then make Coupland a post-ironic, or post-cynical writer? And what role does place play in bolstering the hope of the characters?

Generation X is set in the desert of Palm Springs and its characters all have their lives temporarily on hold while they work so-called "McJobs" which are to real jobs what a McDonalds "meal" is to a real dinner. These McJobs all are located in generic non-places: One character is a part-time bartender in a lobby bar, while another works behind an imitation jewelry counter in a shopping mall. The condo units they inhabit in their time off work are also non-places, pre-furnished housing-units rather than homes. Coupland's next

two novels can be read as a world tour of non-places. *Shampoo Planet* (1992) sees its protagonist Tyler perform a grand tour of Europe on a Eurail pass, and he seeks out generic European locations of the most stereotypical kind: German nuclear power plants, Parisian sidewalk bistros, and the ubiquitous waiting rooms and train compartments, youth hostels and other backpacker income bracket non-places and heterotopias. This novel contains one visit to a potentially more authentic European pilgrimage site or power-place, namely Jim Morrison's grave at Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris, but that place has been voided of its sanctity by the revelers and litterers of Generation X who have rendered the place de-auratic with obscene graffiti and empty bottles. *Microserfs* (1995) is set in a high-tech workplace or, as the characters term it, a 'campus', and they live in group-homes where they are perpetually stuck in immature early adulthood, as if they have never been able to leave college. One could go on listing the non-places of Coupland's story worlds, up to his recent novel *Player One*, (2010) which is entirely set in an airport cocktail lounge under siege by a terrorist sniper as the apocalypse approaches, or possibly in a video game's virtual reality simulacrum of the same non-place, as the title character's 'name' might indicate. But a better strategy seems to dwell in somewhat more detail on the story-world of *Generation X*, and then by comparison on some of the settings in *Hey Nostradamus!* to elucidate that even the bleak teal-colored non-places (often labeled "generic North Vancouver") endemic to the latter novel may in fact be sites of revelations and redemption in Coupland's fictions.

In *Generation X*, the narrator, Andy, casually observes, speaking of the dating patterns and friendships of the group of youthful protagonists that he focalizes for, that nowadays everyone and everything seem to be either from nowhere or from hell. The narrator invites the reader to muse on whether these two points of origin are really that different from one another:

> Dag is from Toronto, Canada (dual citizenship). Claire is from Los Angeles, California. I, for that matter, am from

Portland, Oregon, but where you are from feels sort of ir-
relevant these days ("Since everyone has the same stores
in their mini-malls," according to my younger brother Ty-
ler). (Coupland 1991, 4)

Thus the place of origin is seen as irrelevant because of the extreme
cultural leveling that has taken place due to the commodification
and globalization of our life-worlds. Place-wise the leveling has
resulted in the creation of more non-places ("mini-malls") that are
the same wherever one comes from. Why bother to mention 'from'-
ness, then, if it "feels sort of irrelevant"? Apparently place is not so
easily done away with, since it leaves this residue of having to be
mentioned. Later the narrator reflects further on the phenomenon.
Claire has announced that she has been on a "Date from hell" (Cou-
pland 1991, 5), or that her date was "from hell" (both meanings are
indicated), and Andy generalizes the idiom by speculating:

I wonder that all things seem to be from hell these days:
dates, jobs, parties, weather… Could the situation be that
we no longer believe in that particular place? Or maybe
that we were promised heaven in our lifetimes, and what
we ended up with can't help but suffer in comparison.
(Coupland 1991, 7)

This raises the complex problem of belief, here very specifically tied
to place-ness, and the question of the non-place (if one momentar-
ily suggests that the definition of non-place also could be as a place
bereft of belief). What does it actually mean to believe in a place, be
it heaven or hell? And how can one believe in a place that one can-
not verify by visiting and returning from it? What remains beyond
these not-so-rhetorical questions is that *Generation X* is a text that is
extremely preoccupied with the alignment of place and being, as
will become apparent in the following thematic analysis.

Generation X features a trio of protagonists who suffer from a
feeling of ennui and disgust with consumer society, which means

they have opted out of the career race, and as a result have more time on their hands to examine their own emotions. Coupland's earliest protagonists thus could be diagnosed as suffering from a form of neurotic narcissism. Their choosing to live in Palm Springs is thus a form of both (inner) fugue and (outer, worldly) refuge. Andy, Dag and Claire are all disappointed in life and what they have been able to accomplish. Chance has brought them together in the peculiar non-place of Palm Springs, where they pass the time doing meaningless menial jobs and telling each other little allegories of their lives and times. They are platonic friends and, at least as far as the two male characters are concerned, quite sex-less in behavior and thought. One has the impression that they psycho-sexually have chosen to remain pre-teens, out of fear of getting hurt by the attendant commitments and psychological high cost of loving. ("I must say, if nothing else, all of us just being friends does simplify life." (Coupland 1991, 61))

Dag is basically angry and frustrated, because of some (self-)betrayals he has experienced. He tends to let his anger find outlet in random acts of vandalism, and acerbically ironic behavior towards people who are older and better off than he is. His anger is pinpointed towards social agencies that somehow have disturbed the tranquility of mind that he associates with a pre-nuclear, pre-apocalyptic American childhood. Andy sums up Dag's essence as one of being untouched by history and the future, frozen as an old photographic image, thus indicating the themes of nostalgia and innocence that are essential for the rest of the novel and reach far beyond this initial characterization of Dag:

> To watch him [...] you can't help but be helplessly reminded of the sort of bleached Kodak snapshots taken decades ago and found in shoe boxes in attics everywhere. [...] When you see such photos you can't help but wonder at just how sweet and sad and innocent all moments of life are rendered by the tripping of a camera's shutter, for at that point the future is still unknown and has yet to hurt

us, and also for that brief moment, our poses are accepted
as honest. (Coupland 1991, 17)

Dag is the most typical generational representative of the novel
(and closest to being the fictional alter ego of 'Doug' Coupland),
whereas Andy is more of the 'X' of the title and harder to reduce to
a simple causal narrative. Dag is morbidly afraid of and fascinated
with the end of the world in a nuclear holocaust. This is his major
trauma; one that he compulsively keeps thematizing in the stories
he tells to the other two ("The end of the world is a recurring mo-
tif in Dag's bedtime stories" (Coupland 1991, 62)). He has ended
up dropping out of competitive work-life and society in general,
because of the impossible compromises his (low prospect) career
as an office worker forced him into, but also because his ironic and
cynically superior psychological cover was blown by one of his co-
workers, who shamed him, on a bet, by finding the one person who
got famous without any cash being involved (Anne Frank). This is a
highly significant scene which not only leads him to Palm Springs,
but also later mandates him to try to realize his own cash-less uto-
pian project of running a hotel in Mexico where the guests pay with
stories rather than cash. Thus the Anne Frank episode is both one of
the crucial trauma events in Dag's life and the germ of the therapy
that will eventually cure his cynicism. Mexico is, as we shall see in
more detail later, posited as having potential 'place'-ness in lieu of
the endemic 'non-place'-ness of the USA.

Claire, by contrast, is much more of a cipher as a character. She
comes into the setting as one sibling in a huge clan of refugees from
Los Angeles, all New Agers who fear that the end of the world is
imminent. Claire is totally unlike her family, and even formulates
her feeling of being trapped with strangers with an emotional stran-
glehold on her, the very first time she meets Andy:

I really think that when God puts together families, he
sticks his finger into the white pages and selects a group of
people at random and then says to them all, "Hey! you're

going to spend the next seventy years together, even though you have nothing in common and don't even *like* each other. *And*, should you not feel yourself caring about any of this group of strangers, *even for a second*, you will feel just *dreadful*." (Coupland 1991, 37 (author's emphases))

She thereby precisely pinpoints another key theme of the novel, namely the inter-generational agon with the attendant guilt symptoms that all the characters undergo and to some extent are maimed by. She elects to temporarily break out of the family clutches, instead entering into a non-familial *Wahlverwandschaft*, using as her excuse the embarrassment of her father's faked (or real) heart attack, coupled with his attempt to steal (fake) silverware from the poolside restaurant which is the setting for this scene. She settles with a McJob in Palm Springs. In a sense, this act of elective affinity is also a reverting to childhood for her, which is indicated by her behavior at the end of the scene where Andy overhears her: "In her small voice she was talking to the sun and telling it she was very sorry, if we'd hurt it or caused it any pain. I knew then that we were friends for life" (Coupland 1991, 38). This almost unbearably pathetic moment of naive vulnerability impresses Andy deeply, and her vulnerability is indeed one which no other *Generation X* character shares in such pure form.

Andy, himself, is stranded in Palm Springs "trying to erase all traces of history from my past" (Coupland 1991, 36), and because of this repression of the past (and of course because he is the narrator), he is in control of how and when he lets the reader in on his own traumas. We know early on that he goes to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings (Coupland 1991, 13), and in fact he claims that this has made him invent the one most characteristic behavior pattern of his entire life, and also the pattern that really bonds the trio of friends together: the habit of storytelling with the following ethics: "We're not allowed to interrupt, just like in AA, and at the end we're not allowed to criticize" (Coupland 1991, 14). This risk-free and non-pressuring environment for the storytelling is necessary, because "the three of us are so tight assed about revealing our emotions"

(Coupland 1991, 14). This little snippet of information is also symptomatic of the cultural ennui and social voluntary exile the characters have taken upon themselves. Andy's policy of erasure is the crucial fact about him and opens up some major thematics of the novel. He says about his personality, metaphorically expressed as wardrobe habit: "I dress to be obscure, to be hidden – to be generic. Camouflaged" (Coupland 1991, 15). Andy tells his friends how he came to the point of desiring the anonymity and low stress-level of life in the desert. This is similar to Dag's story in that it entails a violent upheaval emotionally, and a sudden personal epiphany, triggered by somebody else's mistaken yet provocative look upon life. In Andy's case, he has apparently been a high-powered fashion or celebrity journalist or public relations person, working in Japan. Here his boss wishes to have a heart-to-heart with Andy about their most precious possession, and when Andy realizes a) that he doesn't have any one such possession, and b) that his boss' is horribly banal and degrading, he rushes out of the office with a quote from Rainer Maria Rilke on his mind. Rilke's notion being, he explains: "[T]hat we are all of us born with a letter inside us, and that only if we are true to ourselves, may we be allowed to read it before we die" (Coupland 1991, 58). This old-fashioned creed of 'to one's own self be true' may seem trivial to postmodern man, but to Andy there is no irony in this belief, merely the triggering of the escape mechanism that has led him to his present quest for solitude and sums up what he needs at present:

> Two days later I was back in Oregon, back in the New World, breathing less crowded airs, but I knew even then that there was still too much history there for me. That I needed less in life. Less past.
>
> So I came down here, to breathe dust and walk with the dogs – to look at a rock or a cactus and know that I am the first person to see that cactus and that rock. And to try and read the letter inside me. (Coupland 1991, 59)

We note several key thematics congregating here. First, that Andy's desire involves a strong bodily dimension: to breathe things and take them into one's body, to see things and smell them, and in general to commune with nature and other mute creatures such as his dogs. Secondly, that his mundane experiences, regardless of how trivial they are, are validated by their uniqueness and originality ("I am the first person to see"). He is thus imbuing the non-place of Palm Springs with a sense of purpose, symbolically seeking to re-emplace it and himself in a larger context.

Reinvigoration in existential terms is thus shown to be an important issue already from the inception of Douglas Coupland's authorship. Place is a good measure of affect throughout the novel, and various liminal localities, such as the desert, serve to highlight the characters' development throughout the book. As places become re-auratized, characters also come out of their fugues. However, *Generation X*, being a heteroglossic text with numerous para-textual features and other non-narrative discourses represented (including a margin encyclopedia and an appendix loaded with statistical facts), is still trapped in uncertainties pertaining to irony and authorial intention. Coupland could be said to be hiding behind the many layers of representation he wraps his simple story in. The question is therefore if his more mature work can be seen more clearly as a moral, or even Christian quest for redemption carried out by Coupland through his damaged characters. One critic (indeed one of the very few to engage with later works by Coupland, who has otherwise mainly been analyzed on the strength of *Generation X*), Mary W. McCampbell, in fact sees *Hey Nostradamus!* (our next exemplary case) as "an examination and interrogation of the tension between humanity's capacity for evil and the possibility of experiencing transcendence and redemption" (McCampbell 2009, 137). She, however, reads the novel as containing "multiple biblical themes" (McCampbell 2009, 137), as well as it being preoccupied with character development, as opposed to earlier works' focus on "sardonic cultural critique" (McCampbell 2009, 137), and interprets its ending as an "unexpected portrait of redemption" and "an ac-

knowledgement of hope through the possibility of spiritual transformation." (McCampbell 2009, 154) While it is unquestionably true that the novel commences with and has its tone set by an epigraph from Corinthians, promising resurrection and judgment for all, I believe the following analysis reveals that McCampbell overstates her case for Coupland's Christian conversion and the attendant toning down of his social critique. The omnipresence in the novel of firearms and the tragedies caused by their firing certainly to me indicates a political critique that one is hardly likely to find in Christian circles in the US. Coupland's own take on the epigraph (quoted also by McCampbell (McCampbell 2009, 140)) is as follows:

> What it's saying, I think, is that heaven and hell are just a breath away, but at any moment something startling could happen to you, something amazingly, suddenly – no matter what you're feeling, the world would become charged with meaning and the feeling of something better.

This, to me, reads as an epiphanic insight that it is the present world, and not the hereafter, that can and should be re-auratized, and I firmly believe that this is what Coupland is attempting to show through his characters' progress through the non-places he puts them in. I therefore agree more with Colin Hutchinson who restrains himself to claiming the existence of a general trend toward the spiritual in recent Coupland fictions: "[T]his need for some form of personal confirmation within a collective context takes on an increasingly spiritual dimension – an indicator, perhaps, that in the contemporary American context, social communion and spiritual surrender are rarely far apart." (Hutchinson 2008, 40) Here the social situatedness, or place-bound qualities of Coupland's fiction are fittingly emphasized.

In Coupland's 2003 novel *Hey Nostradamus!* which is narrated by four characters involved in or impacted by a high school massa-

cre, the original victim of the shooting, Cheryl Anway,[1] has written (as it turns out, as her very last words while alive) on her school-work binder the little koan-like poem: "God is Nowhere/God is Now Here", echoing once more this fixation with the nature of "no-where" and what that 'place' (or non-place) might contain, if examined more closely. Just as the element of the 'X' as signifier of the unknown, the voided-out or kenotic, in *Generation X* only truly attains value when 'solved' (as in a mathematical equation) or found (as in the 'X' that marks the spot on a treasure map), one could argue along similar lines that for Coupland the "nowhere" of Cheryl's koan always contains in itself a somewhere, or "now here", just as the non-place always contains a 'place'-ness in itself. In Coupland's more mature works of fiction he has investigated carefully whether the "nowhere" indeed may become a present "now here" through faith, i.e. the presence of God, as indicated by the koan in *Hey Nostradamus!*

Hey Nostradamus! is set in three distinct, recent decades. The high-school shooting takes place in 1988, and that portion is narrated posthumously by Cheryl, one of the shooting victims, who after she is killed dwells in a waiting room-like non-place where dead people wait before they presumably move on to a more settled afterlife. In this place the only 'messages' from our world that penetrate are prayers and curses performed by the living.

The second, and most substantial part of the novel is set in 1999, and is narrated by Cheryl's husband Jason (they eloped as under-age teens to Vegas, and got married in a de-auratized heterotopia there – a wedding chapel that served a complementary snack platter and bubbly drink to the happy couple and their witnesses), who is still struggling with the trauma of the shooting, Cheryl's death, the violence he himself perpetrated on the day of the shooting (killing

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1   The novel's characters have such generic names, that one is tempted to call them non-names. Cheryl's is either "Anway" or almost "anyway", and a bland couple are Kent and Barb, or almost Ken and Barbie. This naming joke is yet another sign that Coupland has not abandoned irony entirely.

one of the gunmen) and the suspicion and stigma he was exposed to in the weeks after the shooting where the RCMP tried to pin on him the role of mastermind behind the shooting. Jason has become a builder who modifies the homes of rich Vancouverites who think their generic houses can become homes if they get custom-made heated towel racks installed. His own dwelling is a bachelor pad that he never cleans or tidies, being unable to invest enough of himself in the place to take responsibility for making it a home.

The third segment is narrated by Heather, Jason's lover, who tries to cope with Jason's sudden, unexplainable disappearance in 2002 (the reader can guess that Jason's frequent drug-related blackouts during which he commits crimes in the company of Russian mobsters might be the reason for his demise). Heather is a court stenographer who spends her days in a specialized, but dehumanized heterotopia, namely the courtroom, attempting to, and eventually succeeding in blocking out the stream of voices of lawyers, criminals and judges, which to her has become the generic buzzing of vermin. Heather is a woman who has been lonely her entire adult life before meeting Jason, and it is unbearable to her to even contemplate going back to the lonely state she is doomed to if Jason is indeed dead. She is so desperate to hold on to him that she falls for the scam of a psychic who claims to have messages from Jason she can buy at an increasingly high price. Her interactions with the psychic take place in a sequence of non-places, cafes and restaurants, and eventually the psychic's own home, all of which illustrate the existential loneliness of both Heather and her would-be exploiter.

The novel's fourth and final section is narrated by Jason's father, Reg, who belatedly realizes that his excessive religious zeal has driven his entire family away from him. He has lost his favorite son, Kent, to a meaningless car accident, and now Jason is presumed dead as well. Reg is described in great detail throughout the novel by the other narrators as a soul-less man who cannot fathom the needs of other human beings, and whose religious ideas involve believing that Jason by killing a gunman at the shooting, thus saving many peoples' lives, is a common murderer that he must shun, and

also that twins (such as his own grandchildren) who come from the same egg only have one soul between them, wherefore one of them cannot expect to ever go to heaven. In the final section of the novel Reg turns out to not be so callous after all, and an awakening of his ability to show compassion (which he attains in the generic non-place of a hospital room) leads him to repent and reach out to Jason. The coda of the novel is Reg's letter to Jason, whom he believes has become a version of the mythological Canadian Sasquatch figure, a wilderness-dwelling abominable snowman or Bigfoot, who for Reg has been a point of identification since childhood:

> It was the Sasquatch I'd always identified with, and per-
> haps you can see why: a creature lost in the wilderness,
> forever in hiding, seeking companionship and friendship,
> living alone, without words or kindness from others.
> (Coupland 2003, 232)

Reg has of course described himself perfectly with these words. His inability to communicate genuinely without running his emotions through the dogmatic formulations of his Christian fundamental-ism has isolated him from those he want to love and reach out to. He feels misunderstood and unloved, a monstrous Sasquatch that humans can only reach through violent rejection.

Hey Nostradamus! thus ends with a bucolic scene, where Reg imagines pinning copies of the letter to Jason he has finally been able to compose (at 1 a.m. in a Kinko's lit with fluorescent lamps – as barren a non-place as Coupland could imagine) to every tree in the vicinity of the woods where Jason's belongings have been discov-ered. The description of Jason's final dwelling place is sublime and pathos-filled at the same time:

> Spiderwebs vacant, their builders snug inside cocoons;
> sumac and vine maples turned yellow and red, smelling
> like chilled candy. You're the Sasquatch now, searching for
> someone to take away your loneliness, dying as you live

with your sense of failed communion with others. You're hidden but you're there, Jason. And I clearly remember from when I was growing up, the Sasquatch was never without hope, even if all he had to be hopeful about was bumping into me one day. (Coupland 2003, 243)

We note the childishness of Reg's fantasy, and how he transposes his own emotions onto the figure of Jason in an attempt at stopping the intergenerational transfer of trauma that we now understand he was a victim of through his own father's anger and rejection of Reg as a young boy. In *Hey Nostradamus!* the surviving characters must live on without much comfort or real basis for their hopes.[2] Reg, at least has the liminal, uncanny, yet homely figure of the Sasquatch to identify with and offer to his son as a gestalt to live on in after death. Heather, however, is reduced to bottling up her olfactory memories of Jason by ziplocking his clothes and other belongings in plastic bags that she plans to open and sniff when she gets so depressed and lonely that she needs such medication to live on. She seems doomed to continue to live a suspended life in non-places.

By contrast, it is nature in a sublime and liminal form ("a swamp and its surrounding forest" (Coupland 2003, 243)) that becomes the place that gives rebirth to the characters who escape the non-places. Earlier in the novel Jason, who had killed one of the gunmen in the non-place of the high-school cafeteria with a stone from such a riverbed, but one that had been de-auratized for use in a tree planter for "keeping cigarette butts out of the soil" (Coupland 2003, 58), elects <u>not</u> to murder again when he has the opportunity and justification to do so. This scene occurs in a rocky riverbed that reminds him both of the Capilano River from which the killing stone had come, and the daffodil farm he had grown up visiting

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2   This indicates that critics such as Louis Greenberg only are partially justified in claiming that later Coupland characters such as "Reg in *Hey Nostradamus!* particularly, become more complex, discrete characters" when compared to the *Generation X* ones. (Greenberg 2013, 73)

with his father on when he was a child. Jason instead elects to commit "an antimurder" (Coupland 2003, 126) and drops the rock back in the riverbed, letting the Russian mobster who had brought him there to kill him live on, despite Jason having had him at his mercy. Murder thus seems confined to the settings of non-places (Barb, who surprisingly also turns out to be capable of murder, commits her crime in "a twenty-nine-dollar-a-night motel room" in Vegas, another generic non-place), whereas redemptive acts occur in settings of liminal nature.

Comparing this to other selected endings of Coupland novels, a pattern emerges. *Shampoo Planet* ends with the reconciliation of an American couple who had become alienated from one another when a European *femme fatale* figure came between them. This reconciliation is dramatic in the extreme, as their apartment floor collapses and they find themselves in the apartment below, in Edenic surroundings due to the fact that their downstairs neighbor had converted his living space into a jungle environment, complete with birds and other wild animals in a habitat that included an artificial stream running through his living room. They are thus literally reborn in love as a new Adam and Eve, or as newly charged elements in the two periodic tables that Coupland designed and published as the flap texts for *Shampoo Planet*.

Generation X also features a climactic scene where Andy drives south towards Mexico where he and the other two protagonists are going to start a hotel where customers pay, not with money, but with stories. On the way towards the Mexican border he is frightened to see a huge cloud of smoke which in his mind brings associations of a mushroom cloud, signaling the potential world-ending nuclear apocalypse that his friend Dag has had premonitions of throughout the novel. As he comes closer to the source of the smoke, however, he sees that it is a much more regenerative event he is witnessing. The cause of the smoke is a field being cleared by a controlled burn that will rejuvenate and fertilize the soil so that a new crop can be raised out of it. The blackness of the fresh burn is brilliantly contrasted by the perfect whiteness of an egret who had come to feed on

insects caught by the burn. This phoenix-like white bird that soars out of the black ashes is an omen that the *Generation X* protagonists will be able to restart their lives and not continue the frustrations of McJobs, catering to the pseudo-needs of yuppie wastrels. This scene ends the novel, but the desert has been a constant source of renewal to the characters throughout, as they choose to go there whenever stories of who they are and want to become need to be told. At the very beginning of the book Andy has witnessed a total solar eclipse from the vantage point of a cornfield in the middle of the Canadian prairie. The day before he has spent in a non-place, a motel-room so generic that all he can say about it is that the glasses provided for the guests to drink from have been rewrapped in cellophane so often that they are no longer transparent.

Transparency is in fact what Coupland characters most seem to desire. Whether in matters of love or life, the redemption always comes in places that are immediately outside of the functionalist boundaries of non-places. More precisely put, the non-places are an integral part of the existential exchanges that lead to transparency. Characters learn compassion from nature, but also from seeing how other humans live out their entire existence trapped in the non-places of non-nature. Coupland offers potentially re-auratized lives to those characters who dare the violent leap out of non-place into nature. If this is a sincere project on the author's part, we must conclude that he is a cautious post-cynical, post-ironic, neo-Romantic figure, rather than the pop-modernist he is usually read as (See Forshaw 2000, 41 for an early attempt at discussing "the problem of irony" in Coupland, in which the author, mistakenly sees "the landscape he describes, more or less, [as] a topographical tabula rasa; an emptied out or blank space, inhospitable and difficult."). The analysis of 'place'-ness and the opposition of non-place and re-auratized place equips us to better categorize Coupland's work, compared to such earlier critics.

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FROM THE ROUNDABOUT TO THE CAROUSEL: NON-PLACES AS COMIC PLAYGROUNDS IN THE CINEMA OF JACQUES TATI

Wolfram Nitsch

NON-PLACES AS SETTINGS

Since its introduction about twenty years ago, the term 'non-places' has proved so successful that it still haunts its creator, Marc Augé. Wherever the French anthropologist appears, he has to relate to the cultural and social scientific debate that he has unleashed. The concept of *non-lieux* was characterized by sharp contrasts in his essay of the same name that was published in 1992, but it has since been modified by critical readers and then by Augé himself.

The concept was introduced as a generic term for the mainly abstract and standardized zones which Augé sees as characteristic of supermodernity: means of transport such as aircraft or high speed trains, transit spaces such as airports and highways, and spaces of consumption such as shopping malls or amusement parks (Augé 1992). In such zones, what is distant always seems to be present, and the notion of a distinct cultural territory is lost. Thus, Augé defines non-places in opposition to the 'anthropological places' that represent a significant cultural identity. Anthropological places are the specific and characteristic locations in which we meet a different culture. In non-places, by way of contrast, there is only the superficial recognition of a global civilization. Even at a crossroads in the modern metropolis, an encounter still seems possible, but at a supermodern highway intersection, we pass each other in isolation (Augé 1992, 135). In this regard, Augé sees non-places as com-

plementary to what Pierre Nora calls 'sites of memory' or *lieux de mémoire* (Augé 1992, 37, 100; Nora 1984). However, the latter do not represent a living environment of collective memory; instead, they attempt to artificially revive a history which is already cut off from the present. They comprise, for example, the simulacra of local monuments which, in airports and beside motorways, refer to anthropological places that are no longer within reach. When it comes to non-places, concrete experience and living memory have irrevocably disappeared (Augé 1992).

In more recent work by Augé and his readers, however, this thesis-like definition has been nuanced in two ways. Firstly, historian Karl Schlögel has argued for a temporalisation of the term. Depending on the degree of their frequentation and their lighting, non-places can occur either as 'hot spots' or 'cold spots'. According to Schlögel, an energy potential occurs in highly frequented and brightly lit transit zones and can produce something new, or turn the non-place into an "incubation space" (Schlögel 2003, 296). By way of contrast, an abandoned and darkened transit space is a non-place that looks like a desert or a dead zone. In extreme cases, they resemble *Unorte* in Jörg Dünne's sense: permanently lost places that are no longer accessible (Dünne 2012, 21). The opposition between places and non-places can be changed by heating or cooling: an extremely functional shopping center can be transformed into an urban wasteland, but the wasteland can also be transformed into a space full of creative possibilities. Even Augé himself has recently admitted that the Parisian office district of La Défense seems quite different during the day than during the night (Augé, lecture in Bonn, November 10, 2009). Similarly, new case studies have led him to historicize the concept as Schlögel had suggested. This is apparent from his essay *Le métro revisité*. Twenty years after the first, controversial report, Augé again describes the Paris metro (Augé 2008). The metro, which has sometimes simplistically been labeled as a non-place, did not become a non-place until the late 20th century. In its modern phase, the metro constituted a space of collective and individual memories with historical station and line

names. Thus it stimulated personal memory, which was connected with the daily route as a "lifeline". Not until later did the metro become a supermodern transit zone due to decentralization, musealization and mediatization; this occurred through extension of the lines far beyond the city limits, through built-in memory boards and showcases, and through the dismissal of staff replaced by automatic control and communication systems. In this sense, the metro reflects Augé's sketch of the transition from the city of memory to the city of fiction. Before IT screens were introduced, the metro as a historical and social zone of contact included some of the characteristics of Foucault's heterotopia – characteristics of another space in which the non-coincident and the distant used to meet (Augé 1997; Foucault 1994). In his article on "The city's places and non-places", Augé further clarifies his concept. Drawing on Michel de Certeau, whether a site is experienced as a non-place depends on the subjective 'spatial practices' of the subject. An airport does not have the same meaning for a traveller as it does for an employee; a shopping mall seems different to customers than to the young people who, with no intention of consuming, simply use it as a meeting place (Augé 2000; Certeau 1990). Consequently, whereas a non-place is the antithesis of a utopia by definition, it may eventually acquire utopian potential (Augé 2010). If non-places are deployed tactically in opposition to their planners' strategy, they will resemble adjacent fallow fields or *terrains vagues* which are open to all (Nitsch 2013).

It is possible to observe this temporalization and perspectivization in a number of recent films that have chosen non-places as their central setting. Augé never addresses this opportunity, although he is perfectly willing to refer to film. In particular, he focuses on films that attempt to recall the sites of modernity or which explore the wild surroundings of supermodern non-places. As an example of the former, he cites Murnau's *Sunrise* (1927), in which the modern metropolis is an exciting venue, and as an example of the latter, Wenders' *Lisbon Story* (1994), a film that thematizes *terrains vagues* at the margins of the highway (Augé 1997, 152, 170-171). In recent decades, films have often focused on abstract transit spaces (Hainge

2008). Thus, Paris airports function as key arenas: Orly appears in Angela Schanelec's film of the same name, and in Roch Stéphanik's melodrama *Stand By* (2000), while Roissy appears in Danièle Thompson's romantic comedy *Jet Lag* (2002). In Éric Rohmer's six-part film cycle *Comédies et proverbes*, two whole movies take place in the so-called *villes nouvelles*, the monstrous satellite towns which grew up straight off the drawing board as the metro was being extended. *Les Nuits de la pleine lune* (1984) was recorded in Marne-la-Vallée, immediately next to Disneyland, while *L'ami de mon amie* (1987) was set in Cergy-Pontoise, another densely populated suburb west of Paris. In particular, the latter emphasizes how a faceless non-place can have unexpected charm as the location for a comedy (Nitsch 2001). Two aspects must be differentiated: dramatic expression and the cinematographic highlighting of a potential that is not visible in everyday life. On the one hand, the action of *L'ami de mon amie* aims at a subjective appropriation of what initially appears to be a harsh environment. Whereas the shy female protagonist initially appears lost in a satellite city that only seems to consist of transit zones, a residential complex and an amusement park, she later experiences the *ville nouvelle* as a new city of love, while the old town of Paris loses this distinction. The film presents an entirely different story than the stories of superficial experiences which non-sites usually tell so that they can oppose the impression of emptiness, according to Aldo Legnaro (Legnaro & Birenheide 2005). Similarly, Rohmer's comedy also undertakes a cinematographic upgrade of the satellite town. Dressed in the municipal colours of Cergy-Pontoise, the couples finally come together after many complications, the standardized residential complex is presented in the magical light of the musical, and the artificial amusement park becomes the suburban idyll of poetic realism. Through the eye of the camera, the dull satellite town finally appears to be an aesthetically interesting place. However, long before the architecturally aware Rohmer, it was another of the grand old men of French film comedy who tried his hand at both aspects of the filmic transformation of non-places on the level of the plot and in terms of staging: the comedian and filmmaker Jacques Tati.

A LABYRINTH OF GLASS

Tati turned his full attention to non-places in no less than three of his six full feature films. He did so not just in playing the main role of comic hero Monsieur Hulot, but also as a script writer and director who was so obsessed with detail that his pedantry earned him the nickname "Tatillon". To a certain degree, he filmed abstract zones on location, namely in the last Hulot film *Trafic* (1971), in which the outsider employed as a car designer is primarily to be found on motorways, in service stations and in car parks. Normally, however, he created these zones in the studio, with advice provided by the theatre painter and architect Jacques Lagrange. The supermodern villa Arpel is related to Lagrange's work. In Tati's Oscar-winning *Mon Oncle* (1958), the villa represents the complete opposite of Hulot's complex home in a picturesque Parisian suburb characterized by *terrains vagues*. For the widescreen film *Playtime* (1967), Lagrange even built a whole neighbourhood consisting of skyscrapers and transit spaces (Ede & Goudet 2002). Soon to become known as "Tativille", this ensemble was built in one of the outskirts of Paris with empty fields, which, in contrast with *Mon Oncle*, no longer appear before the camera but are only glimpsed for a brief moment at the end of the contemporary short film *Cours du soir* (1967). While the non-place has no opposite in *Playtime*, it does have a number of counterparts in the architecture of contemporary Paris. As part of the so-called 'Second Haussmannisation' of the 1960s and 1970s and partly influenced by Lagrange, Paris was undergoing reconstruction in fast forward to fit what were already the prevalent international norms of modernity elsewhere (Nerdinger 2004; Marchand 1993). Nevertheless, Tati's film city was ahead of its time by quite a few years, which is why it has later justifiably been called "La Défense avant La Défense" (Daney 1983, 133). Today, the film which was created in this largely mobile and therefore apparently enormous setting appears even more visionary than the setting itself. The film proved to be a bad investment for Tati himself, in that it never managed to repay the expensive building and shooting costs, not even in the short version produced shortly after the film's premiere. Since

the original version of the film was re-launched at Cannes in 2002, however, film critics have come to regard it as an epochal experiment because, for the first time in the history of the genre, it is not the comic protagonist but the setting that is central. The true main role of *Playtime* is played by the high-rise neighbourhood around which Hulot moves for a whole day; as a pure version of the non-place, it creates a continuous comic confusion which is by no means confined to the experience of the protagonist.

This is already apparent in the first setting, Orly Airport, which was also duplicated for the purpose. Hulot has yet to appear when the establishing shot presents a long passage to Gates N and O, together forming the word "No". All place-specific characteristics are negated to the extent that the terminal can barely be identified as a terminal: it is more like being in a hospital. In this clinically clean environment, two nuns pass by followed by a nurse with a baby, while a wife gives her husband the benefits of her medical advice. Even the audience is confused by the high level of abstraction. In French boulevard comedy, it is only certain protagonists who might mistake a hat shop for a registry office (Nitsch 2013, 504-507), but here entire cinema audiences are taken in by the radical erasure of all locality. Only when a plane appears behind a window and *Aéroport de Paris* becomes visible does it become possible to place the scene unequivocally in Orly.

This certainly makes it clear that the group of female American tourists who will appear again and again has landed in Paris, but it could easily be forgotten were it not for occasional glimpses of place-names on road signs and busses and brief reflections of Parisian landmarks when Barbara, the youngest tourist in the party, opens a glass door (Ede & Goudet, 153-155). Apart from these virtual clues as to the setting of events, the party of tourists moves through a business and office zone that is entirely without local colour and which is monotonous in every way (Hilliker 2002; Rammler 2002). Grey tones and cold colours dominate throughout, just as they do in the gangster films that were produced by Melville at the time. Even the desserts on offer in the local "drugstore" look colourless and alien

in the poisonous green light of the shop. Against this background, a single stall with flowers attracts Barbara's attention. Apart from the moss-green buses, the stall is the only outpost of old Paris. However, Barbara cannot manage to take a typical souvenir snapshot because American and Japanese tourists keep turning up on the edges of the picture. The greyness of the area is complemented, secondly, by its lack of profile. In particular, the interiors of buildings are so smooth that it is impossible to gain purchase anywhere. When Hulot is looking for Giffard, he arrives on a bus and enters an office block where he overbalances several times on the linoleum floor, even with the support of his legendary umbrella. His sense of disorientation in this milieu is completed, thirdly, by the serial quality of the spaces he moves through. In the car park in front of the office block, he walks through two identical rows of cars. Similarly, in the building he encounters an entire floor of identical workplaces, whose sheer numbers are disorientating in themselves. Moreover, he encounters the same doors and furniture everywhere, so he even ends up in the wrong building, a nearby exhibition hall which is also full of serial products (Engell 2007, 56-61). Fourthly, the obscurity of this super-modern neighbourhood is paradoxically intensified by the clarity of the architecture. The ubiquitous glass facades and glass doors are also present in private homes and cause the ongoing confusion between interior and exterior space (McCann 2008). Hulot and Giffard fail to meet because each walks towards the other's mirror image and not towards the other person. Later, each of them bumps into a window which, as if by a law of nature, has remained unnoticed. Fifthly, the total transparency of the spaces is associated with a high level of exclusivity. The glass-dominated architecture allows the immediate identification and continuous surveillance of intruders like Hulot who do not fit in. Hulot has barely passed through the main entrance to the office block and gained entrance using an enormous entry telephone when he is pushed into a waiting room which can be inspected from all sides. He experiences something similar that evening when he collides painfully with a glass entrance door and then enters the distinguished "Royal Garden" restaurant. Since Hu-

lot appears to be drunk because he goes on staggering after his collision with the door, the staff wants to throw him out. Moreover, care is taken to cleanse this newly-opened establishment of all traces of its construction and of any damaged or tainted objects. All the shoes, coats and ties that are worn out in the course of an evening are put on by a waiter who has been sent outside, where, like a human waste container, he increasingly embodies what has been marginalized inside.

Unlike the guided and generally enthusiastic group of tourists, Hulot's discovery of this maximally standardized world of glass is entirely involuntary. An important appointment forces him into the office block, a mistake forces him into the exhibition hall, and hunger forces him into the drugstore and the restaurant. Similarly, a spontaneous invitation from an old acquaintance had just brought him into a whole apartment full of shop windows. In *Les vacances de Monsieur Hulot* and even in *Mon Oncle*, Hulot sometimes takes the initiative, but here he mostly seems to be at the mercy of his surroundings. In addition, the serialized nature of the neighbourhood affects him too in a way. In both Orly and Tativille, but especially in the latter, *doppelgängers* begin to turn up. Often, the close resemblance is only apparent at second glance. Tati's worthy efforts to delegate gags to various characters in *Playtime* and thereby democratize comedy is obviously primarily due to the abstract setting (Fieschi & Narboni, 8; Chion 1987). It seems that in a non-place that is so smooth and uniformly drab, everybody must suffer defeat sooner or later, albeit a defeat that is typical of impersonal situation comedy.

A CINEMATOGRAPHIC ROUNDABOUT
The extremely featureless scenery of *Playtime* can also be seen in another light. Especially in the second half of the overlong film the scenery becomes a new comic element. The film no longer represents a mere setting for permanent confusion and mistakes: it appears to be an area for creative play (Borden 2002). This applies both to the

action recorded by the cameras and to the way in which the cameras record the action (Peters 1971). Thanks to the hero's spontaneous interventions, what is produced on the level of the plot is a colourful and odd world that is almost completely absent from Tativille. This happens for the first time in the exhibition hall; encouraged by two female visitors, Hulot lights a lamp labelled "Lustro" that is among the exhibits. Suddenly, a small red light district opens up in the middle of this clinical interior. This seems even more striking in that an electric broom with glaring spotlights has just been presented as the unrivalled peak of the art of cleaning. But above all, Hulot is creative in making things happen during his visit to the "Royal Garden". Not only does he shatter the glass door when he enters, leaving the porter to mime the missing door. Later, he also accidentally tears the veneer off the ceiling, creating a small scene beside the scene. Next, a number of guests begin to play the roles of cooks and waiters, so a Parisian bistro emerges in the middle of this abstract restaurant. Thus Hulot, who has just dropped in, is unintentionally given the role of the architect who happens to be watching the opening of the "Royal Garden" and is festively presented with his folding ruler.

In parallel with Hulot's optical and haptic manipulation, Tati's direction of the film gives the non-place a different face. The second half of the film follows the formula, "from the angular to the round" (Ede & Goudet, 107-109, Blouin 2002). In the long restaurant sequence, the initially chilly atmosphere gradually warms up, indicating a change of movements. When the guests who are playing behind the torn down veneer take over the musical entertainment, the hectic linearity of the jazz dance is replaced by a rounder form of choreography, ending with a slow waltz accompanied by a spontaneous Parisian song. What is apparent here is the scenic significance of Tati's general observation that we move more angularly among strangers but in softer curves among people we know (Dondey 2009, 200). However, the change to the circular is not restricted to the nocturnal "Royal Garden". A rotation develops in front of the broken and simulated glass door when a drunk reveller adjusts his steps to fit in with the spiral shaped neon arrow over the entrance. At day-

break, the circular form is finally channelled out into outer space. In the "Drugstore", Hulot and his dance partner Barbara meet up with the other guests who have taken part in the spontaneous nocturnal games, and the "O" suddenly acquires a completely different meaning than it had in the opening sequence of the film. There, it was still part of the word "no", and thus characterized the non-place, but here it appears above the priest's head like a halo, thus sharing a certain nimbus with the formerly inhospitable bar. After dawn, rotational patterns even appear in the street. On her way to the bus, Barbara notices a rotating globe beside an airline office; the day before, there had only been the linear back and forth movements of an office chair. When she gets on the bus, a brush-seller briefly turns up, his wares dangling on an umbrella like people on a carousel.

This rotational tendency peaks in a sequence that drove some of the audience out of the cinema during the premiere of *Playtime* and which can still confuse critics today (Dondey 2000, 200; Hilliker 2002, 326). The scene is a roundabout in the centre of the glass neighbourhood, and it is passed by a bus carrying the American tourists back to the airport. Its appearance is no surprise; roundabouts are not only a ubiquitous French speciality but are also non-places par excellence. It is no coincidence that they can be traced back to an approximately hundred-year-old suggestion made by the Parisian town planner Eugène Hénard, pioneer in the smooth channeling of traffic (Hénard 2012). This development culminated in the construction of motorways. In fact, roundabouts look less like crossroads and more like motorway intersections, in that direct interaction between drivers is reduced to a minimum (Desportes 2005, 220-222, 297-298). Instead of driving past other people, one drives past an empty space, which, to avoid urban *horror vacui*, is often equipped with so-called 'roundabout art'. Hence the roundabout in Tativille can be seen as yet another emblem of alienation and isolation (Nerdinger 2004, 51). On the other hand, Tati's roundabout looks like a gigantic carousel. In contrast with other roads in the neighbourhood, this one is occupied by colourful vehicles that will not swing out to exit the roundabout and which partly perform a

vertical pendulum motion. This impression is reinforced by the refined interplay of scenographic and cinematographic effects. Some of the carousel-like up and down movements of the vehicles are already generated in the setting itself. A Citroën 2 CV demonstrates its hydraulic suspension; on the back of a motorbike, the female pillion rider is doing gymnastic exercises; and a workshop positioned right next to the roundabout has two constantly working car elevators. The carriageway definitely becomes a fairground ride with the help of *mise-en-scène* artifices such as picture montage and sound montage. When the circulating traffic is briefly mirrored in the oft-used high ceiling window, the pendular movement includes heavy vehicles. When the traffic stops for a moment, it is re-started by feeding a coin into a nearby parking meter, and the slowly rolling traffic is accompanied by a variety of fairground music. Thus the daily circulation machine is transformed into the mechanical ballet made famous by the accident scene in *Trafic*.

It is also important to remember the place in history of the carousel. It does not belong in the typical inventory of closed amusement parks such as Disneyland, which Augé also classifies as one of supermodernity's exemplary non-places (Augé 1997). Instead, the carousel refers to the open and rather dubious suburban street performers of early modernity, in what would better be described as a heterotopia than as an anti-utopia (Szabo 2006). These rough fairground sites are the original home of the cinema. In *Jour de fête* (1947), the cinema and the carousel constitute the two main attractions at a fair, but it is not only Tati's first full feature film that alludes to these humble origins. The roundabout sequence in *Playtime* also hints at it. Depicting the roundabout as a carousel marks both as 'cinematographic objects', that is, as iconic signs of the film reel in both the camera and the projector (Böttcher 2014). Tati uses these two pieces of apparatus to complete what Monsieur Hulot had started in his capacity as trigger of red lights and unintentional vandal: the reverse transformation of an abstract zone into a concrete and particular place.

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COLLISION AND MOVEMENT IN NICOLAS WINDING REFN'S *DRIVE*

Steen Ledet Christiansen

In this article, I will discuss the intensities of non-place in Nicolas Winding Refn's *Drive* (2011), arguing that the aesthetic articulation of cinematic space in the form of what Gilles Deleuze terms any-space-whatever opens up a better understanding of Marc Augé's concept of non-place as a tension between movements and collisions. No longer a Euclidean, geometric container but instead a field of sensations, Augé's non-places must be regarded as spaces where affect is flattened. While Augé discusses in detail the social structures emerging from non-places, the shift to a Deleuzian perspective allows for an analysis of the formation of space as a struggle between lines of articulation and lines of flight. What emerges from such an analysis will be closer to a structure of feeling or affective map rather than a blueprint.

SEA OF LIGHTS

Drive presents us with the backstreets of Los Angeles, the places we rarely see, while also casting an almost utopian sheen over some of the locations. Highly stylized, the movie gives us a cinematic view of the city, rather than an actual sense of what Los Angeles is like. In this way, *Drive* generates a tension between places and non-places based on Marc Augé's definition of non-places as a world:

where transit points and temporary abodes are proliferating under luxurious or inhuman conditions (hotel chains and squats, holiday clubs and refugee camps, shantytowns threatened with demolition or doomed to festering longevity); where a dense network of means of transport which are also inhabited spaces is developing; where the habitué of supermarkets, slot machines and credit cards communicates wordlessly, through gestures, with an abstract, unmediated commerce; a world thus surrendered to solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral… (Augé 1995, 78)

Augé emphasizes two aspects of space; first, the geometries of places in contrast to the fragments of non-places and second, the cultural determinants and unformulated rules of living of places in contrast to the dissolution of social contractuality of non-places. While it might be tempting to regard place and non-place as binary opposites, it is evident from Augé's argument that we are instead dealing with a spectrum. Furthermore, there is no clear distinction or separation of locales into place or non-place, but instead the two intermingle as a mesh. We must keep in mind that space is not simply extensive but primarily intensive. We rarely experience spaces and places in their geometric shapes, but rather in our embodied relations to that space. The anonymity of an airport and the feeling of ennui associated with a layover does not depend on the size of the airport, but rather the inertia associated with our confinement. Movies intensify our relation to cinematic spaces, altering our embodied relations to the sound and images.

It is with Gilles Deleuze's conception of any-space-whatever that we find the clearest expression of space as intensity. Deleuze resists understanding any-space-whatever as a universal and as a geometric space, insisting instead that any-space-whatevers are potential spaces where relations are dissolved in order to be formed anew (Deleuze 2005, 113). Associated primarily with modernist cinema of various European traditions, Deleuze describes any-space-

whatevers to have two states; deconnection and emptiness, which is what destroys the spatial co-ordinates of these any-space-whatevers (Deleuze 2005, 123). Yet Deleuze identifies any-space-whatevers in two ways, one culturally and the other cinematically. The cultural any-space-whatever is surprisingly similar to Augé's argument, the post-war situation's "undifferentiated urban tissue, its vast un-used places, docks, warehouses, heaps of girders and scrap iron" (Deleuze 2005, 124).

Our historical moment has now extended this undifferenti-ated urban tissue into strip malls, downtown financial districts and subterranean parking facilities. We find this undifferentiated urban tissue everywhere in *Drive*. A list of the film's places reveals the ano-nymity and interchangeability. The primary locations are parking garages, the auto shop where Driver works, the race tracks, an Ital-ian restaurant, a supermarket, a diner, a motel, a strip club and the pawn shop of the ill-fated robbery. All of these non-places are transi-tory and impersonal, either meant for business transactions or tem-porary residences. Yet for all the generic urban locations, there is no sense of wholeness, coherence or unity to the city. Instead, Los An-geles as place seems more like a mosaic of spaces, a plurality which refuses easy categorization but instead is exactly deconnected and empty. A similar argument is put forth by Edward Soja in his *Post-modern Geographies*, where he points out that Los Angeles' "spatial-ity challenges orthodox analysis and interpretation, for it […] seems limitless and constantly in motion, never still enough to encompass, too filled with 'other spaces' to be informatively described" (Soja 1989, 222).

Soja's, Deleuze's and my emphasis on motion and movement as part of the constitution of space is found in the pacing of *Drive*. The first part of the film is slow-paced, with a sense of calm and stillness that is, however, constantly undercut with an often menac-ing soundtrack. The second part, from the robbery onward, is filled with wild motion and frenetic speed. While the film's places are primarily dominated by stillness and reflection, the non-places are dominated by movements and collisions. It is when the movement

of non-places enters the stillness of places that violence erupts, suggesting a violence inherent in the anonymous flows of non-places, associated primarily with the city itself.

'The city itself' as a term must be understood cinematically rather than realistically, as constituted aesthetically, which returns us to Deleuze's any-space-whatevers of cinema instead of the actual Los Angeles. Deleuze specifies that cinematic any-space-whatevers are produced by the material-semiotic resources of films; he mentions specifically shadows, whites and colors (Deleuze 2005, 123), but we can add framing, editing and similar cinematic devices to the list, as Deleuze goes on to argue that experimental film is one of the points of origin for cinematic any-space-whatevers, particularly in their wresting away "the narration of actions and the perceptions of determinate spaces" (Deleuze 2005, 125). The significance for any-space-whatevers for Deleuze comes not so much from the correlation of cultural and cinematic spaces, but more from the affects produced by these spaces. For Deleuze, the affects of any-space-whatevers are the 'modern' "affects of fear, detachment, but also freshness, extreme speed and interminable wavering" (Deleuze 2005, 124). It is easy enough to read these affects as the alienation of modernity, found in so many works of modernism whether cinematic or literary.

For *Drive* it is not just that the spaces are blurred and indeterminate, but also that the different locations that the Driver and Irene move through are fragments. There is never a clear sense of where the characters are in relation to a greater whole, nor is there a sense of progression. Much of this dislocated feeling comes from an emphasis on backlots, alleys and other rear views of the city, instead of shots of the fronts of buildings. In much the same way that urban space is deconnected, there is also a lack of establishing shots of new locations. Instead, we are thrown into spaces without knowing their relative geography, their interior layout or any other spatial coordinates. This form of deconnected editing intensifies our feeling of dislocation as well as the fragmented nature of the cityscape. Combined with aerial tracking shots of downtown Los Angeles, this

effect becomes even more delirious. The aerial shots have an impersonal point of view, anonymous in the same way that the spaces this nonhuman POV seeks out and constructs are impersonal. Contrast this to the shots of the city from inside Driver's car; here, the framing is so tight as to give no access to the streets he drives through, blurring and fragmenting.

SLOW PLACES

The first place we encounter is the park that Irene, Benicio and Driver go to one special day. Bright, lush colors and the warm notes of the music push this scene into a dream-like state, emphasized by the lack of dialog. Pushed to the brink of cliché, this scene stands apart from the rest of the film as one of two affective cores of the film; it is where the relationship between Irene and Driver turns into a clear romance, their feelings solidified by the film's soft light and gentle music. This scene is also the only one in the film which feels fake; the clash of lush vegetation and barren concrete a compelling image of the multiplicity of Los Angeles' urban mosaic.

The few times we are inside Irene's apartment, there is a homely feeling that we do not find anywhere else in the film. The warm colors of the walls, the pools of light and the slow editing generate a comfortable pace and a sense of stability and safety. When Standard returns from prison, the homeliness slowly dissolves and the world of violence and crime intrudes. The editing pace picks up in the scenes with Irene and the soundtrack turns more ominous. Encroaching from the moment Standard returns, the scene of his welcome home party is indicative of this breakdown of the safety of home. While we see Standard and his son Benicio in a same-frame shot, with Standard kneeling down, creating a sense of intimacy between them, there is no same-frame between Standard and Irene. Instead, their eyeline matches are contrasted with three elements that separate them rather than unite them. First, the soundtrack has lyrics repeating "you keep me under your spell". Second, the tracking shots of Irene open up the frame space around her, thereby iso-

lating her from the rest of the party and Standard instead of bringing her closer to Standard. Third, halfway through the scene, shots start alternating between the increasingly isolated Irene and Driver sitting in his dark apartment working on a carburetor. This crosscutting emphasizes that the spell which Irene is under is not Standard but Driver.

This reconfiguration of place, expressed most clearly in Irene's desire for a line of flight out of the place she is in with Standard, contrasted with the line of articulation of having to stay with Standard and her son, comes to a head later during the party, when Irene and Driver meet in the hallway outside of their apartments. The articulation of place versus non-place takes on an unexpected turn. Visually, the hallway becomes one of Deleuze's any-space-whatevers in the deep, dark anonymous shadows, the oversaturated pools of light casting the characters in dim light, a peculiar liminal state with a framing that paradoxically ties Irene and Driver together but also anticipates their eventual separation.

Looking at the cinematic space, Driver is to the far left of the frame, looking slightly down to match Irene's eyeline. Irene, conversely, is framed to the far right, looking up at Driver. While the eyeline match ties the two together and creates a well-balanced composition, if the shot-reverse shot relations were overlaid, they are actually both looking away from each other. Offscreen space is established as containing the other person but simultaneously we feel that their backs are to each other, looking out of the frame into an offscreen space containing no one. When Standard enters the hallway and confronts Driver, both men are framed in the left side, creating a space of confrontation in Standard's shot as an empty space with Irene out of focus in the background, Standard's eyeline crossing this empty space looking right and slightly up. The composition of the shot-reverse shot indicates that the men occupy the same space, not just in the cinematic frame but also in the narrative and the relationship.

Considering the constitution of place and non-place, Irene and Standard's apartment is established as a place with clear identities,

relations, and histories. Irene is the partner of Standard (identity), in a relationship with Standard and not Driver (relation), and has been in this relationship for a long time (history). Irene's isolation inside the apartment and her leaving it to sit in the hallway, indicates that these place markers are suffocating her and instead she seeks out the non-place of the hallway, where the markers of identity, relation, and history are loosened. Irene is evidently drawn to the anonymity of Driver and his lack of social markers. The overemphasis of the exit sign in the background of Driver's frame (the sign is both inside a relatively awkward frame and kept in focus) indicates not only Driver's eventual decision to leave but can also be conflated with Irene's double desire for Driver and for an exit from her current life. As we know from Augé, non-places are partly defined by the words and texts they offer us: their "instructions for use" (Augé 1995, 96). The hallway and the exit sign become a menacing collision of desires and while we assume that the hallway will tie Irene and Driver closer together, as the narrative progresses through more and more anonymous non-places, the further apart they end up until eventually they are both left alone.

We find this creeping isolation also in the dinner scene, where Standard, Irene, Benicio and the Driver are all present, attempting to enjoy some time together. The framing of the scene clearly anticipates the growing isolation of Standard, who is only shown in frame with Benicio, while Irene is a shapeless silhouette on the far right of the frame. In contrast to this, Driver and Irene share several frames with clear eye-line matches. Yet the low drone of the soundtrack underlines that nothing good will follow. The dinner scene has a flashback where Driver and Standard arrange for one final score to pay off Standard's debts and secure the safety of his family. After the flashback, we get the only establishing shot of the dinner scene, yet the tone of the film and the fact that Driver is placed symbolically between Standard and Irene in the shot are clear markers that events will unfold negatively. The safe environment of the home is broken with Standard's return and from this scene onward, we never return to Irene's apartment and the stability of place is gone for

good. From here on out, we move into the threatening non-places of the Los Angeles mosaic.

ACCELERATED NON-PLACES

The threat of non-places and their association with violence is immediately made apparent. When Standard is attacked because he owes protection money from prison it happens in a parking garage. The dim shadows make the entire parking garage threatening, turning the garage into an any-space-whatever, undifferentiated urban tissue extending below the earth. What this assault reveals is that the fragmented spaces of Los Angeles remain open to connection at any moment; just as the any-space-whatever is deconnected in pure potentiality (waiting for connections to be made), so the rhizome of Los Angeles' mosaic is pure violent potentiality: any place can immediately be turned into a threatening non-place.

The purest expression of violence as movement comes from the robbery and onwards. The robbery takes place in a strangely deserted strip mall, the sandy-colored concrete blending in perfectly with the desert and mountains beyond, turning this scene into the urban version of a Western movie's bank robbery, the wealth no longer located in a bank but tellingly in a pawn shop where people have had to hawk their belongings, revealing a completely different distribution of wealth. The robbery itself takes place offscreen, staying with Driver's point of view and thereby retarding information that will later become significant. In an unexpectedly understated robbery, the helper Blanche carries a bag of money out and Standard emerges from the pawn shop calmly. When Standard is shot it happens unexpectedly and almost undramatically. The adrenaline surge only kicks in when Driver races off the parking lot and the traditional car chase follows.

In the car chase, again unexpectedly, our point of view moves outside Driver's car, a place we are never otherwise given access to in the rest of the film, where we are always located inside, looking up at Driver. Instead, in this scene our point of view is extremely

mobile, even more mobile than Driver, as we swerve around passing cars, still placed low and looking up. There are alternating shots of Driver looking intensely in the rear view mirror and Blanche looking frightened, before we again move outside to a very vulnerable point of view, twirling along the road, facing Driver and so with our back to the onrushing traffic. Not being able to see what we hurtle towards is extremely unpleasant, causing an intense reaction to the car's movement. In a magnificent car stunt, Driver spins his car and drives in reverse, in order to better see what the pursuing driver will do. This is the only time that we are placed in a relatively safe position of a medium, straight angle shot where we feel more as spectators to a car race, but it is a short respite before we are hurtled into a POV of the pursuing car hurling straight into us.

As suddenly as the car chase occurred, just as suddenly it is over and the image of the semi-flipped pursuing car dissolves into a shot of the money from the robbery. The contrast to the following motel scene is extreme. Moving from high-paced editing, bright exterior, low angle shots that constantly shift POVs and high amplitude direct sound of car tires screeching to dark interior tracking shots, with a stable POV and a low, rumbling drone soundtrack, the contrast becomes viscerally arresting as we crash into a low-speed sequence. The action-image of the car chase becomes the dilating any-space-whatever of the motel room, with the characters reduced to silhouettes. Further frustrating our pent-up adrenaline is the slow-motion cinematography as Driver and Blanche are attacked.

Emphasizing the blurred cinematic space of the motel room, the attackers are announced only as shadows on Driver's body and then slow-motion begins. Our desire to act, the need to move as quickly as in the previous scene is inhibited by the slow-motion images and the shockingly disruptive slowing down of synchronous sound, which is practically unheard of in Hollywood's continuity system, jolts our experience. As image speed reverts to normal, the impact of the violence hits us as Driver quickly and expertly finishes off the attackers. Slow-motion images return, our attention lingering on the bloody face of Driver.

The non-place of the motel, much like the parking garage before it, becomes the site of extreme violence which the film does not shy away from presenting quite graphically to the viewer. Much as social structure breaks down in non-places, so narrative structure breaks down in these scenes of intense violence. These scenes are the more disturbing because they are so unexpected and sudden. While we would expect moments of violence to erupt, the suddenness and extremity of the violence make the sequences stunning because they punctuate a film that has until now been relatively contemplative in pacing. The surge of speed fits less into a narrative arc than a general intensification of affect in the film. Safe places are threatened by bursts of violence, revealing that there are in fact no safe places, all places are open to turn into non-places with the introduction of violence.

The clearest example of a burst of violence turning a place into a non-place is the justly (in)famous elevator scene, which is the second affective core of the movie. The scene starts earlier with Driver picking up Irene and most of their dialog takes place in the hallway outside their apartments, a place that has previously been established as their romantic meeting place. As they enter the elevator, another man stands there and a whining drone ambient sound signals the fact that this man carries a gun and is clearly there to kill Driver. Suddenly, slow-motion is introduced again and the light of the elevator changes in an expressive metaphor that turns this moment into a slow, romantic any-space-whatever. The whining drone fades in favor of a far more romantic melody as Driver and Irene kiss longingly. The rest of the elevator goes dark and the two of them are flooded in saturated, warm light, which demarcates the closest the film comes to a romantic climax. We dwell in this little moment of passion and love, no longer in the action-image but instead an image of pure affect for a brief, ecstatic moment, before the whining drone comes back and the light shifts to the elevator light.

Abruptly shifting back into normal speed, Driver turns around and slams the attacker's head into the wall of the elevator. What follows is another intense, violent action-image where our senso-

ry-motor schema are ambiguously aligned among Driver, the un-known assailant, and the shocked Irene. While most of the actual violence is offscreen, the sounds are visceral enough that there is no mistake as to what happens to the assailant, even with the brief reverse shot as the assailant's head pops with a sickening sound and we see a mass of brain all over the elevator floor. The intensity of the violence and its sudden eruption reveals a side of Driver that Irene has not seen; his pathologically violent side which is nevertheless necessary to save her, if not their relationship.

Moving back into slow-motion, Irene backs out of the eleva-tor into the parking garage that was earlier the site of violence but is now an affective map of desolation and loneliness. All hope for Irene and Driver is gone, the anonymity of the parking garage be-hind Irene in a medium, straight angle shot slowly swallows her up, eradicating her relation and history with Driver. The reverse shots of Driver are low angle, medium close-ups that reveal the blood splatter over his jacket and his slowly growing realization that she will never be his. The cinematic space cuts them off from each other, just as the passionate noosign has been disrupted and violated by Driver's violence. Although the film continues, there is no resolu-tion for Driver and Irene, we know that he must leave town.

COLLISIONS

The central motif of *Drive* is that of movement and its corollary, speed. As we have seen, *Drive* creates two points along a continuum of speed, ranging from slow to fast. Although primarily associated with cinematic speed, there is also the movement of sensation. Non-places are identified with intensely violent movement, while places are filled with calm, relaxing sensations. The connections between place/non-place, speed, and sensation are therefore paramount for the movie, and are narrativized through collisions, where move-ment becomes violence. Scott Bukatman points out the associations of movement, arguing that "Movement is the fact of traversing ter-rain, crossing borders, and transgressing boundaries. Movement

performs freedom, a resistance to strategic spaces of control" (Bu-katman 2003, 122). Augé's non-places are clearly marked as spaces of control, evident in the signs, social structures put into place and the automation of movement within non-places. Conversely, Driver constantly performs movements which place him outside control, although the unexpected introduction of calm places performs a kind of violence of sensation on Driver. Suddenly, he is faced with a sense of belonging he has clearly never known before, Irene becoming the violence of sensation which almost makes Driver stay put.

Instead, Driver is confronted with the sensation of violence, attempts at placing him under control of non-places and their strictures. While non-places dissolve social contracts, control remains present. In fact, control reveals itself to be not a contract but a one-sided relation which we are expected to submit to. Driver rejects this relation, refusing to submit to an uneven distribution of power, and instead transgresses fixed boundaries by traversing the cityscape and leaving Los Angeles.

The tragedy of *Drive* is the dissolution of sensation; Driver and Irene fall into a kind of apathetic numbness as they slip apart. Driver is forced to convert his violence of sensation (his love for Irene) into the sensation of violence (physical brutality) and wreak havoc and vengeance on the people threatening Standard and Irene. As Driver drives off into the sunset, we know that Irene is safe but at the expense of her emotional life. Visually, Driver leaves into a desolate any-space-whatever, first seen on the parking lot where he is going to hand over the money but ends up killing the mob boss as the final act of violence. The killing stab is shot against the sun, creating silhouettes and then shows the mob boss dying in shadow outlines against the parking lot asphalt concrete. Add to this the crosscutting between Irene going to Driver's apartment door, the hallway deep shadows, the poignancy of the moment is intensified.

Elsewhere, I have discussed how movement pulls the spectator along the movie's affective modulation (see Ledet Christiansen 2013), but in *Drive* movement is far more complicated and fraught with affective dips and peaks. While we root for the emotional ties

Driver forms with Irene, we are as shocked as Irene when he crushes the gangster in the elevator, as well as his other violent outbursts. The extreme oscillation in affective tone makes it impossible for us to understand Driver. He remains a cipher throughout the movie, and we know that his inevitable destiny is to move on, crossing into an anonymous non-place yet again. Place and non-place are thereby defined primarily through their intensities and the violence these spaces enact on people moving through them.

As these spaces map almost exactly on to Augé's distinction, what becomes evident is the flattening of affect in non-places; numbness, separation, and alienation are the contingent affects associated with non-places, the anonymity of the cityscape generates anonymity in the people moving through them. Violence seems to be the only real sensation available in the undifferentiated urban tissue, while more utopian passions are only found in short pulses, flowers briefly blooming in the cracks of concrete, such as the park Irene and Driver have their one moment of happiness in. The flattening of affect in non-places does not, it must be emphasized, mean low intensity or lack of affect. Rather, it means that very few modulations of affective tone can occur in these non-places, indicating a kind of sameness and homogeneity. The freeway, roadside motels, and strip malls all induce feelings of numbness due to their homogenous design and function. Identity, history, and relation evaporate precisely because there is only room for the incessant, continuous drone of the same, much like the ambient drone on the soundtrack of *Drive* which also induces an almost trance-like state.

The way *Drive* pulls us along its affective tone is by enacting this numbness through Driver; he remains unfazed throughout the movie. Even during his acts of extreme violence, Driver comes off as calm and detached, which is shocking for us as spectators, taking us by surprise. There is a strong oscillation between the sensations of numbness and detachment and those of startling violence. We are either overwhelmed by intense alienation as human relations decay and crumble, or stunned by equally intense violent outbursts. The modulation of non-places is thus one of extremes with little room

in-between and indicates that the intensity of non-places as integral to our experience of them. Both places and non-places open up for emotional experiences of them, and what is particular about non-places is that new modes of embodiment arise in how we relate to these anonymous zones of indifference. Driver's affect-less stance provides a reaction if not exactly a way out. Constant motion, refusing to stay in one place for long, becomes a primary way of navigating non-places, of conforming yet resisting the numbness with which non-places are associated.

Non-places confront us with a sense of being which is as undifferentiated as the spaces it designates. In *Drive* this undifferentiated space is enacted through a Deleuzian any-space-whatever which fluctuates between violent sensations and sensations of violence. Augé's emphasis on the dissolution of social contractuality in non-places can in itself be regarded as a form of violence, although not necessarily physical violence. Feeling reconnected, with no sense of history, identity or social relation leaves subjects adrift, which is also the narrative arc of the movie. While emotional connections, feelings of love and belonging begin to shape places of calm sensations for Irene and Driver, it is the violence of dislocation which inevitably catches up with Driver, forcing him to leave. Any-spaces-whatever are therefore the affective equivalent of Augé's non-places, where our experience becomes disjointed and flattened, the violent sensation of the dissolution of social contractuality.

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NON-PLACES AND SEPARATED WORLDS: RODRIGO PLA'S FILM *LA ZONA*

Pablo R. Cristoffanini

A common global culture with consumption at its core has caused the proliferation of what Marc Augé has termed non-places. In his view, this culture is an important part of supermodernity or hyper-modernity (Augé 1999, 6-9), which corresponds to what Baumann calls liquid modernity (Bauman 2000 and 2007). Symbols and expressions of this consumer culture include supermarkets, hypermarkets, shopping malls, fast food chain outlets, globally branded clothing designs, and airports. They are often indistinguishable from similar places elsewhere in the world. Unlike traditional cities, it is difficult to read the identity, social relations and history of non-places. Their proliferation is linked to macro changes such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the hegemony of neoliberalism as an economic doctrine in Britain, the USA, China and many Latin American countries (Harvey 2005). This article proposes that gated or walled communities in Latin America should largely be treated as non-places because they are indistinguishable from other similar places in the world, and hence their identity and their relationship with specific big cities are difficult to establish. Moreover, gated communities (GCs) are places where space becomes unavailable, exclusionary and unsocial. They are an expression of the utopia of a privatised city, where, segregated from the social and ethnic other, it is possible to live surrounded only by neighbours from the upper classes while enjoying security and contact with nature.

Augé and Bauman have created a perspective that allows the examination of different aspects of gated communities anywhere in the world. Their framework can be used to analyse Rodrigo Pla's film *La Zona* (2007), which deals with a GC in Mexico City. It is a central thesis of this article that film is a major source of knowledge about significant social and cultural issues in the age of super-modernity or liquid modernity. Film produces and reproduces knowledge and presents us with recurrent discourses and ideologies. Consequently, this article addresses understandings of the concept of ideology and relates them to the central concept of discourse. I also argue that not only does film contain ideology in the critical and derogatory sense of the word (distortion, dilution, alienation or dominance), but that it also contains utopian elements: anticipatory and emancipatory moments which project a longing for a better life.

La Zona and the subject of GCs have been discussed by Jeremy Lehnen (2012), who analyzes the film with ample use of ideas and concepts borrowed from Giorgio Agamben. For instance, *Homo sacer* is the individual who is subjected to the law and at the same time excluded from it. Lehnen's article and mine are both concerned with the relationship between violence, social groups and fragmentation in Latin American cities. The foci are different, however, given that the atemporal nature of Agamben's concepts does not allow for an explanation of the causes of the urban wars and their consequences under liquid modernity. Another difference between our articles is that mine explains how ideological discourses such as those identified in *La Zona* are necessitated by the changes created by globalization, the proliferation of non-places, and the stratification and differences in economic, social and cultural capital. By way of contrast, Lehnen expounds on how discourses can promote fear of the social and ethnic other and exacerbate social divisions, which may legitimize the exclusion and even the elimination of other people.

In her article, Bernice M. Murphy (2012) claims that the narrative of *La Zona* has a great deal in common with the themes and motives of the Suburban Gothic sub-genre, which deals with the fears of the middle classes and their search for safety in the United States.

From this perspective, Murphy's article offers important clues to aid the understanding and explanation of cultural and ideological aspects of gated communities. As the author stresses, however, her focus is not specifically on a Mexican context; she sets out to compare one representative Mexican film with the American variety of the Suburban Gothic.

MARC AUGÉ AND NON-PLACES

A central concern of social theory is to capture the key dynamics that characterize modern societies, especially compared to earlier ages. With this aim in mind, Augé points out the paradoxes of the contemporary world. We are all affected by globalization, by the drive towards uniformity, and, to various degrees, by the homogenization of cultures and societies. GCs are examples of this tendency towards uniformity and cultural homogenization. The causes of these processes involve phenomena that have been emphasized by many researchers. Thus, Augé refers to the interdependence of markets, the increased speed of transport, the immediacy of communication via email and social media, and the creation of a common imaginary by the consumption of identical images through the media (Augé 1999, 1). While positing globalization as a fact, he concedes that the process can be evaluated in different ways: it could be seen as a dream or a nightmare, or it might be exposed to a sceptical point of view (Tomlinson 2001, 83-114). The paradox is that along with such global trends, we are experiencing a resurgence of particularism, nationalism and religious fundamentalism.

According to Augé, contemporary societies are characterized by the passage from modernity to supermodernity and – from a spatial point of view – from places to non-places. To understand what the French anthropologist defines as a non-place, we must start with his anthropologically informed understanding of what a place is. He sees a place as a heavily symbolized space on the basis of which its identity, history and relations with the environment can be read. The non-place constitutes the opposite: a space whose

identity cannot be defined by its relational character or by its history (Augé 2008, 63). Augé's central thesis is that super-modernity or hypermodernity is the producer of non-places: anthropological spaces which, unlike the spaces of modernity, cannot integrate the ancient sites of the city. He subdivides such new and super modern spaces into three main categories:

1. Areas of traffic circulation: highways, metros, services for cars and airplanes;

2. Areas of consumption: supermarkets, hypermarkets, department chains, fast food outlets and shopping malls;

3. Areas of communication: monitors, cables, Wi-Fi, etc.

Augé emphasizes that non-places and places do not exist in a pure form and that creating a dichotomy establishes a false polarity. Rather, the two concepts are like palimpsests on which the intricate game of identity and relationship is constantly being rewritten (Augé 2008, 64). The opposition between the two categories is a relative one because their significance changes according to the time of day. The connotations of a plaza or a stadium are different during the day than they are at night. A shopping mall used as a meeting point by young people is different from the same mall used by shoppers, and an airport will be experienced differently by the traveller and by the employee.

BAUMAN: PUBLIC URBAN, BUT NON-CIVILIAN SPACE
Bauman links non-places with the spatial organization of cities, which, according to him, reveals a society's moral sentiments. Furthermore, he argues that present-day society is witnessing an increasingly exclusionary, totalitarian, alienating and hostile use of space in general, and of urban space in particular (Bauman 2007,

71-93). In liquid modernity, urban space has become public but non-civilian. Bauman understands non-civilian spaces as those that discourage our presence due to their inhospitality or as spaces which have consumption as their main purpose and therefore encourage action rather than *inter*-action (Bauman 2000, 96-97).

In the past, strangers met each other in a random and informal way, but urban space in liquid modernity has been clinically designed and thoroughly tested so that it is predictable, and this promotes mismeeting as strategies are used to avoid binding, prolonged and intimate contact with unknown, ambivalent and potentially dangerous others. As Augé understands them, non-places such as shopping malls, hypermarkets, transit centers, terminal buildings, waiting rooms, and gas stations are everywhere. According to Bauman, they undermine opportunities for other forms of contact than the non-binding and superficial. This is because one of the most important functions of this kind of non-place is to maintain consumer society and keep the cash flow going in a never ending circle (Larsen and Hviid Jacobsen 2008, 20). Unsocial space is a product of architectural measures and behavioral strategies such as those that lie behind gated communities, where space becomes unavailable, exclusionary, antisocial, and empty of human meaning. In liquid modernity, there is an escalation of non-places or non-civilian places.

Cities are densely-populated spaces with a high level of human interaction. Their original function being protection (Bauman 2007, 71), they were surrounded by moats, palisades and fences that also served to separate "us" from "them", or civilization from wilderness. Nonetheless, in the last century, cities have stopped representing security, and today they are sites of the incubation, conception and manifestation of fear. The dense interaction between urban dwellers of disparate social, ethnic and religious backgrounds and the resultant fear cause some to search for scapegoats. As a result, rather than serving as a shelter against danger, the city is becoming its source. In postmodern cities, friends, foes and strangers mix. Today, the war is not being fought between the city and the hostile

outside world, but inside the city itself. In a figurative sense, the trenches are limited access. Tenements are built, fortified and guarded round the clock to separate their inhabitants from the strangers who are kept out. The walls are erected in the cities of liquid modernity to separate different groups of citizens, once some of them have been assigned the role of opponents. These ideas and discourses are most evident in the most homogeneous GCs, which are also the GCs that are most exclusive with regard to race, ethnicity and social class (Bauman 1998, 47).

This development creates a dynamic in which the more a group tries to separate itself from its surroundings, the more necessary surveillance becomes. Today, homes are built to protect their inhabitants rather than to integrate them with the rest of the community. These homes are part of a struggle for survival of which the limits are those that separate the voluntary from the involuntary ghettos. Involuntary ghettos are inhabited by those who are forced to leave the friendly and pleasant areas and live segregated in inhospitable zones. Those with resources settle in separated neighbourhoods and do what they can to isolate themselves from the socially or ethnically different others. GCs constitute separate worlds that offer an alternative to the degraded public spaces of the city. Their central features are their isolation and distance from the city, which involve separation from those considered socially inferior. The inhabitants of GCs keep themselves apart from city life which is disconcerting and sometimes menacing. Security has become a central concern of liquid modernity, which is characterized by uncertainty about the future, by the fragility of social positions, and by existential insecurity. Security becomes an obsession symbolized by bunkers, by fortified communities, and by cars and houses with shaded windows (Bauman 2005, 66-67). Meanwhile, insecurity is the cause of segregationist and exclusivist tendencies in city life.

Mixophobia is a reaction to what is experienced as the disturbing variety of human types and customs encountered in the big cities of the global era. The discomfort of being confronted with people with 'different' languages and cultures leads to segregationist

impulses. The manifestations of mixophobia include the quest for islands of equality and similarity in the flood of diversity and difference that inundate the big cities in liquid modernity. The withdrawal to a community of peers implies an estrangement from otherness and a rejection of the need for understanding, negotiation and agreement required by existence in the middle of difference. The more the others are held at bay, the more frightening and dangerous they seem. Mixophobia serves as an insurance policy against the real and imagined dangers of the socially, religiously, or linguistically different. Meanwhile, it reinforces segregation. Living only among one's peers leads to superficial and trivial ways of socializing without the exhausting task of translating between different universes of meaning. As a result, people lose the ability to live and interact comfortably amid differences (Bauman 2007, 88).

The city is ambiguous. At the same time as it generates fear, rejection and segregation, it attracts and seduces. It is not only a cause of mixophobia, but also of mixophilia. The city is a place of variety, surprises, opportunities and tolerance, and thus it acts as a magnet for many who want to escape what they perceive as the monotony of rural life and its everyday routines. The larger and more diverse a city is, the stronger its seductive powers. The sentiments of mixophobia and mixophilia co-exist not only within the city, but also within its citizens. The builders and architects of GCs create, reproduce, and intensify the need and demand that they aim to meet: people who have developed mixophobia want to move to fortified living quarters. A contrasting strategy would be to create open spaces in large cities to promote mixophilia and the art of living in peace with people who are different and thus benefit from the stimuli, varieties, and opportunities that it offers. This would create opportunities for a fusion of horizons of the kind that Hans-Georg Gadamer suggests when referring to meetings with the cultural creations of other cultures or epochs (see Føllesdal, Walloe and Elster 1995, 99-102).

GATED COMMUNITIES IN MEXICO AND LATIN AMERICA: NON-PLACES AND THE UTOPIA OF THE PRIVATISED CITY

Following Augé and Bauman's ideas and concepts, I propose to treat GCs in Latin America as non-places and to compare them to the ancient city as a place with a historically rooted identity. The growth of the utopia of the private city (GSs and other fortified places) in Mexico and Latin America is linked to the dissemination of a global culture that has been heavily influenced by the consumer culture of the USA. From this perspective, Latin American GCs contrast with the city that is rooted in Mediterranean culture: a central plaza dominated by the cathedral, the seat of government and the law courts. The Mediterranean city centre is densely populated and traditionally serves as the site of interaction across divisions of class, gender, ethnicity and age (Finol 2005, 576-577). In contrast, GCs erode the possibility of face-to-face meeting across divisions of class, ethnicity and age, and they promote mismeeting. Some Latin American researchers consider GCs an expression of core values that have been linked to the white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant culture of the USA: the glorification of work, an individualist perspective and strict observance of privacy (Faulkes 2002, 3). In Latin America, the background of CGs is neoliberal globalization, the weakening of the nation state, privatization, individualization and the exacerbation of social inequality. In general, the 1980s and 90s saw a severe restriction of the role of the state, with the privatization of public enterprises and the dismantling of social security systems. As the ability of the state to reallocate resources decreased, the gap between rich and poor widened, forcing many to turn to private charities for services that had previously been provided by the public sector (Janoschka 2002, 3).

THE FILM AS REPRESENTATION, IDEOLOGY AND UTOPIA

Horkheimer and Adorno (1987, 126) point out the importance of film, contending that all incidents at societal levels are filtered by the media and that real life cannot be separated sharply from life on

the screen. In conveying representations of important political, social and cultural issues, cinema and other media play a major role in creating social imaginaries. Film produces and reproduces knowledge and introduces us to discourses and ideologies that circulate in society (Denzin 2004, 5). As there are conflicting approaches to the concept of ideology, this term needs clarification. This can be approached in two principal ways: evaluatively and non-evaluatively. The understanding of ideology that emerged from the works of Marx and Engels has influenced the largely critical approach to ideology of eminent theorists such as Althusser, Barthes, Eco and Eagleton. Here I confine myself to a few ideas proposed by Umberto Eco, who argues that ideology is a biased and inconsistent vision of the world characterized by its ability to hide alternative meanings and relationships through the choice of words and arguments. According to Eco, ideology is unable to account for the complexity found in conflicting semantic fields. The concealment of other, contrary meanings of a concept is rooted in vested interests (Eco 1968, 457-462). Inspired by Marxism, this approach is problematic in the field of film criticism because ideology tends to be seen as something that influences one's opponents (i.e., the reactionary forces) and that is expressed in their patriarchalism or their religious and political conservatism, to name just two possible manifestations (Denzin 2004, 240; Ryan and Lenos 2012, 117-183). The values and beliefs promoted by films that are critical of contemporary society are not perceived as ideological. By way of contrast, other thinkers conceive of ideology in a non-evaluative manner and refrain from pronouncing on the distorted, garbled or false content of the ideologies of others. Subscribers to this approach understand ideology as beliefs, ideas, values or symbolic systems that foster coherence and identity in groups, and thus do not see it as a necessarily negative or problematic phenomenon. Representatives of this approach are Karl Mannheim (1936), Erik Erikson (1968) and Clifford Geertz (1973). For Geertz, ideology provides a preliminary map of a problematic reality, offering a template or blueprint for the organization of social and psychological processes. He contends that schools of thought

that explain ideology in terms of material interests or psychological tensions fail to understand how symbolic systems operate. In his view, the symbol derives its strength from its ability to help us perceive, formulate and communicate social realities that would otherwise escape the temperate language of science. Evaluative approaches ignore the ability of a symbol to express more complex meanings than its literal reading would suggest (Geertz 1973, 210).

We can use Geertz' understanding of ideology to help us get to grips with the relationship between film and social and cultural reality. The problem with this approach, however, is that it does not always address the role of ideology in the legitimization of social, racial or gender inequalities.

Films can be approached on the basis of either understanding of the concept of ideology. Nevertheless, following John B. Thompson's (1990) emphasis on the relationship between ideology and power, I will limit the use of the concept to ideas and beliefs that establish and sustain dominance. Dominance is the result of systematic power asymmetry between the individual and the group (Thomson 1990, 151). The analysis of the ideology of the film will consist in detecting the articulation of discourses (Eagleton 1991, 205) that establish and sustain social, ethnic, national or gender dominance.

Film contains not only ideologies, but also utopian images. Building on Ernst Bloch's work, Gaines suggests that mass culture represents hopes that are larger than life, with wider imaginative capacity (Gaines 2000). Hollywood may be a manufacturer of nightmare visions, but it also creates positive dreams. Film narratives can capture the desire for social and cultural change and send it back to us via the screen, thus representing an anticipatory consciousness. With its bright display and embellishment of the image, the technology of cinema, can enhance the utopian and magic elements of film. The daydreams shown in film may involve great creativity and anticipate latent realities (Gaines 2000, 100-113).

In line with Gaines, Douglas Kellner (2010, 41) affirms that Bloch provides a method to discern and criticize the ideological content of theories, cultural artefacts and philosophies. In addition,

Bloch elaborates new perspectives for the study of culture and ideology, and a new approach to the history of culture. Bloch's *Principle of Hope* (1954 [1986]) penetrates the consciousness of everyday life and its articulation in cultural forms such as fairy tales, political utopias and the great philosophies. Bloch sees human beings as imperfect, constantly yearning for better ways of life. We are animated by such dreams. Bloch rigorously examines how daily dreams, religions, and culture express visions of a better world in a variety of ways. He encourages us to look for the progressive and emancipatory content of cultural products before searching for the mystifying or ideological aspects. Bloch's cultural theory and ideology criticism are different and more balanced than approaches to ideology criticism that understand it as a demolition of bourgeois ideology. Such approaches often mix and confuse bourgeois ideology with bourgeois culture. This evaluative model understands ideology as mystification, error and dominance and considers ideology as the polar opposite of scientific method. Bloch introduces a more sophisticated conception of ideology than those who understand it as false consciousness or who only highlight the progressive aspects of socialist ideology. For Bloch, all ideologies have two faces, one containing emancipatory elements and the other misleading and incorrect. His model has the further advantage that it underpins the presence of ideology in a series of phenomena linked to daily life: from the dreams of everyday life to popular literature through architecture and the displays of department stores. Ideological criticism must works with phenomena linked to daily life – and with the obvious political ideologies of Hollywood movies or of the corporate or state media.

LA ZONA: MISMEETING, MIXOPHOBIA, MIXOPHILIA AND IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSES

The title of the film refers to a GC in Mexico City, a place with well-cared-for lawns and beautiful houses. The community has a school, playgrounds, and a community centre. As is characteristic of a non-place, this residential area could exist anywhere in the world. No

clear marks of history or identity are visible in the GC, isolated as it is from the big city. The community is demarcated from the poor neighbourhoods that surround it, allowing only the entrance of nannies, gardeners and security guards. This is a product of an architectural strategy that promotes mismeeting. The film uses colours to represent the differences between the two separated worlds. While the suburban surroundings are rendered in grey shades, the GC of the 'zona' is depicted as in a real estate advertisement. The community is protected by high fences topped by barbed wire and patrolled by armed 24-hour guards equipped with dogs and surveillance cameras. Its rich inhabitants do all they can to lock out socially or ethnically different others, but this means that the idyll of the 'zona' is contradicted by the barbed wire fences. The film opens with a shot of a butterfly flying over the beautiful enclosure. When it suddenly touches the electric fence, it is toasted, forewarning the viewer that the idyll can be dangerous for intruders. The butterfly's fate is a symbolic warning of what can happen to aliens to the 'zona'. Under globalization, as Bauman consistently notes, mobility is a factor that separates the powerful from the powerless (Bauman 1998, 36). Like other residents of GCs, the inhabitants of the 'zona' have turned their backs on a city that seems confusing, uncomfortable and threatening. As Bauman writes, fear is a crucial element of the societies of liquid modernity. This fear is useful for planners and real estate agents who build GCs for those who can afford them. The residents of the 'zona' intend to implement the utopia of the privatised city. They have found an oasis of calm and security behind walls and fences. Research has shown that Latin Americans move to GCs to protect themselves from unpredictable and marginalized others (Arizaga 2000, 24-25), with the desire to return to nature as another important motivation. The protected residential areas are located in the suburbs or in the countryside. People with economic resources look for green areas where they can enjoy nature, open their windows without the need for bars and escape from the noise, strange smells and fear entailed by life in the city. Inside a GC, children can learn to ride a bike and

play together in safety. In these new private utopias, people isolate themselves from the unwanted, avoid the social heterogeneity that characterizes the open areas in the big cities, and separate themselves from those they consider their social inferiors (Hernández 2009, 6-7). The longing for community, green areas, and children playing in security can be seen as the utopian face of the ideology behind segregated communities.

THE DANGEROUS SOCIAL AND ETHNIC OTHERS

Despite the surveillance cameras, high walls and electric fences, the unwanted social and ethnic others enter the 'zona'. During a storm, an advertising billboard falls on one of the walls, and three young men from a poor neighbourhood seize the opportunity to gain entry, killing an elderly resident during an attempt to steal her jewellery. A neighbour kills two of the robbers, and a guard is also shot by mistake. The police are alerted by the sound of gunfire, but when their commander, Rigoberto, asks permission from the council members of the 'zona', Gerardo, Andrea and Daniel to enter to investigate the incident, this is denied. From the outset, incidents occur that reveal important aspects of GCs and their inhabitants. For instance, we hear one of the council members inform Rigoberto that he should know that the police cannot enter the 'zona' without a court order. When Rigoberto responds that "La calle es de todos" [The street belongs to everybody], Andrea spits out "But not this one". The rules may be valid for the city (representing "place" in the sense discussed above), but they are invalid in the 'zona'. Meanwhile, Councillor Gerardo tries to bribe the police officer into ignoring the incident by offering him money for beer. When the officer refuses the bribe, Gerardo becomes violent and insulting. The 'zona' is a non-place where streets, parks, recreation areas and playgrounds are meant for the residents only, not for the public as in the city (the place); thus, even the police cannot enter the non-place without a warrant. In addition, the film shows how the inhabitants of the 'zona' see themselves as above the law, accustomed as they are to

evading the consequences of their actions through bribery. In Bauman's terms, this means that they belong to a new elite that is better connected with the global world than with the surrounding city. Throughout the film, we learn about the ideology (the discourses that legitimate their voluntary segregation and alienation from others) that informs the residents' view of the poor people living in the surrounding city. An example is provided by the exchange between the police commander and Gerardo, in which the latter insists that the police remain outside the 'zona' to perform their investigation of the shooting; from his point of view, violence is something that only occurs outside the GC. Because of the disdainful treatment he gets from some of the leaders of the 'zona', commander Rigoberto becomes firmly committed to unravelling what really happened in the non-place. His antagonists are the leaders of the 'zona', who try to hide the incidents by all means at hand.

DEFENDING SPACE AND SPECIAL RIGHTS

Watching the recordings made by the surveillance cameras, the residents of the 'zona' soon realize that one of the robbers (Miguel) has survived and is still in the compound. They assemble to discuss what to do. The most aggressive inhabitants and council members (Gerardo and Andrea) argue that nothing should be revealed to the police because this would entail the loss of the special rights they enjoy. We learn that a clause provides that if violent or blood incidents take place within the protected area, these rights may be rescinded. Arguing that the community should fix its own problems, Gerardo says, "We have weapons, let us use them." Despite opposition from Diego and other residents who wish to avoid further bloodshed, Gerardo and Andrea's position is supported by the majority. Among the leaders of the GC, we trace differences between radical intolerants like Gerardo and Andrea with their harsh views of outsiders, and Daniel, who has a more respectful relation with the police and the people who work for them. But where defending the privileges of the 'zona' is concerned, they share the view that the

end justifies *any* means. For instance, they do not tell the police that two intruders have been killed or that Miguel is still inside.

Miguel's mother and his girlfriend report him as missing. Acting on this information, the police visit the car workshop where one of the thieves worked. Their investigation shows that three persons are missing. After this visit, a subordinate of Rigoberto comments that the residents of the 'zona' want to buy their freedom for just fifty pesos, but that it will cost them a huge amount of money. Rigoberto says that he will not accept bribery and humiliation at the hands of people like the residents of the 'zona'. This scene shows the corruption among low-ranking policemen, and we later see that corruption is pervasive in the police force. Rigoberto not only faces up to the leaders of the 'zona', but also to his colleagues and superiors inside the police, and he attempts to break the habitus of the institution. Most of the police officers give the 'zona' the privileged treatment that its inhabitants expect of them. Rigoberto confronts Gerardo and Daniel. Passing through poor neighbourhoods with them in the police car, he comments ironically, "This is another world. You have beautiful and clean houses and your own district, and now you want your own laws too?" The residents of the 'zona' live in a separate world, in beautiful surroundings, away from the city and its problems and segregated from the social others. Moreover, they have a guarantee that they will always have access to all the services they need (Bauman, 2007: 74-75). In contrast, the social and ethnic others are forced to leave the friendly and pleasant areas and live involuntary segregated in more inhospitable areas.

During the residents' meetings, Gerardo and Andrea manipulate their neighbours' feelings by creating a "them-or-us" mood. They validate the dominant ideology using the symbolic strategy of *fragmentation* (Thompson 1990, 65), which works by emphasizing the differences between groups and people and by obviating the similarities. These supposed differences refer to attitudes, beliefs or appearances. The ideological discourse of the residents of the 'zona' identifies the others as those who "rape us, steal from us, kill us."

In another scene, one can observe the old resident who accidentally killed the guard. He wants to turn himself in to the police because he is convinced that he has done something wrong, but he is stopped by Gerardo, who sees nothing wrong in the shooting and killing of the guard; it was just a stupid accident. In contrast, the intruders' killing of the old lady is seen as a different matter: a crime to which the residents have the right to retaliate, eye for an eye. In Gerardo's discourse of the others, they are so different that there is no need for him to try to understand their circumstances or their universe of meaning. The effect of this discourse is the exclusion of the social or ethnic other or, ultimately, its elimination.

Fearing that the police will find out about the killings and Miguel's continued presence inside the 'zona', Andrea does not want the widow of the killed vigilant to remove his corpse from the 'zona' for the burial, so she threatens her with the loss of her husband's life insurance. Again, the film shows us the residents' habitual use of their economic power to escape the consequences of their violation of the rules of the larger society. As in many other situations, Daniel acts as an intermediary and allows the widow to remove the body from the fortified community. The use of rubbish bags as wrapping for the intruders' corpses is strongly symbolic of the esteem in which 'ordinary' people are held by the residents. In fact the residents refer to them as rubbish in several cases. This use of a trope (metaphor) to reduce others to refuse exemplifies the symbolic strategies of ideology.

THE NECESSARY MIXOPHILIA
A significant part of the film concerns the development undergone by the film's main character, Daniel's young son Alejandro. Alejandro develops through the relationship he establishes with the surviving robber, Miguel. This constitutes a utopian element in the film. Initially, Alejandro maintains a healthy scepticism towards his classmates' ideologically laden discourses about the intruders. In one sequence, he contradicts his classmates when they conjure up

images of the intruders as rapists. The classmates create a story in which the thieves try to have sexual intercourse with the old woman, raping and killing her when she resists. Their discourses portray young people from outside the non-place as capable of the worst crimes, and they discuss castration as the best remedy for the imaginary problem. The film shows the stereotyped and biased discourses of the young residents as a result of living in total segregation from the poor surroundings and the big city. Alejandro rejects his peers' views as prejudiced, maintaining that no rape took place and that their stories are nonsense. Alejandro's attitude changes, however, when his father Daniel tells him why he took the family to the 'zona'. He hears that his uncle was shot dead in the street and that the police were slow to arrive on the scene. Daniel succeeded in identifying the culprits, and although they were found guilty of homicide, they were released after just three months. Later, they tracked down Daniel and beat him badly. He was saved only because the neighbours came to his rescue. Daniel is convinced that the police informed the criminals of his identity. The movie thus allows us to understand that people like Daniel chose to live in a GC because of police inefficiency, police corruption, and the increasing violence in the streets of the big city. People like Daniel, Gerardo and Andrea can afford to move to beautiful and clean houses and surroundings, but the poor have to stay and face the problems of violence and lack of confidence in the police. This, according to Bauman, is one of the main differences created by globalization.

The movie's depiction of characters like Gerardo and Andrea creates a strong aversion to them. Again and again they are depicted as rude, arrogant, violent and biased against members of other classes of society. Meanwhile, we come to understand people like Daniel. We understand his conduct and motivations for living in the 'zona'. He is polite to the police and to people who work in the 'zona'. Alejandro admires and identifies with his father. On the other hand, we experience positive emotions for the main characters, Alejandro and Miguel, the surviving robber.

Alejandro finds Miguel in the basement of his home, where has

hidden from the residents' violent persecution. At first, Alejandro is afraid of Miguel and aggressive towards him, influenced as he is by his father's story about the reasons for their family's move to the 'zona'. He threatens to kill Miguel if he hurts his family. He is unwilling to listen to Miguel, but later he calms down and listens to the robber's story. He gives Miguel food, drink, and a pair of shoes to help him escape. Alejandro has enough empathy to understand that Miguel is just like him: a young man who loves his girlfriend and cares about her mother. He realizes that the differences between them are caused by the very different circumstances in which they live and have grown up. Alejandro comes to regard Miguel as a friend and records his story to use it as a testimony that could save Miguel from further persecution.

The police commander comes to the 'zona' to confront the council with evidence of the murders and of the continued presence of Miguel. Fearing for his career, however, one of his subordinates has contacted the chief of police, who has colluded with Daniel and Andrea to close the case in exchange for a considerable sum of money. The film suggests that policemen who refuse to be corrupted are a minority, and, where privileged groups are involved, the possibility of enforcing the law is minimal because of the widespread corruption within the police, both among the rank and file and among their superiors.

Miguel comes out of his hiding place and tries to get into the police car carrying the police chief, but the latter orders the driver not to stop. Miguel is subsequently beaten to death by the residents of the 'zona', led by Geraldo and Andrea. Outside, Miguel's mother is waiting for the police car and for her son's return. When she realizes that this will not happen, she understands that the policemen have been 'bought' by the rich residents of the 'zona'. She insults Rigoberto, who vents his pent-up frustrations on her by beating and kicking her. The closing scene shows Alejandro taking Miguel's body to bury it in a cemetery.

Alejandro represents the utopian element in the film: he is a young man who is able to see the GC in a new light thanks to his

acquaintance with people outside and his ability to live in peace with them. Another symbol of hope is Diego, the resident who had been humiliated and secluded by Gerardo and Andrea. He prefers to abandon the 'zona', rather than live in a non-place where the segregation and stigmatization of social and ethnic others lead to violence and murder.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, two central hypotheses have been suggested. Firstly, GCs in Latin America (and other parts of the world) belong within the category of non-places. Following Augé, I have argued that GCs in Mexico are indistinguishable from similar settlements in the United States or other parts of the world because GCs are a product of the expansion of a global consumer culture which migrated from the United States to Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s. This global consumer culture is manifested by the proliferation of shopping malls, hypermarkets, fast food chains, gas stations, gated communities and other non-places. These places are all central expressions of supermodernity, and, as Augé has suggested, they are new and ultramodern spaces. Contrary to the old Mexican and Latin American towns whose church, plaza and public administration reflect an identity and relationships that are easy to read, the identity and relationships of GCs with their surroundings are weak or even non-existent. Bauman has provided a way to understand these features, pointing out that a central feature of non-places has to do with the use of space that promotes functionality instead of sociability. They are either hostile spaces or spaces which have consumption as their main purpose and therefore encourage action rather than *inter*-action. Again, compared to GCs, the old plaza still promotes face to face meetings with other social, ethnic and generational groups, while GCs tend to generate mismeeting. GCs are the product of architectural initiatives and behavior strategies which made space inaccessible, exclusive and unsocial, thus promoting mismeeting and mixophobia.

Secondly, the other central theme of this article has been that films reproduce and produce knowledge about cultural and social phenomena which are central to supermodernity or liquid modernity, such as GCs. Hence, in this article, Rodrigo Pla's film *La Zona* has been used as a case study. It has been demonstrated that this film offers an iconic representation of Augé's and Bauman's ideas and concepts regarding non-places. From the first shots, we can appreciate the beauty of the houses, lawns and manicured gardens of the 'zona'. As is the case with an airport or supermarket, we cannot identify precise hallmarks that refer to the geographical and cultural place we see. The surveillance cameras, the high walls and the electrified fencing show us its exclusive, inaccessible and asocial nature. Indeed, such is its inaccessibility that even the police in the film cannot enter this (non) place without authorization. Bauman points to the hostile use of space as a central feature of public but non-civic places, and it is closely linked to mismeeting and mixophobia. In the film, the last mentioned are expressed in myths and stereotypes about social and ethnic others (the residents of poor neighborhoods in the surrounding area) of whom the inhabitants of the 'zona' only expect the worst: theft, assault, rape and murder.

The film also shows a third important issue that has been addressed in the present article: the utopia of the privatized city pursued by the residents of GCs. In the case of *La Zona*, they have their own security corps instead of the police, their own schools, their own gardeners, their own maids, their own trash collection, etc. In fact, the only contact that the residents of the area have with people who are socially and ethnically different is with maids, gardeners and security personnel. As Bauman has pointed out, this kind of contact is rarely committed or intimate in non-places, and the film shows how a council member of the 'zona' considers the death of a guard to be just a stupid accident while another member denies the guard's widow the right to withdraw the corpse to bury him outside the 'zona'.

Additionally, the film demonstrates that the utopia of the privatized city also entails enjoyment of the security of the enclosure,

of 'nature', of playgrounds for children and of a variety of other facilities without the annoying and unsolicited proximity of people who are different from a social or ethnic perspective. It is the mixophobia pointed out by Bauman which expresses itself in the search for islands of equality and similarity in a sea of difference and inequality. Nonetheless, the film shows how the segregationist impulses that underlie the utopia of the privatized city can lead to an unrestricted defense of acquired privileges and eventually to the rejection, exclusion and even elimination of the social an ethnic other. Bauman points to mixophilia as a possible solution to the problems of mismeeting and mixophobia. Mixophilia involves face to face meetings with the ethnic, social or sexually different other. In the movie *La Zona,* mixophilia is exemplified in the relationship between Alejandro and Miguel. The first moves from prejudice and aggression toward understanding and empathy for Miguel, the intruder and burglar. Alejandro realizes that Miguel is only a young man like himself, but one who has grown up under very different circumstances.

La Zona invites reflection upon the extent to which many of us live at a macro and micro level (either our nation or our place of work) in a non-place in the form of a fortified community where the effort of understanding has been eliminated, as has the need to negotiate and agree with individuals who are different from us.

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"BETWEEN US AND WEIMAR LIES BUCHENWALD" – PLACES IN EUROPEAN HOLOCAUST LITERATURE

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> "*Das Konzentrationslager ist ausschließlich*
> *als Literatur vorstellbar, als Realität nicht.*"
> (Imre Kertész, 1998)

"BETWEEN US AND WEIMAR LIES BUCHENWALD"

After World War II – that is to say after the Nazi dictatorship, the Holocaust, and the total destruction of Germany, both physically and morally, there was a need for the rediscovery and development of a democratic culture within Germany. The *Weimarer Klassik* of Goethe, Schiller and Herder provided a rich source of inspiration and occasion to once more turn towards the humanist tradition of German culture. However, Germanist Richard Alewyn, a returned emigrant, issued a warning in 1949 in connection with the bicentennial celebration of Goethe's birth, cautioning against a Goethe cult and the use of the *Weimarer Klassik* as an alibi. Therefore he impressed these words on the German nation: "Zwischen uns und Weimar liegt Buchenwald" (Alewyn 1949, 333-335).

"Between us and Weimar lies Buchenwald" is a sentence that acquires its special significance from the fact that the Buchenwald camp is in close physical proximity to Weimar, lying a mere eight kilometres from Goethe's house and the National Theatre, where

the first democratic constitution of Germany was passed into law in 1919, and only two kilometres from the Ettersburg castle. Here artists had gathered since the 1780s (including Hans Christian Andersen in the 1840s) to present their works in idyllic surroundings, since Ettersburg had developed into a cultural site symbolizing the "co-existence of art and nature in the spirit of Rousseau" (Dalos 1994).

The Goethe-Schiller Memorial on the square in front of Goethe's National Theatre in Weimar, July 3, 1936. The Memorial is surrounded by SS standards, as the National Socialist regime celebrates the 10th anniversary of their second party congress in Weimar in 1926. © Polfoto / ullstein bild

"Between us and Weimar lies Buchenwald" was also a realization that resonated with a whole generation of students in West Germany in the 1960s. Their protests against the lack of a complete break with Nazism, against diplomats serving the NS-regime being reinstated into new West German ministries in the 1950s and against old Nazis occupying top positions were all central to the student rebellion (Conze 2010). Thus, they protested against how "the settlement

with the National Socialist past ['Vergangenheitsbewältigung']" had largely been left to a legal system that "never had any desire to sit in judgement over its own practices" (Kreimeier 1984).

In 1999, in connection with the 250th anniversary of Goethe's birth, Weimar was the European cultural capital, and the connection between Weimar and Buchenwald frequently became a theme. This occurred almost programmatically on February 19th at the National Theatre when German President Roman Herzog stated that "Weimar ist Deutschland *in nuce*" and pointed out that it was a town

> […] in der nicht nur Kultur und Geist, sondern auch Unkultur und Barbarei zu Hause waren. […] Das nahegelegene Buchenwald […] ist und bleibt eine schreckliche Erinnerung, und es ist zugleich eine Mahnung ["a town in which not only culture and spirit, but also unculture and barbarism found a home. […] Nearby Buchenwald is and remains a horrific memory, and at the same time a warning to all"]. (Herzog 1999)

This realization was fast becoming mainstream in Germany. A more provocative thematization of this subject was offered by former concentration camp inmate Boris Lurie (also in Weimar in 1999) through his exhibit "NO!art" which commemorated the camp with obscene collages as part of a larger cultural context which also included post-war culture, thereby emphasizing that Buchenwald was and should be more than just "eine schreckliche Erinnerung" ["a horrific memory"].

HETEROTOPIAS?

The general frame of the present anthology necessitates a query into whether concentration camps – the main topic of this article – can be regarded as "non-places". In the witness literature which this investigation is based on there are descriptions of concentration camps which partially remind us of Marc Augé's criteria, but overall the

camps do not appear as non-places. Rather they are similar to his definition of "places" which have three characteristics in common, being "places of identity, of relations and of history" (Augé 1995, 52) – albeit in the most extreme sense. When Augé writes "a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity" (Augé 1995, 77) this is largely – but in an utmost destructive form – true also of the Nazi concentration camps. Apparently some of the characteristics that Michel Foucault has elaborated concerning his notion of heterotopias also apply to the camps, as they are represented in the witness literature.

According to Foucault heterotopias are found "in every culture, in every civilization";

> they are real places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which […] all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. (Foucault 1967, 3-4)

Foucault emphasizes that "each heterotopia has a precise and determined function within a society" and elaborates on "heterotopias of deviation […] in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed"; as the most distinct examples he mentions "psychiatric hospitals, and of course prisons" (Foucault 1967, 5). In this investigation Foucault's work on heterotopias is thus included in the attempt to evaluate the experiences of concentration camps recorded in the witness literature.

CANONIZED WITNESSES?

The field covered by this article comprises works by six authors who survived their incarceration in concentration camps: Jean Améry

(1912-1978), Imre Kertész (*1928), Ruth Klüger (*1931), Jorge Semprún (1923-2011), Primo Levi (1919-1987) and Elie Wiesel (*1928). Klüger was incarcerated from 1942-45, Améry from 1943-45, the rest from 1944-45. The works investigated,[1] however, only form a part of the authors' collected textual processing of their experiences of the Holocaust and the concentration camps.

	Jean Améry	Imre Kertész	Ruth Klüger	Jorge Semprún	Primo Levi	Elie Wiesel
Nationality	A	H	A/USA	E	I	ROM/ USA
Original book title	*Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne. Bewältigungsversuche eines Überwältigten.* 1966	Sorstalanság. *[Fatelessness].* 1975	*Weiter leben. Eine Jugend.* 1992	*Le grand Voyage.* 1963; *Quel beau Dimanche.* 1980; *Le Mort qu'il faut.* 2001	*Se questo è un uomo?* 1958	*Night.* 1958
Edition cited	*Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne.* […]. 1971. Stuttgart: Klett Cotta.	*Roman eines Schicksallosen.* 2008. Reinbek: Rowohlt.	*Weiter leben. Eine Jugend.* 1992. Göttingen: Wallstein.	*Die große Reise.* Roman.1981; *Was für ein schöner Sonntag.* 1984; *Der Tote in meinem Namen.* 2003; all Frankf./M.: Suhrkamp.	*Hvis dette er et menneske.* 1989. Copenhagen: Forum.	*Natten.* Roman. 2012. Copenhagen: Rosinante.
Key	A	K	RK	S1, S2, S3	L	W

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1 Quotes from the authors mentioned are marked in the text by abbreviations, followed by page numbers. These abbreviations are: A (= Améry), K (= Kertész), RK (Ruth Klüger), S1, S2, S3 (three books by Semprún), W (= Wiesel).

"Over time Semprún has become included among the canonized witnesses of the concentration and extermination camps, aligned with Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel, Jean Amery, Ruth Klüger and Imre Kertész" (Storeide 2008). This sentence from Vordermark's analysis of Jorge Semprún's Buchenwald publications caught the present writer's attention, and it led to the question of what "canonized witnesses" are when it comes to the Holocaust witness literature. The expression was not clarified by Vordermark, nor was any reason why these authors were selected as "canonized witnesses". These short-comings in fact became the starting point for the present investigation of exactly these authors' works. The purpose, however, was not to possibly uncover the missing explanation as such, despite the fact that – as shall be elaborated upon later – the term "canonized witnesses" seems extremely problematic in connection with the Holocaust. Rather the aim of the investigation was to uncover what these writers' works might have in common in their settling of the scores with the camps. Thus, it is not primarily the authors as witnesses, but rather their works as testimonials that are in focus.

It is next to unthinkable that the "canonized" authors can be "aligned with" one another as the review claims, since their prose represents rather diverse genres: memoirs, novels and autofictions. Nonetheless, they are treated here as if one could disregard the differences in genre between them and discover what the works of the "canonized witnesses" might have in common – and what that might mean in relation to the discourse of heterotopias.

According to the dictionary, to canonize means "to declare a saint; to declare an ideal state" (Hårbøl, Schack and Spang-Hanssen 1999, 490). The authors of the works investigated did not feel like "saints" – if for no other reason than that, as Semprún declared in 1980, for them the camps would never become a closed chapter (S 2, 231); the survivors left the camps, but the camps never left them. Thus, the camp, according to Primo Levi, became "a form of existence" (L 95) which did not cease to be when the prisoners were released in the spring of 1945. This is evidenced in particular by the

homesickness for the concentration camp which Kertész's protagonist experiences after the liberation (K 286). The fact that the camp continued to be a "form of existence" could possibly be the background for why camp survivors such as Jean Améry and Primo Levi took their own lives many years after the liberation.[2]

The works selected have been translated into multiple languages, and two of the authors have received the Nobel Prize: Elie Wiesel received the Peace Prize in 1986 and Imre Kertész the Literature Prize in 2002. Still, even those two should not be termed "canonized" or ideal, because only those who have personally survived the horrors and "patterns" of the concentration camps will be able to formulate adequate criteria and frames for what defines "the ideal" in this context. The similarities that one can observe between the works in question are insufficient to characterize the authors as "ideal" witnesses, since they share these similarities with many other survivors' accounts of their concentration camp incarceration. In sum, the expression "canonized witnesses" is counterproductive, even useless.[3] Were one to persist in using it, the consequence might be that that portion of the camp literature that is not "canonized" would appear as less authentic or second-rate. The use of the term "canonized witnesses" would also necessitate that Jorge Semprún should be characterized as merely "partially canonized witness" since in 1980 he distanced himself from his first book about Buchenwald (S 1). This was due to him finally settling with the communist world-view which informs the 1963 book. At that time he was, according to his own statements, unaware of Stalin's horrible GULAG camps and therefore did not write about them. By contrast, his second Buchenwald book from 1980 (S 2) is characterized by critical (self-)reflexions and a distancing of himself from Stalinism. On the

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2   They may, like others who survived the Holocaust, have suffered from what psychoanalyst William G. Niederland termed "Überlebenden-Syndrom" ["Survivor Syndrome"]. Cf. Niederland 1980.

3   Imre Kertész would agree with this assessment, as he rejects the creation of any form of "Holocaust canon", cf. Kertész 1998, 56.

background of its size and scope it is however debatable whether this really makes him a better witness of the concentration camps.

While I assume that only the surviving concentration camp inmates are or were capable of evaluating who might function as an "ideal" witness through his or her writings, not even this assumption is a given because concentration camps experiences, despite their similar descriptions, can be very different.[4] For those of us that work with witness literature it is already hard enough to recognize and assess the difference between fictional and documentary witness prose. The paradigm case highlighting this difficulty is Binjamin Wilkomirski's book about a childhood spent in a camp (Wilkomirski 1995). The book was praised world-wide, rapidly became a classic within the genre of Holocaust memoirs; the author receives significant literary awards (Mächler 2000, 125-140), and is invited by the Washington Holocaust Museum to give an oral history interview in 1997. Then in August 1998 the Swiss weekly *Weltwoche* starts questioning both the authenticity of Wilkomirski's memoir and his Jewish identity (Lau 1998). *Weltwoche* documents that the Swiss citizen Bruno Dössekker, alias Wilkomirski was never incarcerated in a concentration camp. The book was reviewed in Denmark as a "crushing book" (Thurah 1997), but when doubts are raised as to whether Wilkomirski has written the book based on his own camp experiences, a discussion is conducted concerning the authenticity of the book and it is asked how one would read it "if it were labelled a novel?" One possible answer would be: "In the reality of the book that which is told is authentic. The book creates its own reality" (Thurah 1999). This may be true, but since this discussion is carried out in Denmark in 1999, Wilkomirski had already begun retracting his claims. Where previously he had denied point blank that the book was fictional, insisting on calling it "ein Buch der Erinnerung" ["a book of memory"], he soon relativized this state-

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4   Here there is only space to note that the Holocaust can serve as a "projection screen for very heteronymous interests", cf. Zuckermann 1998. In this article it is unfortunately impossible to discuss the individual author's "interests".

ment by saying that "Es stand dem Lesenden immer frei, mein Buch als Literatur oder als persönliches Dokument wahrzunehmen."[5]

The memory of the horrors of the camps can be expressed through several channels and media. Therefore one should only make "demands of truth, not of method," as one reviewer wrote about the photo exhibition *Totenstill* at Malmö Konsthall, which showed photographs taken in concentration camps between 1987 and 1993. I share his conclusion that "there are many ways to the memory of the past" (Tøjner 1999). But Wilkomirski's road is not a passable one. When he lets himself be celebrated as a canonized witness in the express lane of Holocaust memory literature, he cannot later push responsibility away by leaving it up to the reader to decide whether his camp memoirs are fake[6] or real. By doing that he is merely serving the interests of the Holocaust deniers.

"ALL HOPE ABANDON YE WHO ENTER HERE." COMMON MOTIFS IN CONCENTRATION CAMP LITERATURE

The most striking result of a comparative analysis of the works mentioned covering 45 years in total, is that they share a number of common motifs which to an extent are also significant in relation to Foucault's heterotopias.

· Breach of normality

The breach of normality is the largest common denominator. The authors thematize how the prisoners' concepts of normality are thoroughly altered: the horrible becomes "natural" (K 270). Suddenly the terrible and the atrocious become normal for them. An aspect of the horrible is for instance that Beethoven "and all of Ger-

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5   Quoted in Lau 1998 ["The reader was always free to treat my book as literature or as a personal document"].

6   One cannot entirely rule out that this is a case of a non-deliberate memory displacement. Cf. Mächler 2000, 287f.

man culture suddenly belongs to the enemy" (A 27f.). But the Nazis not only take over the classical cultural heritage, they even use it as a torture mechanism. For hours they let classical music thunder from the speakers of the assembly square while the prisoners are left standing there, rain or shine, summer or winter, day or night.

· Total exposure

The total exposure of the prisoners is another common motif: the prisoners were "at the mercy of an anonymous will", they were "human beings who could not dispose of themselves as they saw fit" (RK 86). "My body is no longer my own" (L 38). Most of the other common motifs are closely linked to the two first motifs.

· Break with traditional time

"The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time" (Foucault 1967, 6). A corresponding break with time as the one described by Foucault in the quote above, is characteristic of all the works analysed: all prisoners are subjected to another's enforcement of time. Thus they all experience a different experience of time which can end with them finally "losing all sense of time" (W 49). Levi experienced how in Auschwitz one quickly began to "repress both the past and the future" (L 37). Finally, it no longer seemed possible that there was "a world other than ours, consisting of mud, or another time than ours, one that stood so still that one could not imagine that it would ever end [...] For us the march of history had come to a stand-still" (L 137).

In the language of the camps words such as "never" and "tomorrow morning" had been transformed horribly into synonyms (L 156). The altered sense of time has terrible consequences: "For us the camp is not a punishment," Levi wrote, "for us there is no end to how long we have to stay there. The camp is simply a form of existence forced upon us, with no limits" (L 95).

· Transformation

Common to all the works is also the theme of transformation. This can be described both as a development away from human identity and/or as a development towards an (auto-)image of objectification, commodification or the abjectal ("garbage" K 206), all body ("I was a body. Perhaps not even that: a starved belly" (W 63).) – or an animal. This transformation Primo Levi labels "bestializzazione" (Levi 1987, 180), i.e. "the work of bestial degradation" (Levi 1958, 204).

In his condemnation of the objectification perpetrated by the camp system Jean Améry uses the expression "the dehumanized man". In contrast to for instance Klüger who also thematizes the "dehumanization" of the camps, Améry does not use this term for the tortured and starved inmates, but rather for the SS personnel and the torturers: "Man schaut nicht dem entmenschten Menschen bei seiner Tat und Untat zu, ohne dass alle Vorstellungen von eingeborener Menschenwürde in Frage gestellt würden" ["One cannot assess this dehumanized man through his deeds or crimes without having to question all preconceptions of innate human worth"] (A 44).

One step in the systematic dehumanization of concentration camp prisoners is that all newly arrived inmates must hand over their clothes, be shaved all over, and receive used prisoners outfits: "Within a few seconds we had ceased to be humans" (W 48). The next step in the transformation or deterioration of their identity within Auschwitz is the tattooing of a number on their arms. These numbers are used instead of their names henceforth, throughout their incarceration. Wiesel who had received the number A-7713 writes: "From now on I had no other name" (W 53). Also Klüger (RK 85, 114f.), Kertész (K 120f.) and Levi (L 26, 61) describe this transformation from name to number. For Wiesel the consequence of the numbering was that his "self-preservation instinct, self defence, pride – everything was gone" (W 48).

The prisoners' transformation ("bestializzazione") has how-

ever already begun on the way to the camp, as they are transported under horrific conditions in cattle cars (W 21, 36, 101; RK 197; S3, 151) (Hilberg 1981). There are numerous descriptions of these horrible human transports in cattle cars, for instance in Semprún's first Buchenwald book (S1) where the detailed treatment of the transport itself forms the outer frame for the narrative of the concentration camp internment. The fact that the prisoners are described as "pay loads" (K 207) and are treated like animals (W 50, 59, 104, 106, 109), or cattle brought to slaughter (A 39) is a constant theme in these works. It is entirely consistent with this theme that Wiesel repeatedly labels the camp as a slaughterhouse (W 43, 78), and that Klüger remembers Theresienstadt as "the stables, belonging to the slaughterhouse" (RK 81).

· Factories of death, chimneys, smoke

But there are also other horrific terms for the camps: "factory of death" (W 78), "penal colony" (W 44) or "death machine" (K 99). In Foucault's heterotopias conditions may be terrible and inhuman, but their original purpose is to discipline human beings in an attempt to enforce the ruling power relations. Therefore, a penal colony would also be regarded as a form of heterotopia. But in a slaughterhouse or a factory of death the primary purpose is not to discipline but to eliminate. Obliteration. When "a prisoner's human existence and the person's right to be is denied" in Auschwitz (RK 111f.), then the use of the term "factory of death" is strictly logical and consistent. Part of this ferocious "logic" (RK 112) is the numbering, sealing the objectification of the person through the use of the tattoo as the final step before annihilation. The tattooed numbers thus signal that: "No-one is allowed to escape from here" (L 61).

The smoke from the chimneys of the crematorium belongs to those motifs that run throughout all the works. Two phrases recur: that the camp inmates can only *leave the camp through the chimney* and that human flesh *goes up in smoke* (S1 35, 109; S2 12, 164, 298). These phrases reveal that the prisoners spoke a language complete-

ly devoid of illusions regarding their own future. In Dante's *Divine Comedy* it is written above the entrance to Inferno: "All hope abandon ye who enter here" (Inferno, Canto 3). The prisoners' language reveals that they had indeed abandoned all hope. The motifs of the chimneys and the smoke are also parts of the mystery of transformation. *Going up in smoke*, that is the ultimate transformation. When Wiesel, who lost his father in Buchenwald, says upon returning to the site in 2009: "My father's […] grave is somewhere in the sky" (Wiesel 2009) then this is only a more poetical rephrasing of this transformation.

"VOLKSGEMEINSCHAFT" = "THE BANALITY OF EVIL"

Hannah Arendt's famous and controversial words (Krummacher 1964) on "the Banality of Evil" (Arendt 1963) were uttered when Adolf Eichmann was sentenced to death and executed in Israel in 1962 for his part in the planning of and participation in the mass murder of the Jews. Being Jewish, Hannah Arendt had escaped Germany for France in 1933, where she was interned in 1940 in Camp Gurs as an "enemy alien", and from where she succeeded in escaping for the USA in 1941. She witnessed the Eichmann trial and in 1963 she wrote several articles about the trial for *The New Yorker*, and these later became the foundation of her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Arendt characterised Eichmann as a meticulous petit bourgeois perpetrator who had nothing of the demonic about him. Her statement concerning the banality of evil was fiercely contested (Lausten and Rendtorff 2002) – as indeed it is in one of the works: In 1966 when Jean Améry thematizes the torture that the SS and the Gestapo put him through, he describes how their "banal" average faces ("Dutzendgesichter") were transformed via the torture activity and suddenly became "Gestapo faces" (A 52). This argument, however, does not seriously undermine Arendt's statement, since Eichmann as a bureaucrat avoided situations where he personally would be transformed from desk perpetrator to executioner. Arendt's statement is rather confirmed by, among others, a former Polish camp

prisoner who has said about the concentration camp staff: "They were capable of killing people – and yet they also were quite normal – that was incomprehensible to me" (Janssen 1984). However, more recent research shows that Arendt was actually fooled by a sly Eichmann who as desk perpetrator acted much more under his own orders than he admitted during the trial (Losowick 2003). It is remarkable that the subject of "evil" in the works analysed is not thematized in any specific German cultural context. The reason might be that the authors share Kertész's view when in an essay he characterized Auschwitz as a "world experience" (Kertész 1998, 56). Neither the camps themselves, nor their Germanness are demonised in the works. Kertész also refuses to speak of "the Hell of the camps" (K 271, 274). But when his protagonist after the liberation in Budapest feels "homesick" for the concentration camp (K 286), this is also an indication of the extent to which the camp can have been a grotesque expression of the "normality of evil."

The judges of the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial wrote in 1965 in their motivation for the sentencing of concentration camp executioners that "behind the gates [of the camp] began a Hell which was unfathomable for a normal human brain" (quoted in Schünemann 2001). This was based on the conviction that a clear distinction between normal and abnormal was possible. However, "normal human brains" had an equal share in the development of evil; and this was also the case outside the camps, and indeed it is on the outside that the camps were made conceivable in the first place. "The normality of evil" has its roots there, on the outside. It is to be found everywhere, for instance also in a decree issued in October 1938 making all Jews' travel passports invalid. They were decreed to not be valid for travel abroad until after the authorities had stamped them with a large "J" on the first page of the passport, stigmatizing and excluding the Jews. Presumably it was also "normal human brains" that had thought up this type of sign which started appearing near town limits in many sites:

"Jews are not welcome in our town" (Deutsches Historisches Museum 2010).

The text on this sign shows a remnant of formal politeness and thus reveals a clear connection between normal towns (with normal brains) and the camps with regards to the unwelcome and undesirable human beings. Ordinary towns and concentration camps have one thing in common: "Jews are not welcome." Both types of places have a role to play (not formally stipulated, yet perfectly effective) in the "Sonderbehandlung" ["Special treatment"] of the "unwelcome": The normal towns deselect and exclude the unwelcome, whereas the camps fence them in and subject them to various forms of dehumanization and a transformation most commonly ending with annihilation.

The signs are but one expression of Germany's transformation from a (reasonably) democratic constitutional state into a racist and terrorist "Volksgemeinschaft" ["Community of people"]. Jews are unwanted, because they disturb the formidable notion of a homogenous German "Volksgemeinschaft". The camps are the lethal consequence; here all who do not correspond to this notion of homogeneity are gathered. The notion of a homogenous "Volksgemeinschaft",

which even today is at work in many normal brains (all over Europe), contains a more or less latent desire for homogenization. The concentration camps are the one place where this homogenization is realized consistently.

"IMAGINING THE HOLOCAUST"

All the authors reflect in various ways their works on the process of telling about the camps, and about making the memory of the camps work. Their books testify to the fact that there are quite various ways of attempting to describe the indescribable, to try to say the unsayable. At the same time each author has a slightly different agenda.

If one wishes to experience how a modern Candide who lives through one catastrophe after another survives in the camp as "in the best of all worlds", one must read Kertész's novel. If one has observed that the running and administration of the camps was largely a matter for men only, one must read Ruth Klüger's feminist flavoured memoirs. On several occasions she addresses exclusively female readers, since – as she bitterly notes – most male readers do not want to read a woman's memoirs anyway (RK 79, 199). If one wishes to draw the perspective of Stalin's GULAG camps into the concentration camp discourse there is no way around Semprún's late Buchenwald books. He claims that as a Communist he did not really have his eyes opened to the presence of Stalin's camps until after the publication of his first book (S 1). He gives particular credit to Solzhenitsyn's novel *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and Shalamov's *Kolyma* texts for enabling him to reassess the concentration camps in a new and better way. Up until the 1960s they had been the epitome of capitalist oppression for him, but later they almost appear as copies or mirror images of the Soviet camps. In this connection he attacks Hegel whom he claims has created the legitimation for both the concentration camps and the GULAGs (S2 141 ff.). If one wishes to follow the story of a Jewish boy from Stettl to Auschwitz without all of the above-mentioned political discourses, one must start with reading Wiesel's novel *Night*.

Several of the authors emphasize that the camps were experienced very differently. Klüger writes: "The camps are not the same. The camp reality was different for each individual" (RK 82). Therefore it is no wonder that the witness literature avails itself of different genres. But when reality "was different for each individual", the fact that the works share central motifs can also be interpreted as a form of message.

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The descriptions of how the prisoners were at the total mercy of the camp personnel are quite similar throughout the literature investigated. There are also traceable similarities in the speeches and essays by some of these witnesses and in the way in which they use their camp experiences in the current political discourse. Elie Wiesel, for instance, complained during a visit to Buchenwald in 2009 that the world had not learned enough from the concentration camp horrors: "Had the world learned, there would have been no Cambodia and no Rwanda and no Darfur and no Bosnia" (Wiesel 2009). In 2012 Wiesel demonstrated how he uses what he has learned when he returned the *Grand Cross Order of the Merit of the Republic of Hungary* to the Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly which he had received in 2004 from the Hungarian President, in protest against "anti-Semitic elements and racist expressions in [the Hungarian] political environment" (Wiesel 2012). During his Nobel Lecture Imre Kertész stated, that Auschwitz for him is more than just the past: "Whenever I think of the traumatic impact of Auschwitz, I end up dwelling on the vitality and creativity of those living today. Thus, in thinking about Auschwitz, I reflect, paradoxically, not on the past but the future" (Kertész 2002).

"TOPOGRAPHIE DES TERRORS"
With focus on the common motifs in the concentration camp literature investigated I would not describe the camps as heterotopias – in spite of the numerous similarities between them and the char-

acteristics Foucault has formulated. The camps described are in fact "places […] outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality" (Foucault 1967, 3-4). They also reflect the social conditions, they represent them and do not deviate from the ruling norm which in its extreme form finds its expression in the National Socialist state's "Topographie des Terrors" ["Topography of terror"] (Nachama 2010).

Thus concentration camps are a form of negative to the Nazi image of a "Volksgemeinschaft", which is a "popular racial, biological, anti-semitically defined social order designed for the exclusion of politically, socially and racially defined 'enemies of society' and persons deemed 'damaging to society'" (Knigge and Baumann 2008, 11).

In Foucault the heterotopias are generally defined as parts of society. But in the Third Reich it is just the organization of the camps, their personnel and the businesses benefitting from the prisoners' slave labour that are part of society – not the de facto condemned concentration camp prisoners. To start with they are "unwanted", later they are deprived of their freedom, interned – and subsequently they become commodities, numbers, cattle; their lives are completely at the system's disposal. Particularly the lives of Jews, Sinti and Romas, enemies of the state, slaves, homosexuals, prisoners of war, the sick and the weak (Nachama 2010, 190-285). The purpose is not to discipline. Therefore concentration camps should not be considered heterotopias in the Foucauldian sense.

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Ruth Klüger, Imre Kertész and Elie Wiesel were children when they became concentration camp prisoners. An example that there continue to be children of the Holocaust era who were not able to write about their childhood years in the camps until they grow old, is Otto Dov Kulka, whose moving and completely unusual Auschwitz memoirs were published as recently as 2013 (Kulka 2013). We must be grateful that there continue to be new eyewitnesses who publish

their memoirs and extend our knowledge of the monstrosities of the Third Reich. The research into prison camps, ghettoes and concentration camps and the entire "Topographie des Terrors" is therefore far from concluded.

Recent research even shows that the number of camps continues to increase. In 2013 researchers from the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. documented in their monumental *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos,* that there were far more than the approx. 7.000 camps that had previously been assumed to exist – an incomprehensibly high figure of 42.500, including 980 concentration camps. The number of murdered victims is also likely to be far larger than previously assumed: researchers estimate that "between 15 million and 20 million were killed or imprisoned in the facilities set up by the Nazis and puppet regimes in occupied countries from France to Romania" (Milmo 2013).

These new figures have considerable consequences for a total evaluation of the National Socialist camp system's importance and character. The new map of camps in Europe shows a net that "stretches throughout Europe, from Italy to Russia" (Milmo 2013). The nodes in the network were interconnected. This can be read out of the transports back and forth between camps which particularly the able-bodied prisoners were exposed to. Within this network, connected through the German State Rail with thousands of civil servants (Hilberg 1981, 12), we find every type of camp – including some mentioned by Klüger: "Außenlager", "Durchgangslager", "Arbeitslager", "Vernichtungslager", "Judenlager", "Familienlager", "Frauenlager", "Männerlager" ["remote camps, transit camps, work camps, extermination camps, Jew camps, family camps, women's camps, men's camps"] (RK 81f., 127f., 136 ff. 146).

Some of the official denominations are deliberate misdirection. In a "family camp" the prisoners may survive slightly longer before they are murdered, but in the meantime they are cynically abused for propaganda purposes, and Buchenwald was never a re-education camp, as Semprún assures us of (S2 174, 186; S3 52, 75). No mat-

ter what the various camps were called by the Nazis, they were all "Schreckenslager" ["terror camps"] (RK 86) for the prisoners.

The fine-masked net of concentration camps proves that the camps were well-integrated in state and society – in other words, that they were not, as has long been claimed "dämonische Ausnahmewelten, hermetisch abgetrennt und weit entfernt von den gewöhnlichen Menschen" ["demonic exceptional worlds, hermetically separated and far removed from ordinary people"] (Knigge and Baumann 2008, 7). At the same time it has become impossible to believe in all those who claimed that they knew nothing of the camps (Longerich 2006). "Auschwitz was not on an alien planet", Klüger emphasizes, "but rather a part of life right in front of us, continuing as usual" (RK 144). But despite their integration in state and society there is one significant point in which they do not conform to Foucault's criteria for heterotopias, namely the fact that the lives and survival of the inmates in the camps mattered not at all.

This realization may have several consequences: one can either consider the concentration camps a unique "place" in world history, i.e. a place sui generis; or one would have to extend the spectrum of heterotopias with one new category. With an expression by Klüger they could be termed "auschwitzartige Orte" ["Auschwitz-like places"] (RK 128). A possible explanation why Klüger uses Auschwitz typologically can be found in Kulka's childhood memoirs of an Auschwitz depicted throughout as a "Metropolis of Death" (Kulka 2013).

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NON-PLACE AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PLACE: REPRESENTING THE M25 WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MARGARET THATCHER, GIMPO, AND IAIN SINCLAIR

Jens Kirk

Place has been an important concern in recent English letters. To mention but a few examples, Will Self's *Psychogeography* (2007) and *Psycho Too* (2009) tap into the relationship between mind and place. Also, the power of place has formed an important aspect of Peter Ackroyd's work, for instance, *London: The Biography* (2001) and his three part historical documentary for television about the city's history (2004). Terry Gifford's idea of the "post-pastoral" is also related to a keen interest in the representation and the possibilities of representation of wild places today (1999). Robert Macfarlane's book on *Wild Places* (2007) and his television documentary *The Wild Places of Essex* (2009) feature similar concerns. Roger Deakin's bestseller *Waterlog: A Swimmer's Journey through Britain* (1999) also investigates place in new and startling ways. Iain Sinclair's *Lights Out for the Territory* (1997) documents new ways of representing London as does his edited volume *London* (2007).[1]

This paper concerns a particular kind of place. The M25, London's 117-mile orbital motorway, has been and still is the focus of a wide range of representations. Although it has been figured regularly in public debates concerning London's infrastructure since the

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[1] It has been an important concern elsewhere as well, of course. See, for instance, Tim Cresswell's *Place: A Short Introduction* (2004) and Lawrence Buell's chapter on place in his *Environmental Imagination* (1995).

beginning of the twentieth century (see, for instance Phippen 2005), this paper focusses on some of its representations since its official opening in 1986. Basically, two strands of representation are apparent. One is concerned with the M25 merely as an infrastructure, more particularly, as a motorway designed to facilitate the unhindered movement of traffic. This is, for instance, the case with the BBCs website *Travel News: London (M25)*, which is designed to keep its users updated in real time of speed restrictions, delays, stop-go traffic, etc. caused by roadworks or "live incidents." For instance, as I write this, the web site reports among other things that

> […] M25 Kent – Queuing traffic on M25 anticlockwise at A282, Dartford River Crossing toll booths. Congestion to J1b, A282 (Dartford) […] M25 Greater London - Slow traffic earlier on M25 anticlockwise between J28, A12 (Brook Street Roundabout) and J27 M11, because of earlier barrier repairs. […] M25 Essex - Queueing traffic on M25 clockwise at A282, QE2 Bridge. Congestion to J30, A13 (Lakeside). […] (BBC 2014)

As the example suggests, this kind of representation, and similar traffic updates constantly broadcasted around the London area, is exclusively concerned with how well the M25 performs as a structure. Its ability or inability at facilitating the flow of traffic is of sole interest here. The example also suggests that this strand of representation is highly economical and formulaic. It adheres closely to discursive and generic prescriptions and rules concerning grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. The discourse is designed to communicate information almost like motorways are planned to enable traffic.

The second strand of representation, on the other hand, focuses not so much on the success or failure of the M25 as a structure. Rather, it is constituted by the connotations that surround the M25 first and foremost. This tradition concentrates on the subtexts, legends, and myths that have accrued or are forming around the lanes of tarmac that we refer to as the M25. The examples are plentiful as

the following selection, which is representative but incomplete, is intended to show: According to a popular saying, it is "The world's largest car park"; to Chris Rea it signifies "The Road to Hell" (1989); in a similar, but also more comic vein, it denotes the sigil odegra [meaning] "'Hail the Great Beast, Devourer of Worlds'" in Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman's novel *Good Omens* (2006), and it topped the BBC's list of "The Seven Horrors of Britain" (BBC, 2002). Moreover, documentaries have teased out its many and varied connotations. Thus, James May uncovered for BBC4 "the secret history of the M25 Road Race […] the greed of the late 1980s as Porsche-driving city traders indulged in illegal contests of speed" in "Speed, Greed, and the M25" (BBC, 2008). Also, it was celebrated as a virtual birthday boy in 2011 by the BBC with a documentary, "The Road to Nowhere: M25 Celebrates 25th Anniversary" (BBC, 2011a) and in various electronic resources, for instance, "Your M25 Memories" (BBC, 2011b) and "M25: Ten Ways It Has Changed Lives" (BBC, 2011c). In a kind of culmination, this rich vein of representation recently succeeded in turning the M25 into UK's latest tourist attraction (*The Guardian*, 2012a). Moreover, now, it is even possible to tour the highlights of the ring road virtually (*The Guardian*, 2012b). The list suggests the power of M25 to create connotations and stories that form an alternative to the infrastructural strand of representation.

The two traditions are often related. Thus, it is rumoured that Chris Rea wrote the lyrics to "The Road to Hell" during a traffic jam on an access ramp to the M25. Similarly, the popular phrase "the world's largest car park" appears to have been produced by the M25's repeated inability to facilitate the movement of traffic. In the following, I draw on Marc Augé's terminology of non-place and anthropological place in order to better conceptualise what is at stake in the two representational strands I have identified.

NON-PLACE AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PLACE

Marc Augé's book *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*, originally entitled *Non-Lieux, Introduction à une anthropologie de la*

surmodernité , is situated squarely within a particular field, i.e. anthropology. Of course, this suggests that the conceptual framework developed by Augé is relevant within the on-going debates that constitute that field, first and foremost. I'm not an anthropologist, and this is not an anthropological paper, but I want to propose that his two key terms – anthropological place and non-place – are useful outside anthropology proper, too. They offer a way of thinking about the stakes involved both in the M25 and in its representations.

According to Augé, anthropological places are characterised as being "places of identity, of relations and of history" (Augé 2008, 43). Anthropological places are systems of fairly rigid rules assigning identity to their inhabitants and defining their relations. In a family home, the distinction between adults and children, or owners and guests is mapped out spatially in terms of different bedrooms and bathrooms, for instance. Similarly, villages are structured physically in terms of different zones of various social activities. Work and leisure, for example, or political and religious duties are structured so that "[t]he layout of the house, the rules of residence, the zoning of the village, placement of altars, configuration of public open spaces, land distribution, correspond for every individual to a system of possibilities, prescriptions and interdicts whose content is both spatial and social" (Augé 2008, 43). Anthropological places are historical, moreover, in the sense that their physical and symbolic systems are stable and continuous over time. They're not the places of the grand events studied by historical science, for instance the Battle of Waterloo, but they are places of lived history: "The inhabitant of an anthropological place does not make history; he lives in it" (Augé 2008, 45). Into his definition of anthropological space Augé includes the idea that it "[b]ristles with monuments – imposing stone buildings, discreet mud shrines – which may not be directly functional but give every individual the justified feeling that, for the most part, they pre-existed him and will survive him" (Augé 2008, 49).

A non-place is the opposite of an anthropological place according to Augé: "If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as

relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place" (Augé 2008, 63). However, non-places, for instance motorways, supermarkets, airports and similar places of transit (Augé 2008, 77), are not completely without relations or identity, of course. Thus, a distinctive feature of the non-place is that it locks the individual into a state of "solitary contractuality" (Augé 2008, 76). For the duration the individual occupies the non-place, he or she is assigned an identity specific to the non-place and mediated by texts that contain instructions, prescriptions, prohibitions, and information:

> Sometimes these are couched in more or less explicit and codified ideograms (on road signs, maps and tourist guides), sometimes in ordinary language. This establishes the traffic conditions of spaces in which individuals are supposed to interact only with texts, whose proponents are not individuals but 'moral entities' or institutions (airports, airlines, Ministry of Transport, commercial companies, traffic police, municipal councils); sometimes their presence is explicitly stated […] sometimes it is only vaguely discernible […]. (Augé 2008, 77-78)

With specific reference to motorways, Augé claims further that motorway travel is "doubly remarkable: it avoids, for functional reasons, all the principal places to which it takes us; and it makes comments on them" (Augé 2008, 79). As a consequence, a particular kind of absolution is offered the individual travelling on motorways. He notes how the autoroutes in France are furnished with

> […] texts planted along the wayside that tell us about the landscape and make its secret beauties explicit. Main roads no longer pass through towns, but lists of their notable features – and, indeed, a whole commentary – appear on big signboards nearby. In a sense the traveller is absolved of the need to stop or even look. (Augé 2008, 78)

So, while non-places are the opposite of anthropological places they still work by establishing certain rules of behaviour, nevertheless. First of all, the convention of solitary contractuality establishes that individuals in a given non-place relate to and obey texts enunciated exclusively by abstract public or private bodies that exist above the level of the individual. Secondly, and included within the texts that formulate the law of solitary contractuality, the individual is offered absolution or freedom from his or her curiosity to know. What is at stake for an individual in a non-place is the laying down of a new kind of subjectivity that is only valid for the duration of his or her use of the non-place. In contrast to the subject inhabiting an anthropological place, non-place subjectivity involves a high level of domination of the human subject. An excellent illustration of this idea of subjection is offered by the formulaic discourse from the BBC's *Travel News* I quoted earlier. This I take to be a kind of master discourse of the non-place. Here readers – almost like the drivers on the M25 – are assigned the unequivocal role of a passive decoder of explicit and connotation free information. This conspicuous absence of room for interpretive manoeuver involves a redefinition of subjectivity within a set of strictly defined rules.

AUGÉ'S "PROLOGUE:" NON-PLACES, THE REDEFINITION OF SUBJECTIVITY AND THE DECLINE OF NARRATIVE

Interestingly, at least for a student of literature, Marc Augé opens his book on supermodernity with a little story that stages an individual's non-place experiences in a manner that is also suggestive of the fate of narrative discourse in that context. In Augé's "Prologue" non-places of solitary contractuality (his examples include cash machines, motor ways, airports, planes, etc.) are intrinsically without conflict. For Pierre Dupont, the protagonist, the drive on the motorway is "trouble free" (2008: 1) offering "no problems" and "no tailback." Antagonists are conspicuously absent. At the check-in, his suitcase weighing "exactly 20 kilos," Pierre, effortlessly negotiates "a smoking seat next to the gangway" with the hostess. Nothing im-

pedes the movement of our protagonist, then, and nobody threatens his quest. Everything, on the other hand, contributes to the realisation of the protagonist's desire. Since helpers are everywhere and antagonists are absent, Augé seems to suggest that non-places are inherently conflict free environments in contrast to anthropological places. Roissy, the Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris, nevertheless, strikes Pierre as a site with a remarkable narrative potential. He muses:

> These days, surely, it was in these crowded places where thousands of individual itineraries converged for a moment, unaware of one another, that there survived something of the uncertain charm of the waste lands, the yards and building sites, the station platforms and waiting rooms where travellers break step, of all the chance meeting places where fugitive feelings occur, of the possibility of continuing adventure, the feeling that all there is to do is to 'see what happens.' (2)

Significantly, though, this potential remains unrealised. Chance meetings never materialise, fugitive feelings don't manifest themselves, there is no adventure, nothing happens. From my reading of the "Prologue," it is clear that the condition of supermodernity where the individual is locked in a state of solitary contractuality interacting with institutional bodies first and foremost involves a redefinition or reduction even of what it means to be human.

Moreover, almost like the motorway Pierre travels on and which absolves him from having to stop and look, Augé's little story progresses smoothly in a linear fashion without detours, flash backs, and other achronological features, freeing the reader from wanting to stop and look. The "plot" consists of a series of "events" dramatising solitary contractuality: withdrawing money, driving, parking, checking in, shopping, boarding, waiting for take-off, and flying where the "protagonist" interacts with texts and signs enunciated by what Augé labels moral entities rather than individuals.

As a consequence, Augé's "narrative" is characterized by the complete absence of dialogue. Systematically, the third person narrator transforms verbal interactions to summaries, suggesting that they are inherently uninteresting, that they do not qualify as dialogue. Augé's "Prologue," then, puts some of the traditional features of narrative, e.g. plot, event, protagonist, and dialogue under pressure as if the experience of supermodernity involving scenarios of solitary contractuality is not the stuff that narrative is made of.

However, most readers of Augé's story quickly realise its conflict with the reality of travelling today. It seems that the events have been selected for narration in order to stage a conspicuous contrast between Pierre's experiences and our general experiences of non-places. Few travellers, if any, can testify to the conflict-free story of the protagonist. Instead, we know that driving long distances always involves some sort of problem usually in the form of tail-backs. Also, you tend always to be over or under the baggage limit, never exactly spot on, and hostesses at check-in points aren't necessarily in an accommodating mood. Shopping, too, often actualises an internal conflict between your desire for luxury and your conscience. Boarding, similarly, often equals pushing and shoving, etc., etc. Augé's "Prologue," then, works like a fable. But unlike, for instance, Cormac McCarthy's novel *The Road*, which dramatizes the impending disappearance of anthropological places and non-places alike, it is not so much a warning spelling out the likely consequences of the choices we are making today. Rather, it is an attempt at imagining how fully realised non-places create individual experiences and narratives that are markedly different from the ones that pertain to anthropological places.

While Augé's concept of non-place forms a contrast to that of anthropological place, he maintains that they are not mutually exclusive "in the concrete reality of today's world" (Augé 2008, 86). In fact, the two "intertwine and tangle together. The possibility of non-place is never absent from any place." This intertwinement and entanglement Augé also conceptualises with reference to the notion of the palimpsest. Speaking of the non-place as "the real

measure of our time," (Augé 2008, 64) he maintains:

> It never exists in pure form; places reconstitute them-
> selves in it; relations are restored and resumed in it: […]
> Place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the
> first is never completely erased, the second never totally
> completed; they are like palimpsests on which the scram-
> bled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewrit-
> ten. (Augé 2008, 64)

The texts that I examine in the following all collude in tangling to-
gether place and non-place. In different ways, Margaret Thatcher,
Gimpo, and Iain Sinclair agree that the M25 is like a palimpsest.
They all attempt to equip the infrastructure with identity, history
and relations. For Thatcher, the M25 is an efficient structure *and* a
monument. In walking rather than driving around the M25, Sin-
clair's project resists the invitation to solitary contractuality. Moreo-
ver, the possibility of absolution offered by the orbital motorway is
refused by Sinclair, who embarks upon a massive alternative pro-
ject of signification. In contrast to Sinclair, Gimpo insists on driving
around the M25 on an annual basis. His project involves spinning
annually for 25 hours around the M25 for 25 years. Rather than re-
sisting it, Gimpo wilfully misreads the invitation to solitary con-
tractuality in subjecting the sign "M25" to a reading that is not war-
ranted contractually. This misreading of the contract is continued
logically in his insistence in inscribing his own signs on the orbital
motorway.

MOTORWAY AND MONUMENT: MARGARET THATCHER, "SPEECH OPENING FINAL SECTION OF M25"

A key moment in the history of the orbital motorway was the open-
ing of its final section on October 29 1986. Several photographs
documenting the occasion are available on the Internet. Similar-
ly, a transcript exists of the official speeches made by Margaret

Thatcher, at that point in her second term as Britain's prime minister, Secretary of State for Transport, John Moore, and Don Holland, representing the contractors and engineers. A photograph from the opening captioned "Margaret Thatcher opened the M25" shows Thatcher walking between the central reservation and the embankment of a nearly empty expanse of a multi-lane motorway stretching away behind her into the horizon (BBC 2011c). At her back, left and right, a small number of cars – some of them police cars – are parked. Her feet are fairly closely together as if she is walking slowly rather than striding along. In her left hand, she is holding her handbag, and with a smile, she is looking straight at the viewer. Hairdo, suit, and handbag all speak *Thatcher*, and everything suggests that she is posing for photographers. But the middle of a six lane motorway seems a very odd place for a PM to have her photograph taken. In fact, a high level of contradiction is involved in picturing Thatcher – or anyone for that matter – in the middle of a non-place. Non-places are infrastructures, not photo-opportunities for politicians.

So, while she in a very literal sense is located on a motorway, a generic non-place, she is simultaneously situated somewhere else. Thatcher's pose reveals that she knows she is not merely positioned in a non-place. She is aware of the fact that the speeches accompanying the opening are about to or already have transformed the lanes of tarmac, the embankment, and the central reservation into a monument and its opening into a photo-op. The transcript of the speeches shows how political and industrial voices unite in a verbal construction of the M25 as not only a marvellous non-place, a highly efficient motorway, but a great national monument, too. In the transcript, John Moore, Secretary of State for Transport, begins by fashioning the opening of the ring road as historic. "This is a very important day for our country, as well as for London and the whole of the area" (Thatcher 1986). Speaking on behalf of the contractors, Don Holland goes on to underline the monumental nature of M25. He refers to it as "this splendid motorway," and "a milestone for the construction industry." Similarly, he constructs it as "a showpiece

of British engineering skills, planning, design and construction" and "a reminder of the achievements of the British construction industry." According to Holland, the M25 illustrates "to our overseas customers the prowess of the British construction industry in producing the skills, techniques, resources necessary for mastering the challenges of major projects around the world." M25 is "a project which compares with the civil engineering works of our Victorian forbears." His vocabulary (milestone, showpiece, reminder, for example) transforms the non-place into an anthropological place with a history that assigns identity to Britons.

Like Holland, Thatcher also touches on the monumental nature of M25 when she begins by sketching out the history of "the longest city bypass in the world" (Thatcher 1986). She underlines the fact that the vast majority of its construction took place after 1979, i.e. after she became PM. But equally important for her is a celebration and defence of its functionality and value as a non-place, as a structure:

> And as you know it's already proving its worth. It's cutting the time to the ports and to the airports, and it's allowing people to make journeys that they could not have faced before. And it's making life much more pleasant for people in many of our communities, it's taking heavy traffic away from our towns and villages, and from London itself. Of course, the road runs through some of the most attractive countryside, but great efforts have been made to blend it into the landscape, including the planting of some two million trees.

This celebration necessarily involves refuting the widespread criticism of M25's functionality as a failed non-place: "Now some people are saying that the road is too small, even that it's a disaster. I must say I can't *stand* those who carp and criticise when they ought to be congratulating Britain on a magnificent achievement and beating the drum for Britain all over the world. *[Applause.]*" According

to Thatcher, the complainers haven't grasped that the M25's inability to accommodate the vast volumes of traffic is "a mark of its success, not of its failure." Thatcher concludes by reiterating its monumental character and the fact that "[t]his is a road of which we can all be proud. It's a showpiece for British engineering and our great construction companies." It is a monument that is capable of linking the present with the future, "this £1 billion investment in Britain's future, this great achievement for Britain. *[Applause.]*"

The completion of the M25 is regarded by the three speakers as significant with respect to place and non-place, then. Not only is it a highly effective non-place succeeding in making everyday life much more agreeable, contrary to the critical voices. It is also a monument (almost like a cathedral), a milestone and a showpiece, a great feat of civil engineering comparable with those of the 19th century (e.g. the construction of the railroads). It is construed as a monument of national greatness. The M25 is a sign of the superior expertise of *British* engineering. Together the three speeches both celebrate the anonymous lanes of tarmac – inherently without relation, history, and identity – and transform them into a monument that is relational, historical and productive of identity. Geographically, it is the centre of world engineering. Historically it is the link between Britain's great past and future. In this way, anthropological place and non-place are made to intertwine and tangle together. From the moment of its opening, the M25 is a palimpsest of monumental infrastructure or infrastructural monumentality.

MISREADING AND REWRITING THE M25: GIMPO'S 25
According to his web site *Gimpo's M25 25 Hour Spin*, Gimpo (Alan Goodrick) began his project of driving round the M25 for 25 hours every year at the vernal equinox for 25 years in 1997 (Gimpo 2014a). His web site contains files of photographs and videos that document the annual roundtrip. Moreover, it links to other texts that have documented the annual tours, for instance, Bill Drummond's 1998 "Gimpo's 25," Angus Carlyle & Kristian Buus's, "Spinning Around,

Or The Point of the Pointless" (2004) and Rod Stanley, "Circles Of Hell." (2001).

On the one hand, the written and visual texts on Gimpo's web site revel in the M25 as a non-place. From the most recent spin (22nd-23rd March 2014), image 12 (2014b), for instance, documents the solitary contractuality of driving on the M25. This image shows a road sign for Clacket Lane Services overflowing with ideograms of McDonald's, Costa Coffee, and informing of the range of facilities available there. On the other hand, Gimpo's project is clearly fuelled by a desire to misread the M25 and its key texts visible on road signs and gantries. Image 57 (2014c), for instance, a photograph of a direction giving sign for Gatwick and Heathrow airports using the characteristic iconic signs for aeroplanes, is captioned, "up in the heavens" rather than read conventionally. Moreover, as a general rule Gimpo's project rebels against the "moral entities" and institutions bombarding the motorway driver with commands, prescriptions, and information that he or she must pay attention to. Rather than embracing the solitary contractuality demanded by the blue M25 sign, Gimpo misconstrues it wilfully and takes it as an invitation to a 25 hour spin around the ring road for 25 years. The repetition of the numerical figure suggests a strong element of ritual in Gimpo's project. Likewise, the choice of the spring equinox as the time of the yearly drive points to an aspect of ritual and history.

Moreover, usually the M25 is inscribed with signs that document the drive. Bill Drummond, who participated in one of the first spins, outlines its conclusion in this manner:

> Back into Herts, St Albans cathedral on the horizon. Two minutes to one. The pips. Gimpo goes berserk. The job has been done. We pull up on the hard shoulder. Trucks plough by. Gimpo is out. Down the embankment. Hammering in a wooden stake with a huge wooden mallet that I gave him as a wedding present. Mr Green has prepared a Wedgewood-blue plaque. These are the words printed on it:

On March 22nd/23rd 1997 Dave Green, Bill Drummond and Gimpo drove around the M25 for 25 hours non-stop. This plaque marks the point where the journey was finished.

This is nailed to the stake. Mr Green has also got a camera. He takes our pictures. We smile. A job well done. (Drummond 1998)

Also, at the end of his 2006 spin, Gimpo put a sticker reading "Gimpo's M25 25 Hour Spin Ended Here 26/03/06" on an official M25 road sign (Gimpo 2006). These examples show how the spins are enactments of the entanglement of place and non-place that Augé speaks about. Superimposing his own sign on an official one is almost a literalisation of Augé's notion of palimpsest. Similarly, in some of the photographs documenting his spins, Gimpo is wearing a customised motorway safety jacket in fluorescent yellow inscribed with what appears to be an official traffic information sign, which reads, "Gimpo's M25 25hr spin" next to the ideogram for motorway (Gimpo 2012).

In his account, Bill Drummond takes care to outline Gimpo's idea of the M25 spin:

Gimpo starts to reveal his vision. He wants this thing, this Gimpo M25 spin, to become an annual event. The closest Saturday night/Sunday morning to 21 March each year, to mark the opening of the rave/festival/drug-taking/banging/techno/hippie thing that Gimpo and his weird mates know all about. He wants loads of other people to join in, come out in their cars, vans, trucks, loaded up. A non-stop 25 hour party, road to nowhere sort of thing; car stereos cranked up, people screaming, pumping horns, blowing whistles. Hundreds, thousands, pouring out of Clacky services. Not a race, but a celebration of this broken down modern world, where the M25 would get

clogged up, grind to a standstill, the authorities could do nothing - and Gimpo would be king. (Drummond 1998)

This is a vision that would turn the M25 into an anthropological place i.e. a historical and relational place concerned with the creation or acting out of counter-cultural identities. Gimpo hasn't achieved this, and perhaps never will. In fact, most of his recent spin was undertaken on his own. But the M25 is nonetheless adorned with a history. Like Thatcher and Holland stamped the M25 as a monument inscribing it with in the history of British greatness, Gimpo engraves his own story on the lanes and traffic signs.

"COM[ING] TO TERMS WITH THIS BEAST." IAIN SINCLAIR, *LONDON ORBITAL* (2002)

Within the tradition of discovering or inventing the stories that have accumulated around the M25, Iain Sinclair's *London Orbital* (2002) and Chris Pettit's and his film (2004) take pride of place. In the following, I focus on Sinclair's book first and foremost. Sinclair's representational project takes on the motorway, "this beast" (Sinclair 2002: 7), in an altogether different fashion from Thatcher and Gimpo. He doesn't drive or walk *on* but walks *along* the M25 sometimes inside sometimes outside it, but remaining always within hearing distance (Sinclair 2002: 16). He refuses the solitary contractuality and absolution that constitutes the M25 as a non-place. Instead, he insists on stopping and looking in a manner that is related to psychogeography and its favourite procedures, summarised here by Robert Macfarlane:

Unfold a street map of London, place a glass, rim down, anywhere on the map, and draw round its edge. Pick up the map, go out into the city, and walk the circle, keeping as close as you can to the curve. Record the experience as you go, in whatever medium you favour: film, photograph, manuscript, tape. Catch the textual run-off of the

streets; the graffiti, the branded litter, the snatches of conversation. Cut for sign. Log the data-stream. Be alert to the happenstance of metaphors, watch for visual rhymes, coincidences, analogies, family resemblances, the changing moods of the street. Complete the circle, and the record ends. Walking makes for content; footage for footage. (quoted in Coverley 2010, 9)

According to Macfarlane, a psychogeographical walk begins and ends with the inscription of signs. First, an arbitrary route is drawn on a map in the form of a circle. In Sinclair's case, the circularity of the M25 is already inscribed on any London map. The point of psychogeography consists in completing that geometrical figure on the map and in recording your experiences as you go along. Sinclair's walk, however, is closely linked to another project. In fact it originates as a consequence of his desire to distance himself from the Millennium Dome[2] – an "urge to walk away from the Teflon meteorite on Bugsby Marshes. A white thing had been dropped in the mud of the Greenwich peninsula. The ripples had to stop somewhere" (Sinclair 2002, 3). The second chapter of his book, "Soothing the Seething: Up the Lea Valley with Bill Drummond (and the Unabomber)," documents the walk on the 27 March 1997 away from the Dome (Sinclair 2002, 27), "the most tainted spot on the map of London" (Sinclair 2002, 44). This walk away from Greenwich following the meridian as closely as possible is conceptualised as an act of "[e]xorcism." On 30 December 1999, more than two years – and five hundred pages – later, Sinclair is able to conclude that "[w]e hadn't walked around the perimeter of London, we had circumnavigated

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2   The Millennium Dome was and is the largest dome in the world and the site of numerous scandals. Thus, the web site politics.co.uk has called the Millennium Dome "one of the most controversial public works projects ever undertaken, for a large number of reasons" (Politics.co.uk 2014). Its centrality and notoriety in the British public sphere is also indicated by the fact that *The Guardian* has made an electronic dossier of articles available on their web site (Guardian 2014).

the Dome. At a safe distance. Away from its poisoned heritage. Its bad will, mendacity. The tent could consider itself exorcised" (Sinclair 2002, 551).

While the walk around the M25 is an act of exorcism, Sinclair admits that it is also linked to his "unhealthy obsession" (Sinclair 2002, 3) with the identity of the orbital motorway. Thus, within a single paragraph Sinclair offers four epithets for it: "grim necklace," "true perimeter fence," "conceptual ha-ha," and "tourniquet." He goes on to outline a wide range of examples of the conflicting stories that have accrued around the London Orbital. For instance, the M25, and motorways in general, are "the last great public parks" (Sinclair 2002, 5). For some commuters, it surprisingly constitutes "the best of it, the high point of the day" (Sinclair 2002, 7). The length of the road, "somewhere between 117 and 121 miles," (Sinclair 2002, 7) escapes correct measure. Swans from the Thames mistake the surface of the road for water, causing "several nasty accidents" (Sinclair 2002, 10). Originally Thatcher's "pet and pride" it has become "a rage inducing asteroid belt, debris bumping and farting and belching around a sealed off city" (Sinclair 2002, 11). At first, "a highway to the wide world" it quickly became the subject of sensational journalism. Rather than a ring road that bypassed London it's "a convenient back lane for housebreakers, a shuttle into the excavated chalk quarries (ghosts of wartime tunnels and bunkers) now imagineered into virtual unreality shopping cities" (Sinclair 2002, 11). Even the circularity suggested by the by the concept of ring road is "a fraud, reality was a series of badly stapled straight lines…" (Sinclair 2002, 13).

In this manner, Sinclair regards the M25 and its key connotations as highly contradictory and inherently deceptive, masking the reality of the motorway behind a haze of appearances. There's always more than meets the eye. Even road rage scenarios are not what they seem. Referencing the 1996 M25 road rage murder where Kenneth Noye fatally knifed Stephen Cameron, Sinclair outlines how the participants are now the "full-blown figures of myth" (Sinclair 2002, 13) whose story is everywhere on the M25: "Bent cop-

pers, Masonic conspiracies, buried bullion. It is always assumed, ru-
moured, that the three men – killer, victim and witness – had plenty
of previous, criminal connections" (Sinclair 2002, 13). The example
of the M25 road rage murder suggests the extent to which legends
have accrued around the ring road. Next to the solitary contractual-
ity reducing the individual to communication with official entities
characteristic of non-places, the London Orbital is steeped in other
signs. The M25 Swanley interchange – the location of Cameron's
murder – not only conveys the official signs for the entrances and
exists for M20, A20, and B2173 (Motorway Database 2014) – it is also
a crime scene – a place to which three people brought their identi-
ties, relations, and histories.

His desire to penetrate this high degree of semantic confusion
and contradiction – which is also a refusal of the absolution to stop
and look he is offered by the motorway – motivates his walk and his
"the belief that this nowhere, this edge, is the place that will offer
fresh narratives" (Sinclair 2002: 16). Taking the form of five stages,
Sinclair's massive project of walking around the M25 begins and
ends at Waltham Abbey. In the following, I limit myself to just one
of the numerous stories and meanings Sinclair unearths in his book.
Arguably, it constitutes a kind of climax of his walk and book since
it furnishes him with a narrative (not a new one, but an old and fa-
miliar one) and a unifying metaphor for the M25.

Sinclair's final walk is entitled "Blood and Oil: Carfax to
Waltham Abbey" and begins in the town of Grays Thurrock on the
north bank of the river Thames three kilometres to the east of the
M25. At first, Sinclair notices the familiar and confusing contrast
between the "cloacal, rusty, tired" reality he senses around him and
Grays as it appears on the "'computer generated impressions'" of the
area that the Barratt developers are exhibiting (Sinclair 2002, 480).
Next, alternative versions of Grays are offered in the form of dia-
logues with two local residents he encounters on his walk. They de-
scribe the Barratt homes as "'kennels'" and "'Lego homes'" respec-
tively (Sinclair 2002, 482). From one of the residents, moreover, he
receives directions to "one of the river's great secrets" (Sinclair 2002,

486) – the twelfth-century church of St Clement's in West Thurrock. Having eluded Sinclair on his previous walks – it's overshadowed by industrial plants – coming face to face with the unlikely survival of an ancient building in the middle of a heavily industrialized zone confirms a hunch of his concerning another survivor: "*A residue of Count Dracula was still earthed in Purfleet*" (Sinclair 2002, 486. Italics original). In the following pages of Sinclair's book, Stoker's 1897 novel becomes his preferred guide book in his discoveries. Thus, he believes it forms

> A considered and accurate geography. Westwards: Transylvania to Whitby. The Gothic imagination invading – and undoing – imperial certainties of trade, law, class. *Dracula* announces the coming age of the estate agent. Nothing in the book works without the Count's ability to purchase, rent, secure property. Like the Moscow Mafia buying into St George Hill (proximity to Heathrow), Dracula chose Purfleet, alongside the Thames, so that he could ship out for Varna at a moment's notice. Being an immortal, the Count knew that he only had to hang on for a few years and he would have a bridge across the river, a motorway circuit around London: new grazing grounds. The future M25 was a magic circle, a circle in salt. The Vampire couldn't be excluded, he was already inside! Purfleet rather than Thurrock. The motorway was the perfect metaphor for the circulation of blood: Carfax Abbey to Harefield – with attendant asylums. Stoker predicted the M25, made its physical construction tautologous. The count's fetid breath warmed Thatcher's neck as she cut the ribbon. (Sinclair 2002, 487)

Further, in his remaining account of the Grays and Purfleet area, *Dracula* is constantly echoed. Numerous and sometimes lengthy quotations from and references to the novel form the background of Sinclair's discoveries that, for instance, Stoker's themes of "im-

migration, storage, distribution" (Sinclair 2002, 492) are still notice-ably present in the heavily industrialised area. Similarly, he finds that "Dracula anticipates the boys in braces, Thatcher's bluenosed-sharks, Blair's private/public arrangements" (Sinclair 2002, 493). Moreover, the fictional place Carfax, which Dracula buys and relo-cates to in Stoker's novel resonates in several contemporary places most notably in the M25 Junction 30/ A13:

> Carfax: *Quatre Face*. The crossing of four roads. The tra-ditional burial place for vampires. In psychogeographic terms, Junction 30 of the M25, the point where the motor-way assumes its original identity, is the ultimate Carfax. Ten lanes of the M25 (north/south) violated by the rude east/west incursion of the A13. Their marriage mirrors the crossing of Thames and Queen Elizabeth II Bridge. Currents and countercurrents send vortices of energy swirling in all directions. (Sinclair 2002, 496)

Like MacFarlane's psychogeographer – paying attention to meta-phors, rhymes, coincidences, analogies, and resemblances between place and book, Sinclair succeeds in reimagining present day Grays, Purfleet, and the M25 very much in Stoker's terms. The creation of this resemblance is made possible by Sinclair's refusal to accept the solitary contractuality handed to him by the M25. Similarly, he rejects the absolution on offer and insists on stopping and looking instead. Significantly, he is handed a clue to what he perceives to be the real nature of the M25 in a conversation with an old resident of the area and not by any of the computer generated signs he records.

CONCLUSION

In Augé's terminology, the M25 is a non-place subjecting the indi-vidual to a state of solitary contractuality – inscribing him or her in a particular situation where he or she interacts solely with signs of, for instance, instruction, information, prescription or prohibition,

emitted by authoritative entities and institutions. Moreover, agreeing to the conditions of solitary contractuality absolves you from your curiosity to know. While non-places are the mark of supermodernity and while they redefine the notion of subjectivity, they never exist in pure form, though. Non-places always tangle and intertwine with anthropological places. In very different ways, the examples of Thatcher, Gimpo, and Sinclair show how anthropological places have reconstituted themselves in the M25. They agree in furnishing it with meanings and turning it into an anthropological place. Thatcher and the M25 contractors cast the orbital motorway as a monument of British engineering establishing its superiority worldwide and connecting Britain's great past and future. In a countercultural gesture, Gimpo misreads the official command of solitary contractuality – the M25 motorway sign – as an invitation to a 25 hour spin every year for 25 years, systematically inscribing it, moreover, with and within his own history. Sinclair sets out on his walk in a search for new narratives to substitute the confusing and contradictory connotations that have accrued since the opening of the M25 and discovers *Dracula* as the master plot of circulation for the Orbital.

The wide range of interpretations involved in the three examples suggests that non-places not only subject the individual to a set of strict rules, they also, paradoxically, appear to set the individual free. While a non-place subjects, it also seems almost to form a kind of tabula rasa inviting the inscription of any kind of sign. Because non-places are not relational, historical, or concerned with identity, they are, in contrast to anthropological places, also without firmly pre-established meanings. This near absence of meaning inherent in a non-place invites or even demands readings, interpretations, and inscriptions intended to furnish it with identities, relations and histories. This is perhaps why the marked representational interest in London's Orbital Motorway that I have outlined some key aspects of is merely an example of a much wider cultural interest in the phenomenon identified by Augé as a non-place. Thus, the last decade or so has seen the rise of a wide range of television docu-

mentaries on places of transition. The fact that, for example, BBC's Heathrow-based *Airport*, Travel Channel's *Airport 24/7: Miami*, and History's *Ice Road Truckers* have established themselves as mainstays on many networks suggests an almost omnipresent concern with the relationship between anthropological place and non-place in contemporary culture.

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THE MONSTROSITY OF NON-PLACES: *TROLL HUNTER*

Jørgen Riber Christensen

In his otherwise positive review in *The New York Times* of the Norwegian film *Trolljegeren* (director André Øvredal 2010, English language title *Troll Hunter*) Mike Hale has one point of criticism: "At 1 hour 43 minutes, the film is about 20 percent too long, and there are more traveling shots through car windows of the fjord-land scenery than are absolutely necessary" (Hale 2011). These travelling shots do not, however, only show picturesque Nordic scenery. The foregrounds of the views are always crash barriers. This article will focus on the film's locations, and it can already be pointed out now that these locations are far from being solely fjords, woods and mountains. The prevalence of ferries, lay-bys, caravan parks, power lines and motorways is impossible to miss in this film. The article asks the question what the significance is of this choice of locations.

The plot itself of *Troll Hunter* is not particularly original as the film belongs to the fairly recent horror subgenre of found footage, first made popular by *The Blair Witch Project* (directors Daniel Myrick, Eduardo Sánchez 1999). As in the American film a group of young Norwegian university students set out to produce a documentary film. In this case also about a local legend Hans, who may or may not be a bear poacher. It is gradually revealed to the film makers and to the audience that Hans is in actual fact a highly professional, though disgruntled caretaker of trolls, employed by the governmental Troll Security Agency. In a series of filmed interviews and documentary footage the actual existence of huge and danger-

ous Norwegian trolls is disclosed. The Troll Security Agency is part of a state conspiracy to keep the trolls a secret from the Norwegian population. This conspiracy becomes critical during the film as the trolls begin to break out from their reservations and behave in an unheard of aggressive manner. The analysis of a troll blood sample explains this behaviour as caused by an outbreak of rabies. The film includes traditional troll lore and mythology. Trolls love goats, especially on bridges, and their ability to smell Christians is part of the plot, they turn to stone in daylight (Kvideland and Sehmdorf 1988, 312), and in the film the troll hunter's main weapons are large lamps that emit daylight thus turning the trolls into stone and causing them to disintegrate.

The often dramatic and violent action of *Troll Hunter* is tempered by the film's humour, which redefines its horror genre as a mockumentary. One of the many self-ironic jokes of the film is that the power lines with their pylons, which in one case just go around in a circle, that disfigure Norwegian landscape are in actual fact electric fences meant to keep the trolls inside their reservations, and in a final clip from a press conference with the Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg he also acknowledges the trolls and their existence, and uses this as a reason why Norway must have pylons. The debate about power lines through Norwegian nature reached a climax in 2010 with the planning of 92 kilometres power lines with 40 meter high pylons, named the monster pylons by the local residents, through the unspoilt Hardanger landscape (Skjeggestad 2010, Holm 2011). The satire of the film also includes multiculturalism, as when the cameraman is killed by trolls because he was a Christian and easily sniffed out, his replacement is a Muslim, and everybody is confused as traditional Norwegian troll lore does not take this religion into account. A group of Polish artisans are included in its description of contemporary Norwegian society. In the end of the film there is a climatic struggle with a giant troll in the mountains, and in the ensuing confusion with the arrival of government agents the entire film crew disappears never to be seen again. Only the camera's hard disk survived as found footage.

THE SUBLIME, ANTHROPOLOGICAL PLACES AND NON-PLACES

In her article "Our need for monsters and fear Fictional narratives as role playing and training" ("Vårt behov av monster och skräck Fiktiva berättelser som rollspel och social träning") the Swedish professor Yvonne Leffler suggests a recent tendency especially in Scandinavian films to depict nature in itself and not just its fauna as a source of horror:

> Recently it has become nature as such, wild nature that constitutes the threat. This is foremost the case with Scandinavian works, e.g. Michael Hjort's film *The Unknown* (*Det okända*, 2000), which is partially based on Myrick's and Sánchez' *Blair Witch Project*, or Lars von Trier's *Anti-Christ* (2009). Many later horror films such as Watkin's *Eden Lake* (2008) and Neil Marshall's *The Descent* (2005), narrate how the romantic retreats or holiday outings of city people into the wilderness are transformed into nightmare vacations. The accidental tourist is neither prepared for the strange landscape, or for coping with wild animals or for getting on with the local inhabitants, and for him the formerly romantic landscape is changed into an uncontrollable monster, which he is overcome by, or which he himself is transformed into. (Leffler 2012, 298)[1]

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1 "På senare tid har det däremot blivit naturen som sådan, den vilda naturen, som utgör hotet. Detta gäller framför allt för många skandinaviska verk, t.ex. Michael Hjorts film Det okända (2000) som till viss del bygger på Myricks and Sánchez *Blair Witch Project*, eller Lars von Triers *Anti-Christ* (2009). Många sena skräckfilmer, som James Watkins *Eden Lake* (2008) och Neil Marshalls *The Descent* (2005), skildrar hur stadsmänniskans romantiska retreat eller semesterutflykt i vildmarken förvandlas till en mardrömsvistelse. För den tillfälliga turisten, som varken är rustad att ta sig fram i det främmande landskapet, hantera dess vilda djur eller umgås med de lokala invånarna, förvandlas det tidigare som romantiska landskapet till ett okontrollerbart monster som huvudpersonen besegras av eller själv förvandlas till" (Leffler 2012, 298).

Leffler suggest the explanation that we as city dwellers have become estranged from nature, and one may add to this very plausible reason that there has always been a tendency in both Romantic and Gothic literature and art that nature can instil not just a sense of beauty into the spectator but also of fear, in other words we are dealing with the concept of the sublime. With roots in classical antiquity British philosophers, notably but not solely, Edmund Burke developed the idea that a certain kind of nature did not only instil a feeling of beauty in the spectator, but it could also instil a sense of awe, astonishment, wonder and terror as the sheer size and majesty of e.g. the Alps were beyond human comprehension. In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) Edmund Burke described how nature can be a source of the sublime (Burke 1757/1998, 101). Also vastness and greatness of dimension are aspects of the sublime, and "another source of the sublime, is *infinity*, if it does not rather belong to the last. Infinity has a tendency to fill the mind with that sort of delightful horror, which is the most genuine effect, and truest test of the sublime" (Burke 1757/1998, 115). In J.M.W. Turner's paintings and watercolours dramatic and overwhelming Alpine scenes are notable European examples of the sublime in art, but also the Norwegian mountains became motifs of Nordic sublime art. Peder Balke and Johan Christian Dahl depicted glaciers, waterfalls and mountains, e.g. Dahl's aptly named The Troll Summits (Trolltinderne, 1823). A combination of folklore and art can be seen in Theodore Kittelsen's illustrations, e.g. The Troll pondering how old it is (Trollet som grunner på hvor gammelt det er, 1911), in which the colossal, chthonian troll seems to melt together with the mountains.

This kind of sublime nature is part of the locations of *Troll Hunter*, but mostly only sporadically or in glimpses. It is not until the final showdown in the mountains of Dovre with the giant Jotnar troll, 200 feet tall, that sublime vastness is allowed in nature that is not hemmed in by any human interference, though the troll is vanquished along with the film crew.

Johan Christian Dahl. The Troll Summits (Trolltinderne, 1823).

Anthropological places and non-places are described in Marc Augé's *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. Augé's discussion of places and especially what he calls non-places is an instrument to define supermodernity. The context of supermodernity seems similar to other social philosophers' (Lyotard, Fukuyama, Bauman) cultural pessimist conception of postmodernity with globalization, the end of history, the death of the grand narratives, and a general sense of solitude and alienation. This cultural condition has its manifestations in town-planning and architecture that are fundamentally different from what Augé calls anthropological places, i.e. places and buildings that contain and embody especially local history, memory and communal identity such as provincial town centres with e.g. war memorials, churches and town halls (Augé 1992/2008, 42-43, 53-54). Non-places, on the other hand, are without these social-semiotic values. They are not stationary and constant, but their main function is transit, not only general transport and the

circulation of commodities also almost ontologically, transit to and from life such as through the clinic or hospital (Augé 1992/2008, 63). This kind of places are for instance airports, railway stations, service stations, motorways, great commercial centres, transit camps, hotel chains, leisure parks (Augé 1992/2008, xxii, 28, 64).

Read in the light of Augé's concept of non-places, it does not seem entirely accidental when using film language terminology that the iconic camera shot of *Troll Hunter* is a travelling, in the sense that the camera is mobile, moving past its motif. It is the shot from a driving car with the crash barrier foreground of the image with sublime scenery as the background. Augé writes "Space, as frequentation of places rather than a place, stems in effect from a double movement: the traveller's movement, of course, but also a parallel movement of the landscapes which he catches only in partial glimpses, a series of 'snapshots' piled hurriedly into his memory" (Augé 1992/2008, 69). The extensive use of non-places, such as highways, bridges, road tunnels, parking spaces, lay-bys, caravan parks, etc. in *Troll Hunter* as documented in this article can be understood as a positive and creative reply to Augé's tentative claim that "perhaps today's artists and writers are doomed to seek beauty in 'non-places', to discover it by resisting the apparent obviousness of current events. They may do this by highlighting the enigmatic character of objects, of things disconnected from any exegesis or practical use" (Augé 1992/2008, xxii).

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

The article now turns to the part of the film's mise-en-scène consisting of its locations. The research method is here quantitative content analysis (Schrøder 2012, 108-112, Gunter 2012, 249-250). This method has been described by Peter Larsen as a mixture of description and interpretation: "While quantitative content analyses are descriptive in nature, aiming at "the manifest content of communication" […] textual analyses in the tradition of literary criticism and art history are usually interpretative, aiming at what is sometimes termed la-

tent meaning. The basic questions, consequently, are 'qualitative.' What does the text *really* mean, and how are its meanings organized?" (Larsen 2012, 134), and when Larsen continues about giving particular attention to particular works in this way he states that the reason may be "that they are thought to be significant carriers of cultural values and insights." It is the premise of this article that *Troll Hunter* despite its quaint subject fulfils this condition, and the quantitative method employed in the article moves as described by Larsen above from the quantitative observations to the qualitative interpretation. The location types of the film are measured and counted, and the measuring unit is the scene defined as the action in a single location with continuous time (Bordwell 1979/1997, 481). A breakdown of the film based solely on location types of its scenes, not surprisingly perhaps, reveals that the five scenes containing the encounters with the trolls are by far the longest. For instance, the climatic one on a mountain plateau lasts 945 seconds. The location of these scenes are woods, woodland, mountains, an abandoned mine, an old, small bridge in a wood and along a creek. The entrance into these troll locations is often signalled by a rite of passage, as the troll hunter Hans and the film crew must disguise their human smell by covering themselves in disgusting troll slime.

Another type of locations in the film is without trolls. These are non-places and specifically they are highways, flyovers, road tunnels, parking spaces, lay-bys, caravan parks, a roadside cafeteria, ferries, a veterinarian clinic, a railway station and a power station. Locations corresponding to Augé's definition of anthropological places are absent from the film. Diagram 1 illustrates the progression of the film through the two types of locations, troll scenes and non-places.

The total duration of troll scenes is 3875 seconds. The total duration of the group of scenes situated in non-places is 1904 seconds. The third non-descript group has the duration of 76 seconds. The proportion of the troll and non-places scenes is illustrated in diagram 2. As can be gathered from this diagram the locations with non-places e.g. highways, caravan parks and lay-bys take up a third
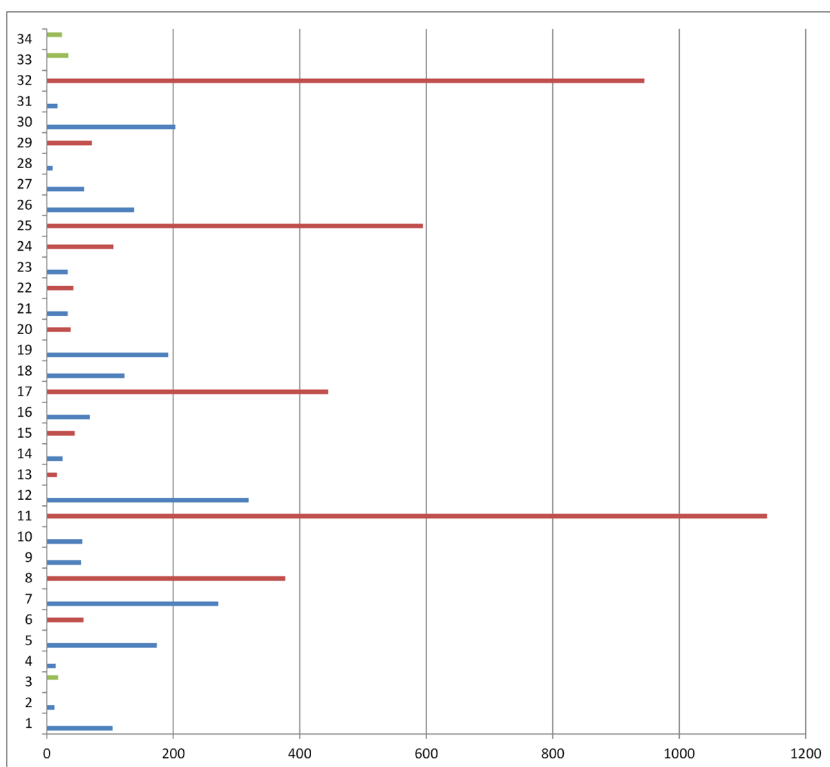
Diagram 1: The horizontal x axis counts the seconds of each scene based on its location, and the y axis is the chronological progression of the film with the film's beginning at the bottom of the diagram and the climatic end of the film at the top. The red lines denote the scenes with trolls in nature or as it is the case with the shortest lines with traces of trolls. In one curious case only small souvenir troll dolls. The blue lines denote scenes with the type of locations characterized as non-places. The few, short green lines denote a third non-descript category such as a press conference and a TV studio.

(33 per cent) of the total duration of the film, and as can be gathered

from the first diagram these are fairly evenly distributed through the whole film. We now seek to answer the question of what the meaning can be of this quantitative predominance of non-places in a film about folkloristic trolls. What is the significance of the combination of trolls and non-places, and how do the sublime places fit into this picture?
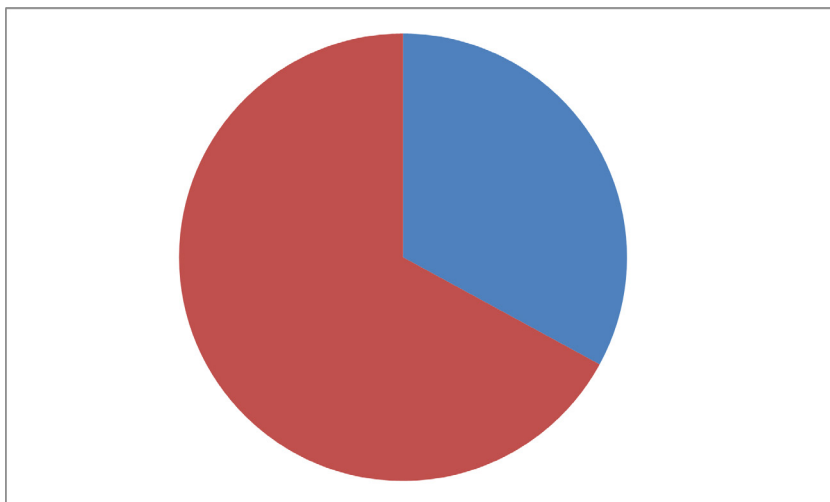
Diagram 2: The red part of the pie diagram (66 per cent of the film's total length in seconds) denotes the duration of troll scenes, and the blue part (33 per cent) the duration of the group of scenes whose locations are non-places.

A recurring image in Troll Hunter seems to merge the two types of locations of the sublime and non-places. It is so frequent that it can be said to be iconic of the film as such. The motif of this image is a backdrop of majestic mountains with clouds surrounding their summits or the background may be fiord landscapes. However, the foreground of these images is invariably crash barriers. Mostly these images are in the form of a travelling camera from the moving car of the film crew, but they may also be stationary as when the character Thomas strides over the crash barrier to pose with a walking staff in front of the mountainous landscape, as he asks "Do I look like that famous painting?" referring to "Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer" (around 1817) by Caspar David Friedrich. The answer may be "Not quite," as there is no crash barrier in the foreground of Friedrich's painting of the Romantic wanderer in sublime nature. It is exactly this border between the natural and magnificent – or sublime – Norwegian nature and human habitation – or civilization that *Troll Hunter* thematises through spending 33 per cent of the film's time on places like e.g. caravan parks, highways or roadside

Still from Trolljegeren, director André Øvredal 2010. Copyright Filmkameratene AS.

cafeterias. This leads us to consider three sorts of places: the sublime, anthropological places and non-places, all in relation to the monstrous nature of the Norwegian trolls.

The film's climax takes place in the mountains of Dovre with the impressively gigantic Jotnar troll. This scene is 945 seconds long or 17 per cents of the film's total duration (Diagram 3). In this case sublime scenery is untainted by and depicted without the film's emblems of non-places, crash barriers and pylons. The implication of this scene is twofold. On the one hand it is a celebration of the sublime parts of Norwegian nature that have not been and are not being spoilt by the infringement on it by non-places, but the negative implication of this scene is that it is left undefended as both the Jotnar troll and the film crew do not survive.

Caspar David Friedrich. Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer. Around 1817. Hamburger Kunsthalle. Copyright bpk | Hamburger Kunsthalle | Elke Walford.
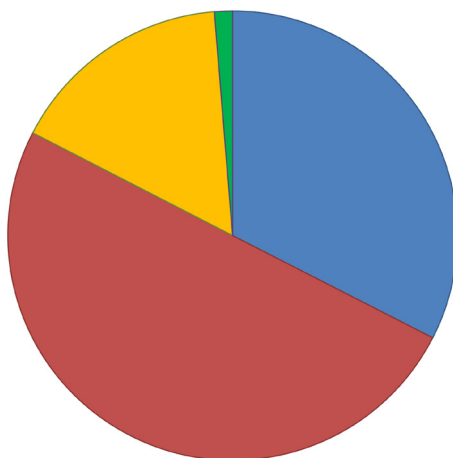
Diagram 3: The orange part of the pie diagram denotes the Dovre scene with sublime nature. This takes up 17 per cents of the film's total duration, and as such sublime nature is represented in the film as a substantial contrast to non-places.

CONCLUSION: FOLKLORE, PLACES AND SOCIAL CRITIQUE

The reality and very existence of the trolls of *Troll Hunter* are established without doubt to the film's protagonists at the same time as it is to the film's audience. This happens 27 minutes and 23 seconds into the film, when a troll (with three heads) is made visual. Until this point the conflict is not between humans and the troll monsters, but the conflict is of a phenomenological nature, in which the protagonists must only fight their disbelief, until they get certainty of the existence of the impossible trolls. In the case of the protagonists the phenomenological conflict is continued into a physical one with the trolls, though primarily as spectators to the troll hunter Hans' exploits, and secondarily, it seems, a more fatal conflict with the government agents. In the case of the audience this phenomenological conflict must necessarily be transformed into interpretation. The audience knows that trolls do not exist. Despite the film's successful CGI, despite the Norwegian prime minister's confession, trolls do not belong to the Norwegian fauna. This interpretative imperative on the part of the film's monsters is informed by the context of these

monsters. The trolls have been removed from the cultural habitat of folklore and fairy tales, which in this case is Asbjørnsen and Moe's collection of *Norwegian Folktales* (*Norske Folkeeventyr*, 1841-1870) with tales such as "Boots Who Ate a Match With the Troll," "Boots and the Troll" and "The Three Billy-Goats Gruff." The latter is almost directly quoted in the film with the episode of the old bridge and the three goats as bait for the troll. The overall narrative engine of the film is the transport of the trolls from make-believe fairy tales into a real and contemporary Norwegian society. This turns the troll figures into something monstrous that must be dealt with.

This article has employed a method of quantitative content analysis that has almost solely focussed on locations, but this exclusive approach to film analysis, which has left out analyses of narrative structures, characters etc., has combined the results of this quantitative content analysis with the sociological theory of Marc Augé's non-places to seek to explain the significance of the film's extensive use of what has been characterized here as non-places.

Troll Hunter's creation of a Norwegian society that is also populated by trolls employs places to do so. Trolls by their sheer size are not only magnification monsters in Noel Carroll's meaning of the term (Carroll 1990, 42-52). In the habitat they are leaving in the film they are sublime. The Norwegian mountainous regions are sublime as we have seen they have been depicted in art. In *Troll Hunter* traditional folklore and sublime nature, which may be considered part of Norwegian national identity, have been transformed into a depiction of modern society that is almost solely characterized by non-places. In the universe of this Norwegian film, sublime places do exist as the film's climax shows with the Dovre plateau, but for the most part they are only there as backgrounds of non-places, and as such the film is social critique of supermodernity. This article has sought to explain *The New York Times* film review's critique of too many "traveling shots through car windows of the fjord-land scenery". The composition of these shots with their non-place foregrounds and their sublime backgrounds is the vehicle of the film's cultural critique.

It is now time to look in the rear-view mirror to consider whether the analysis in the article has any theoretical repercussions, and ask what it has told us about the relationship between Augé's non-places and the concept of the sublime? The answer to this question is based on the remarkable absence in the film's universe of anthropological places with their local and social history, and so there is no intermediary category of place between the two contrasting categories, the timeless and mythical sublime nature where man is at most a visitor and the man-made non-places whose time is hypermodernity. This fact strengthens and intensifies the argumentation of the film, but theoretically, it demonstrates the usefulness of Augé's categories, but also that his two types of places, the non-places and the anthropological places are not exclusive. The sublime places are just one category that can supplement Augé's work. Elsewhere in this book, a fourth category of intertextual places has been added in the article "Northern Jutland as an Intertextual Location Hyperrealities in Peripheral Denmark". However, the addition of these two categories is not a critique of Augé. On the contrary, his point of departure that a place is a semiotic mechanism or a sign that is constituted by both a physical phenomenon of a social and geographical nature and by additional significances has only been supported by the analytical and theoretical inclusion of these two new categories of places in the analysis of *Troll Hunter*.

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PROVINCIAL NON-PLACES IN MORITZ VON USLAR'S POP REPORTAGE NOVEL *DEUTSCHBODEN*

Mirjam Gebauer

THE PROVINCIAL TOWN AND NON-PLACES

Marc Augé's concept of the transitory non-place mostly seems to be related to urbanity and "the worldwidely observable appearance of faceless megacities" (Böhme 2009, 192). In contrast, the provincial town is presented as a space where anthropological places prevail, facilitating personal communication and interaction (see Augé 1995, 53-54). This dichotomy of, on the one hand, the metropolis as the space where (super-)modernity reigns, shaping and even threatening the individual; and, on the other, the provincial town where the individual can breathe and unfold freely is already to be found in Georg Simmel's famous essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life" from 1903. It is even striking, how much Simmel's description of the small town and countryside seems to resonate with Augé. In addition, when Augé laments "the abstraction that corrodes and threatens" (Augé 1995, 83) our era, then this threat could be seen as a new variation of or even just another term for what Simmel calls "the objective culture". For Simmel, this objective culture is especially present in big cities, where its sheer accumulation threatens to overwhelm the individual. Hence, he derives the hatred against the metropolis, which Nietzsche and other intellectuals famously advocated:

The atrophy of the individual culture trough the hyper-trophy of the objective culture lies at the root of the bitter hatred which the preachers of the most extreme individu-alism, in the footsteps of Nietzsche, directed against the metropolis. But it is also the explanation of why indeed they are so passionately loved in the metropolis and in-deed appear to its residents as the saviours of their unsat-isfied yearnings. (Simmel [1903] 1972, 19)

The narrator in the reportage novel by Moritz von Uslar, *Deutsch-boden. Eine teilnehmende Beobachtung* ["German Soil. A Participatory Observation"] (2010) seems at first sight very different from this type of melancholic urban residents. Being part of a well-established cultural elite in Berlin, this journalist envisions to find, to spend sev-eral months in and to portray a provincial town in Brandenburg, a Bundesland which surrounds the German capital. But, initially, it is hard to put a finger on his personal motivation to do so, other than a vague curiosity for the exotic 'other'. As he tells his friends in his local Berlin bar: he wants to go there, "where hardly anybody has been before us" and "where people in shining white sweat suits hang out at gas stations and, once in a while, let threads of spit fall to the ground!" (Uslar 2010, 14[1]). In this dismissive portrayal of the provincial town, an urban-friendly discourse shines through which could be called a kind of a counter-discourse to the melancholic look at modernity and late modernity by Augé and Simmel. This equally powerful discourse establishes the metropolis as a mental center and the province as periphery, a genuine space of boredom, lifelessness and backwardness (see for instance Ellekjær et al. 2006). The slowness and phlegm of the province, which Augé emphasizes positively (see Augé 1995, 54), become unbearable for the accom-plices of (late) modernity.

Another aspect of the narrator's imagination of the provincial town present in the quotation above draws attention unto itself,

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1   The quotes from Uslar's book are translated from German by me.

because it is highly significant of how the province is displayed in Uslar's book, namely that classical non-places, gas stations, are mentioned as places somehow characteristic of the province. This choice of place seems fully deliberate, as Uslar throughout the book almost demonstratively refrains from displaying anthropological places in the sense of Augé such as the market place, the local bakery or the historical town hall. Instead, the streets of the provincial town which the narrator actually finds and writes about, are dominated by gloomy buildings not denying their GDR-past and, as witnesses of newer times, almost countless, but seemingly identical nail studios and Asian bistros. In this way, "Oberhavel", as the provincial town is renamed in the text, really represents an accumulation of desolation from past and present. Anthropological places appear somewhere along the text, but are treated with a kind of wilful ignorance and sometimes even with a certain animosity.

Representative of this perspective is the description of a little spot which is "a mixture of café, winery, bric-a-brac-shop, cultural meeting point and herbal garden with terrace – a little of all and all this made with much love" (Uslar 2010, 62, see also 231) and run by two former residents of a larger German city. It is clear that this kind of place is not what the narrator is looking for or even appreciates in the provincial town:

> I was astonished to find a place like this in my provincial town. Then I wasn't astonished anymore and saw the small town, indeed my whole journey from now on with different eyes. One should not be disappointed: No matter where one got to, culture and taste, the bric-a-brac collector, the wine drinker, the cabaret enthusiast and the connoisseur of delicate herbage had always already arrived before one. (Uslar 2010, 63)

Clearly, this experience bereaves the narrator of his clear-cut categories of the metropolis as the space which culture and savoir vivre are reserved to, on the one hand, and the province as the space of

culturelessness and bad taste, on the other. Hence, the narrator loses his illusion of being able to find the unknown and exotic in "Ober-havel". Another interesting aspect here is, however, that the exotic is not linked to the aforementioned individually arranged place, but to the non-places surrounding it. The impressions of the local, the picturesque and the historically embedded which this genre of place emanates, are decoded by the city resident as all too familiar urban styles and practices (re-)imported into the provincial town. He doesn't see them as authentic relics of a certain mode of living still existing in the province such as certain anthropological places by Augé. Indeed, they come across as the materialized dream of the melancholic metropolis residents Simmel talks about. In this way, these places have little to do with an in any way genuinely rural lifestyle which would be significant of the provincial town. By contrast, regarding non-places and the use of them, one could also say that the non-placeness is much more representative of the narrator's provincial town and therefore is positioned in his center of attention. Hence, typical non-places such as the gas station, the parking area of the supermarket, the street and even the car dominate Uslar's text. Another place gaining some space in *Deutschboden* is the local pub and a lot of the narrator's "participatory" involvement consists in getting drunk with his informants (see André (2010) who reads Uslar's text as "pub novel"). However, the question whether this can be regarded as one of the anthropological places Augé had in mind will not be pursued here. But it is very clear that Uslar tries to capture a specific social context of mostly young inhabitants of an East German post-*Wende* provincial town which is affected by "poverty, unemployment, emigration" (Uslar 2010, 15). In this rather rough social environment, tourists in outdoor clothing, biking now and again through the picture looking for historical sites, seem almost like funny figures (see for instance Uslar 2010, 291). And it seems to be this very contrast to the harsh social reality of "Ober-havel" which provokes the narrator's "hatred against the twee, little puzzle world which the two misters with their brick stone had constructed for themselves" serving "cheese cake tasting of the

metropolis" (Uslar 2010, 231) in the abovementioned picturesque spot.

In spite of all the idiosyncrasies of the somewhat egocentric and eccentric narrator, which these few quotations should have given a good example of and which consume quite a bit of the reader's attention, the subtitle of the book, "A Participatory Observation", is to be taken seriously. Besides referring to himself as a "reporter" and with a self-ironic punch line even as "reporter impersonator" (Uslar 2010, 16), the narrator is taking on the role of an ethnologist who tries to decode a foreign culture. Still he makes much more fuss of himself and his language is much more colored by subjectivity than readers are used to from the genres of ethnography and classical journalism. Phrasings using slang, swearwords, exaggerations and a style of narration which besides precise descriptions often fluctuates between (posed?) strong emotions of enthusiasm, gloominess, despair and even aggression caused by the observations made adds something to the narrator's utterances and makes the reader wonder about the position from which the narrator observes and speaks. Thus, it seems as if the narrator's role of the "reporter" somehow is jeopardized or at least "meta-ised" (see Hauthal 2007) which is why this appellation is used with quotation marks here, while Uslar's protagonist 'in reality' is nobody else than exactly the narrator of this piece of literature – rather than journalism.

This thought leads to the three central questions of this article: The first and main question is, in which way Uslar's 'ethnology of the near' performed in *Deutschboden* specifies, nuances and re-evaluates Augé's concept of the non-place by adapting it to the provincial town and to a specific social context. Secondly, the question pursued is in which way the perspective on this specific social milieu, the concept of the urban centre and the provincial periphery are changed through the attempt to constitute the displayed provincial uses of non-places as culture in its own right. Thirdly, it is asked whether the aesthetic features of the text support, modify or even undermine its ethnological endeavor.

THE TOPOLOGICAL FOCUS OF POP LITERATURE

Aspects of the text which already were briefly treated such as the idiosyncratic, posing, but self-ironic narrator focusing on lifestyle phenomena are typical of a literary tradition which in the German context has been called "pop literature", "pop journalism" or simply "pop" and which refers to authors such as Bret Easton Ellis, Douglas Coupland and Nick Hornby as important influences.

Determining the notion of "pop" in literature, I take departure in the lively scholarly debate in German scholarship of the latest decade, where this literature is loosely defined as a mode of writing which demonstrates the knowledge that present day "dominant culture is organized through market and media" – including literature itself (Baßler/Drügh 2012, 1, my translation). Thus, this writing has consequently abandoned Theodor W. Adorno's highly influential concept of the autonomous art work which implies that the role of the artist is to criticize the exploitative market system and the culture industry. Popular culture after the second world war seemed highly compromised among most German intellectuals through the Nazis' misuse of the notion of the popular for their propaganda, and it seems that this could be one of the reasons that discussions on pop culture and pop art, postmodernity and the blurring of the boundaries between high and low were somewhat delayed in the German debate and scholarship. However, in literature there was already a first wave of pop in the late 60s and early 70s, mostly represented by the writer Rolf Dieter Brinkmann and influenced by American pop culture and pop art. A second notable wave of pop literature was to be observed since the mid-90s which was said to have ebbed away in 2001 in the wake of September 11.

In the German scholarly context, the concept of pop is not to be confused with popular literature or trivial literature. By contrast, literary pop, or what is regarded as such, is more to be seen in the context of Avant-Pop with which it shares a certain overlap (Hecken 2012). Both concepts claim artistic quality and sophistication and a clear distinction from mass culture. In this way, literary pop often finds its readers more in small elitist circles than in a mass audience.

Still, it is recognized that pop should be regarded as an attitude towards a certain mainstream where it somehow causes frictions with the boundaries of this established cultural field. These frictions are caused by unusual combinations of cultural elements, ironic quotations and other violations of genre conventions and reader expectations. In this sense, pop can be regarded as a bit of an avant-gardistic chameleon which changes as soon as the boundaries of a certain cultural or literary field change and certain pop techniques and features have been incorporated into the mainstream (see among others Menke 2014).

Some concrete and relatively timeless characteristics of pop literature are the focus on surfaces, instead of in-depth psychological inquiries of protagonists, the unfolding of catalogues and lists of titles of labels of pop music, consumer products of everyday life and lifestyle such as clothing, interior decoration and food instead of classical narrative plots. In other words, pop literature is to a certain degree substituting a focus on ethics and morality by a focus on aesthetics and design. In this way, famously and infamously, in the German pop book *Tristesse Royale* (1999) five young dandy-like authors and publicists, meeting up in the Berlin noble hotel Adlon and chatting about the mental state of their generation, commented on a protest demonstration outside the hotel by focusing on the clothing of the girls and not on the cause of the demonstration. Posterior texts of this pop literary wave in the late 1990s might not have perpetuated this decadent style, but still the focus on surfaces and the interest in the cultural archive (for Baßler (2002) a central key for the understanding of pop literature) remain crucial, and all kinds of lists and catalogues from everyday life are still an essential feature of pop literature which, as it has been stated, basically "communicates through references" (Menke 2014, 242, my translation). These references are mostly taken from the 'here' and 'now' which is another significant aspect of pop and a clear divide from the melancholic focus on time and memory of modernist literature (see Richter 2003). Clearly, pop literature with its interest in the now and the outer world and relative disregard of the temporary and

psychological inner world is affected by or symptomatic of the post-modern *topological turn*. Thereby the pop literary interest in space is mostly directed towards urban places. Almost symbolically for this, Uslar's text starts out in Berlin and from there guides the reader on a journey – physically and mentally – to the provincial town.

Just as the narrator-protagonists in pop novels, often resembling alter egos of their authors, seem descendants of the bohemian *flâneur*, they are equally constantly creative subjects. What earlier *flâneur* writers noted down on restaurant napkins, beer coasters and small motel receipts, today's digital nomads note on their mobile devices. However, it might be said that the digital bohemians of supermodernity rather are at home in airport lounges, high speed trains and other non-places, than on the Montmartre in Paris or other picturesque places.

Pop literature with its vital interest in the zeitgeist and lifestyle phenomena ranges always close to non-fictional genres, and many pop writers previously or simultaneously wrote or write reportages, columns and reviews of pop music. In this way, it doesn't seem surprising that the genre of Uslar's text is a hybrid between literary prose, social reportage and ethnography. While pop literature often can be regarded as auto-fictional and even 'author-fictional', as pop literary books are filled with everyday observations from their author's life including the process of writing itself, in Uslar's case, the declared subject of the text is the social and cultural life of an East German provincial town, while the writer-subject is still very much present. One could say that the pop writer is transplanted from his 'natural' urban habitat to the province, participating in observing its residents. In this way, *Deutschboden* again can be regarded as a genuine piece of pop literature, because it generates unusual, surprising and provoking combinations, namely the meeting between the urban pop writer and the province or the combination of playful pop writing and social issues.

The method of the participatory observation, widely used in anthropology and sociology, aims at particularly intimate and accurate knowledge about the subject of enquiry through the deep-

going involvement of the researcher. He or she is supposed to become a part of the observed social environment over a longer period of time. Of course, Uslar's text aims not at fulfilling all scientific criteria of the research paradigm, but still the involvement with the object of inquiry by spending several months in the provincial town implies a new curiosity towards a social topic which has been debated controversially in Germany in recent years.

However, the subject of the displayed social layer and the method of the participatory observation seem very 'un-pop' at first glance. It does not seem to fit at all with the obsession of pop with cultural distinction, aesthetics and lifestyle which was also typical for the version of German pop dominant in the 90s, a context in which Uslar spent his formative years as a pop journalist. Neither does the profound, self-investing field research method seem to fit with pop's interest in the superficial. Again, one could argue, that it is exactly this arrangement of the clash between different cultural and social fields – to let pop or Gonzo journalism clash with social realism, to give an aesthetical critique of buildings, interiors and clothing where a description of misery and moralizing is expected – which produces the provocative friction characteristic of pop.

Another provocative friction arises from the hybridity of the text between (social) reportage and literary artwork. Hence, in an interview, the "hobby-ethnologist" (Westphal 2014, my translation) Uslar felt the need to comment: "My first duty and task consisted in writing a good book, my second in doing justice to the described people" (Bollwahn 2010, my translation). Undoubtedly, a 'real' anthropologist or sociologist would state another priority and a 'real' reporter wouldn't call himself a "reporter impersonator". Thus, some reviewers saw in the treatment of the informants as literary material even a "case of abuse" (Reichert 2010, my translation, see also Westphal 2014). But however vital the moral dilemma, the use of real life persons as text material is not unusual in literary writing. And with the style of non-fictional fiction, one could argue, Uslar's text follows a literary tradition which was initiated by Tru-

man Capote's novel *In Cold Blood* (1965) showing that nothing has to be added to real life material to be as exciting reading as a thriller. Where it is almost a convention among most fiction writers to claim the existence of clear-cut boundaries between real life and art, the provocation of nonfictional fiction such as in Uslar's and Capote's case, consists in contesting exactly these boundaries. Still "Oberhavel" is to be regarded as a stylized, highly fictionalized place – to a certain degree it is invented and could be invented otherwise. When the book was filmatized (*Deutschboden*, 2013, directed by André Schäfer), this complicated relation between fact and fiction seemed to be somehow misunderstood, insofar as the filmmakers, using the authentic model of Uslar's provincial town for the film, became disappointed, because the authentic provincial town didn't prove to be the boring, gloomy place that they had expected to find (Wojach 2014). Indeed, as there isn't a pre-constructed plot, 'reality' serves as material, but could be arranged differently. Therefore, as mentioned above, Uslar's text is analyzed in this article first and foremost as a piece of literature and not as a journalistic reportage.

THE LAST BUS: THE EAST GERMAN PROVINCE IN THE IMAGINATION OF LITERATURE AND FILM

Augé uses the notion of the palimpsest to characterize the continuum between the place and the non-place: "the place never disappears completely and the non-place is never fully established – they are palimpsests on which the confusing game of identity and relation finds its own reflection over and over (Augé 1995, 79). The notion of the palimpsest seems quite useful for Uslar's construction of places as well. To begin with, historical periods have left traces which the narrator reads from the surfaces of the buildings such as "the Greybrownfawnish of the old GDR" (Uslar 2010, 258). Also, the depicted town is to be seen somehow as representative of Germany as the text is called "Deutschboden", which is the name of a little spot in the wood, nearby "Oberhavel", but which also could mean 'German soil'. In addition, very symbolically the "reporter" stays at

a little hotel called "Haus Heimat" when being in "Oberhavel". The text is here evoking notions of nationalism which get a disconcerting touch as the described milieu bears latent tendencies of right wing extremism. These mentioned historical layers result in a semiotically dense space with highly complex places.

In the filmatization, at one point Uslar, who is acting as himself in the picture, is displayed at an abandoned bus stop. The message seems to be that it has been a very long time since this place saw the last bus, probably since the fall of the Berlin wall. In this way, the place iconographically symbolizes those parts of East Germany where observers would locate 'the losers' of the German unification process. In the years after the fall of the wall, the results of the flow of funds invested to restore the ruined towns and landscapes of the old GDR, were more visible in bigger cities which changed dramatically. By contrast, traces of the old GDR still remain visible in smaller towns. Many areas were left behind in the fast development. Those areas are marked by unemployment, a significant brain drain and other social problems. In the Bundesland Brandenburg, these issues seem only to be underlined by the proximity to the culturally highly ranked, global metropolis which Berlin has developed into since the social shift set into motion in 1989/90.

However, exactly these East German, somehow forgotten areas which still have their own pre-(super)modern, sometimes morbid charm have in the last few years become a preferred space of imagination of writers and filmmakers, a tendency which the filmatization of Deutschboden itself is an example of. Other literary examples with plots unfolding in the East German province are Judith Zander's novel *Dinge, die wir heute sagten* (2010) and Daniela Krien *Irgendwann werden wir uns alles erzählen* (2011).

These depicted provincial spaces contain non-places according to one simple definition by Nathan Lewis which Augé probably would agree with: "Places are areas where things happen […] non-places are areas where nothing happens" (Lewis 2009). Also in *Deutschboden*, not only are non-places put at the centre of attention, also the category of 'nothing' seems to be a recurring motif. One

chapter of the book is even called "The Nothing" (Uslar 2010, 341). Also the author takes his point of departure in a 'non-plot', which is indicated in the motto of the text saying: "There is no story. Only the location where the story could have taken place." But not only is there no pre-constructed plot, also according to the narrator not much happens in the lives of the portrayed people: "There was little to talk about, while, as always, there was talk all the time" (Uslar 2010, 362). This sentence proves true on a deeper level, because it is exactly in the absences of action that narration unfolds. As the narrator asks at some point: "Who needed the description of drabness? Was there a possibility […] that the drabness through a detailed description could be transformed into a more bearable state?" (Uslar 2010, 161) Also the author stated in an interview, that it was the "external lack of events and the linguistic giftedness of the people" (Bollwahn 2010, my translation) which fascinated him about "Oberhavel". This dialectic between the absence of events and actions, on the one hand, and a linguistic and textual abundance, on the other, seems to be one fundamental principle which the text is built on.

To make this poetical principle work, the minor and ordinary have to be described with the same interest as the extraordinary, the meaningless with the same interest as the meaningful without imposing one's own values and judgments on the described objects. This is indeed one declared approach of the "reporter" who tries to describe more and to think less:

> My ideal […] was to just be there, without thinking at all, without drawing any conclusion. What was the result of thinking anyway? It was always the same, old shit, which misunderstood everything again and again. Better: not trying to understand to begin with. With dusky eyes, bleary, half shut, I wanted to look and only describe the small movements of what was going on. Describing thoroughly in detail, what in the big picture didn't make sense […]. (Uslar 2010, 235)

Concretely, this means also that instead of telling how a story unfolds over time, figures of speech, clothing styles, street names, labels of consumer products, stores etc. are catalogued. As was already observed earlier in this article, it becomes clear again, that the pop literary mode of narration is establishing a poetics of the surface, not of the depth and hence engages more in spatiality than temporality.

The narrator's ideal of describing instead of thinking and drawing conclusions, points at his ethnological approach to what others would describe as social problems. Instead, the narrator presents the vital issues of the described social context playfully in an alliteration: "Arbeitslosigkeit, Abwanderung, Armut" – "unemployment, out-migration, poverty" (Uslar 2010, 15). In an even more playful and provocative way the narrator makes a list of fictitious, little flattering names of small towns of the region which resound with the cliché of the desolation in the East German province: "Brandow. Sandow. Sumpfow. Stumpfow. Ostow [etc.]" (Uslar 2010, 15). This play with words is symptomatic of how the narrator or "reporter" doesn't focus first and foremost on social hardships which would include a certain evaluation of people's life, but considers the provincial town a foreign, exotic microcosm, "a whole world of its own with its own language, its own jokes, its own culture of drinking" (Uslar 2010, 326), or as Raymond Williams has put it: as "a whole way of life". As the narrator is establishing this social context as a cultural microcosm in its own right und tries to 'read' it, it is quasi-objectified as a kind of text (Horvath 2006). Thus, at the centre of the attention are mostly young people living in "Oberhavel".

The reading of this foreign culture includes the documentation of clothing styles and figures of speech indicating a latent right wing extremism. Instead of judging, the narrator looks and describes curiously and carefully, but without leaving doubt about his own anti-racist attitude. Racism and neo-Nazism are attitudes again and again related to East Germany and especially the East German province in the 1990s where several incidents of racist violence had occupied the media's interest, and the neo-Nazi past of the town

is treated in one book chapter (see Uslar 2010, 341-353). After 2000 these issues were temporarily moved into the background of the German public, when in November 2011 several murders, taking place in different places in Germany and over a period of several years, were revealed as a series of xenophobic attacks on citizens with migration background struck by the neo-Nazi organization "Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund" (NSU). In *Deutschboden*, it is made clear that the boundaries between provocative national and clear-cut neo-Nazi symbolism are blurry. The milieu on display here is not a decidedly right wing extremist one, but a milieu where right wing attitudes and a corresponding clothing style are tolerated or even an integrated part of the youth culture. Still, it is probably exactly such a milieu which made possible the NSU's attacks by supporting the perpetrators with different supplies, as the ongoing trial against the last surviving member of the NSU now is revealing almost from day to day. In this way, Uslar's notes from the East German province have gained an uncomfortable actuality not foreseen by most observers.

THE "BOYS FROM ARAL"

The chapter called "Aral" functions dramatically as a kind of climax of the text describing a summer night at the gas station and will stand in the center of the analysis in the last part of this article. This gas station is one of those non-places and preferred meeting places of the young people described in the book which gains a specific meaning for them. This is reflected in a specific linguistic phrasing. One preferred place are the streets and the highway and a frequent occupation is described as to "take a town spin / stroll" or to "drive to the B1" (Uslar 2010, 314). When the group meets at a certain gas station or at a certain supermarket's parking place they use the label's name and a preposition which is usually used for places with specific names such as cities and countries – they say: "nach Aral" (the label of a gas station frequent in Germany) or "nach Kaiser's" (the label of a supermarket) instead of "zu Aral" and "zu Kaiser's"

which would be the linguistically correct form. The narrator calls this deliberate wrong phrasing the "correct phrase in the language of Oberhavel" (Uslar 2010, 278). Through the choice of the wrong preposition and the name of the label, instead of the function of the place (gas station or supermarket etc.) the appropriation of the non-place as a place of some kind becomes visible on the linguistic surface. One could also say that the youngsters are constructing new places of their own. By using the (non-)place in certain ways it becomes more to them than an arbitrary gas station.

For the youngsters, the stay at the gas station is a typical routine, when they are doing, as it is called, their "Aral-thing": "Aral, this is now, in this beautiful weather, the place to be anyway" (Uslar 2010, 277). In the description of the night at the Aral gas station an especially high atmospheric density is created. And the gas station is even regarded as a somewhat mythical place with historical depth, the place where youngsters spend a formative part of their life. The narrator refers to a kind of emergence myth of the teenager when he describes the clothing and attitudes of one boy from the gas station:

> It was as if in him, year in year out, in the small town, a lust, a thirst, a hunger had accumulated which one single night at the gas station – be it as hyped up, as crazy, as wicked as it could be – couldn't satisfy. It was, the reporter read in the performance of Marcin who was tense from the cape down to the sneakers, not less than the classical lust for more – more sex, riot, sound volume, speed, hp –, from which once, way back then, a good fifty years ago, in the small towns and at the gas stations of America, the teenager emerged, the beatnik, the rebel without a cause. (Uslar 2010, 310)

This is a characteristic example of how the "reporter" adds some cultural-historical depth to the pure description of what happens and of surfaces. This depth is, however, not a psychological one, but refers to a certain cultural archive in which the person's clothing,

attitude and behavior are allocated. Interestingly, in the figure of the American teenager rebel, the narrator draws the silhouettes of a common, however far ancestor between the boys from Aral and his friends in Berlin.

It becomes clear that Aral is not just a gas station like any other gas station, but a formative place to the group of youngsters. In this way, also the gas station kiosk is not just a kiosk, but "the house of the gas station" (Uslar 2010, 303) at it is called, and the group uses it not as a kiosk, but as a place "to hang a little at the standing tables and to chat away". To them these tables are "in reality rubbish bins with a table surface above. Nobody was buying anything" (Uslar 2010, 303-304). The alleged non-place even constitutes such a strong identity, that it becomes a collective subject capable of acting, when one youngster tells the narrator that "practically the whole gas station would register" (Uslar 2010, 305) for a certain competition game.

The other non-place which plays an important role in the book and which is even more central in this chapter is the car, and the "car topic" (Uslar 2010, 312) is omnipresent. As Eric, one informant of the "reporter", tells him, his friends are "[a]ll crazy about their cars. They live for their wheels" (Uslar 2010, 300). When Eric informs the "reporter" about what there is to know of some friends, these short biographies all include types, horse power and other information related to their cars and their owner (see Uslar 2010, 300-302).

Related to the special use of the non-place are certain occupations which many wouldn't consider 'real' activities. Nevertheless, they occupy a large space in the life of the observed youngsters. One of these occupations is to drive "city rounds" (Uslar 2010, 276). As mentioned earlier, the "reporter" avoids drawing conclusions or making judgments, instead he simply tries to describe; that is to say that instead of applying a standard which is external to the described culture, he is preoccupied by finding structures and patterns – or one could also say: a kind of meaning from within. This method is visible for instance when the narrator looks for patterns in the constellation of the parked cars, whereby the act of parking is described as a sophisticated cultural, virtually artistic expression:

> The architecture of the seemingly coincidentally, but, in reality, in a higher order parked cars – a choreography of hoods (Motorhauben), spoilers (Spoiler), aprons (Schutzbleche), car doors and flood lights. I didn't understand the pattern / structure (Ordnung). But I saw, however, that one could park one's car wrongly and rightly, fortunately and less fortunately. (Uslar 2010, 305)

It is not easy to distinguish to which degree the impression of the artistic really can be attributed to the described object, or whether the artistic rather lies in the eye of the beholder and the choice of a certain perspective and, on the textual level, in the choice of certain metaphors in the description. In the same way, the movement of the youngsters at the gas station is described as a dance following a certain choreography as something which could be taken out of a modern musical: "Again and again the sitting, pushing and hustling, the sitting down and jumping up came together to formations looking as if they were choreographed by an invisible gas station director" (Uslar 2010, 318).

To blur or at least to contest the boundaries between the ordinary, everyday and high culture seems well in line with the concept of pop. Still, this well-known pop literary technique gains some effect of surprise and provocation when adapted in this specific context. Particularly as analogies to literature and especially poetry are drawn again and again: "And with low voice the car tuner said a few verses of the internationally common car tuner-poetry" (Uslar 2010, 311). In reality this means, that the "car tuner" describes which individual components his car contains and how these were assembled. Another example of this radical combination of everyday and high culture is found in the strongly dialectally colored statement of one youngster that "smoking is cool, because it makes the chicks look at you" which the narrator exuberantly praises as "great, really unscalably great literature" (Uslar 2010, 298). This special framing of everyday language as highly acclaimed art also seems to mark that the narrator in this statement sees a particularly exemplary and

therefore highly valuable expression of the described (youth) culture.

Patterns and the serial instead of the behavior of individuals or the single detail are also focused upon by choosing – cinematically spoken – the long shot as a perspective on the whole group of youngsters and what could be perceived as fast motion. In this way parallels in space and time are made visible. The handling of the cars seen as a dance channels the focus on patterns in the behavior of the whole group and in repetitions over time. The "reporter" notes that all actions of the youngsters at the gas station somehow involve their cars, especially when these are not used to drive: "The boys smoked, posed their shoes on the tires, opened their trunk, closed their trunk, started their cars, drove two meters, shut the engine down again" (Uslar 2010, 306). Exactly the narrator's ethnologically informed pop approach which looks for meaning in the superficial and the visible and not in depth and in reasoning seems to help to make sense of this behavior. It is obvious that the car represents much more than a means of transportation, it is a very important part of a lifestyle and it plays an important role in the identity-making of the boys from the gas station. In this way, also the "departing from the gas station" becomes an act of performance where different variations are possible:

> One could do it with screaming tires or with scream-screech-whining tires. And one could act as if one would drop the vociferous goodbye, in order to, on the last meters of the gas station, to let the tires scream even more beastly loud. Just simply departing from the gas stations, that was not possible. (Uslar 2010, 306)

The constant occupation with the car finds its extension in a generally transitory behavior, a constant arriving and leaving: "Boys left and new boys arrived, parked their car, jumped out, shut their car doors with a thunk, greeted everybody with a handshake […] and left again" (Uslar 2010, 306). Following Augé's pondering that the

"traveller's space may [...] be the archetype of *non-place*" (Augé, 86), one could argue that the transitory function of the non-place is mirrored in the transitory behavior of the people using it and even preferring it over other kinds of places. The described youngsters produce the transitory, also when they don't move, thereby almost effacing all pauses used to dwell: "In one, two, at most three minutes, this had to be said constantly, one wanted already to be gone. In this way one could very well stay for another half an hour" (Uslar 2010, 319). Only in the mode of the transitory a certain dwelling seems acceptable. This constant real or potential change of place, the existence in between places, which for the youngster seems to function as a perfect strategy to prevent oneself from boredom (see also Uslar 2010, 298), is to be found on another level as a kind of transitory navigating between conversation topics: "Topics of conversation would be treated, at a maximum, for thirty seconds. Thus, not a minute went by, without a new suggestion for the next topic of conversation being made" (Uslar 2010, 295). Again we can observe here a simulation of the transitory which fits very well the paradoxical preference of the gas station as a place of dwelling.

CONCLUSION: READING THE USE OF PROVINCIAL NON-PLACES

Summing up the findings of this article, analyzing the use of non-places in Moritz von Uslar's text *Deutschboden* has shown that it is fruitful and even necessary to discuss Augé's concept in different contexts. Non-places are not always to be found in the sterility and purity Augé's concept sometimes seems to envision them. In certain geographical and social contexts the non-placeness of non-places, so to speak, unfolds to different degrees.

In Uslar's text, Augé's concept is seen against the background of the urbanity vs. provinciality divide. However, the dichotomy between the urban space with its accumulated objective culture and numerous non-places, on the one hand, and provincial spaces with a stronger individual culture with more anthropological places, on

the other hand, cannot be sustained. As we have seen, inhabitants of provincial spaces develop their own use of places and non-places. Still, between urban and provincial spaces exists a mutual transfer of meaning and a constant ascription and revaluation of the relation between these two types of spaces. Opposite directed discourses such as the dichotomy between urban center and provincial periphery, on the one hand, and the province seen as the space of alleged authenticity and individuality and the metropolis of sterile non-places, on the other, play an important role in these negotiations. As the analysis of Uslar's text has shown, the yearning for the authentic, individual and the historical is developed in the urban context – just as Simmel observed one hundred years ago – and projected on the provincial space. In the provincial space, for its part, at least in certain social contexts, classical transitory non-places are preferred and non-placeness is even simulated, because, as one could assume, they stand for the alignment with modernity and progress.

The mentioned discourses of spaces and places are both mirrored and produced on a textual and poetical level as well. The choice of the genre of pop reportage novel instead of for instance social reportage results in different ways in frictions with the established perspective of the depicted social context. But in fact, the use of the urban pop paradigm results in, as has been shown, this social context becoming readable as cultural text, and therefore, at least to a certain degree, possible to connect with urban discourses. The narrator's reports from the Brandenburg province are somehow directed to an imagined cultural center, represented by his Berlin friends, for whom he, so to speak, translates provincial youth culture. As also has been shown, the text compensates for the different absences present in the provincial and in the non-place by producing a linguistic abundance and a certain narrative suspense. One might say: non-placeness is not so much perpetuated on the textual level, but is seen as a worthy adversary to fight against.

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FILM

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NORTHERN JUTLAND AS AN INTERTEX-
TUAL LOCATION: HYPERREALITIES IN
PERIPHERAL DENMARK

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Elsewhere in this anthology articles elaborate on and employ Marc Augé's categorization of places in Supermodernity. However, this article proposes to expand Augé's categorization of places. Augé's depiction of the supermodern world contains two categories, anthropological places, which are places that contain and embody especially local history, memory and communal identity such as e.g. provincial town centres (Augé 1992/2008, 42-43, 53-54), and then non-places that are devoid of these social-semiotic values of authenticity such as airports. Their main function is transit. (Augé 1992/2008, 63). As it may appear, it is the reading or reception of the semiotic values of places that produce their meaning, and this article's addition to Augé's two categories is based on the reception of places. We propose to include intertextual places as a third category of places. By this category, we mean places that do not and cannot appear only as places in their own right, be it anthropological places or non-places, but in the reception of these places is added the fact that they have been locations in films and media. The category of intertextual places can apply to both anthropological places and non-places, and it supplements these two categories as it can add meaning to instances of both as the example of underground car parks shows with regard to a non-place, and the following examples show that anthropological places can also be intertextual plac-

es. Quite famous examples are the Queensboro Bridge in New York from Woody Allen's *Manhattan* (1979), Monument Valley in John Ford's westerns, the Odessa Steps from Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) or Mount Rushmore's presidential sculptures from Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* (1959). The many tourists that visit the ancient city of Petra in Jordan with its rock cut architecture may find it difficult to experience this place as it is. They may well find it hard to avoid being reminded of films such as *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), *Arabian Nights* (1974), *Passion in the Desert* (1997), *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* (1977), *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* (2009). And they may be reminded of computer games such as *Spy Hunter* (1983), *King's Quest V* (1990), *Lego Indiana Jones* (2008), and *Sonic Unleashed* (2008) or the Tintin comic book *The Red Sea Sharks* (1956), for that matter.

The famous giant stairway in Odessa, Ukraine, known from Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* is a particularly interesting case. Today, it is explicitly referred to as 'the Potemkin Stairs / Potemkinsky Skhidtsi', which stresses the mediality of the place. However, Brian De Palma recycled the particular stairway scene in *The Untouchables* (1987), which, then, creates a second order intertextual reference to the actual Ukrainian stairs. De Palma chose to film the scene in an actual place of transit, Union Station in Chicago, which then again mediated what from the point of view of Augé's view would be a non-place turning it into a highly intertextualised location with reference to a mediated place and not an actual place. The textual relationships become even more complex when we include Peter Segal's intertextual parody in *Naked Gun 33 1/3: The Final Insult* (1994) where the hyperbolic reference becomes what Michael Iampolski calls a hyperquote:

> A quote becomes a hyperquote whenever one source is insufficient for its integration into the fabric of a text […]. A hyperquote essentially becomes a kind of semantic funnel, drawing in all the competing meanings and texts, even if the latter contradict each other and are not readily

reconciled into one unitary and dominant meaning. (Iam-
polski 1998, 35)

The continued intertextual repercussions of the stairs are continued as genre parody in the Peter Segal film. In the Potemkin scene in this film the original hypotext with its direct mimetic relationship to the actual Odessa Steps and its ideological message has receded out of sight and the audience is left with not one pram but four plus the addition of a red lawn mower semiotically freewheeling down the stairs in a hyperreal way. Stressing the 'loss' of Eisenstein's film, the scene in *Naked Gun 33 1/3* was *not* shot in Union Station. The actual staircase in Odessa has, by now, become a reference without an actual object outside the text. Nevertheless, according to Iampolski the text still remembers. In Sbigniew Rybczynski's *Steps* (1987) the (con)fusion of the actual and real Odessa Steps with their mediated and hyperreal counterpart has run full circle. Because of the iconic intertextual status of the steps, they are visited by a group of American tourists. However, it is not the actual Odessa Steps that they visit, but they visit the steps in the black and white film into which they have been cleverly edited electronically and in colour, so that they move around inside the film and have to step aside for the Czarist soldiers. The location of a film has become a tourist attraction to the extent that there is no distinction between the location's existence in reality and its existence in the film (Christensen 2004, 239). As we shall see later in this article, this combination of tourism, film and reality is not so futuristically far-fetched as it may seem. It is a conspicuous frame of reference for tourist bureaus and has been referred to as *film tourism* (Waade 2013) or *film induced tourism* (Beeton 2005).

The point is that these places are just as much filming locations as they are places, in all these examples anthropological places except the Chicago train station, and it may be impossible to perceive them as only places without including transferred meanings from the films and media in which they were locations. These places may be said to be augmented or enhanced intertextually by the media

texts they have become parts of, and in which they may often have been perceived before they were perceived in reality (Waade 2013, 180-183). One may then ask whether anonymous non-places that do not possess the same kind of clear-cut iconic characteristics as the examples above can have the same kind of intertextual values. An example can be any underground car park. A car park of this type can, however, be recognized from innumerable crime films and thrillers as a dramaturgically perilous location. It is not just an Au-géan non-place, it is not just a place to park your car, and a specific reason for the well-known fright of underground car parks stems probably not from a genuine risk, but it may originate from our in-tertextual location mentality. Such places are also stereotypical loca-tion topoi of the intertextual quotation type described by Umberto Eco. According to him, the intertextual effect consists in a frequent repetition of a topos that is so common that it cannot be pinpointed to a specific hypotext (Eco 1997, 22). This is different from the direct intertextual quotation where the hypotext is always a specific one. The iconic intertextual examples of the places above refer to specific films and as such, they may be said to belong to the type of direct quotations.

THE WORLD AS CINEMA

To expand this phenomenological idea that places contain an inter-textual value even further, we now turn to Jean Baudrillard's con-cept of postmodern hyperreality. We are here not going to delve into Baudrillard's theoretical construction of hyperreality with its floating signifiers, simulation and simulacra; but as we are con-cerned with places and the traveller's and the visitor's semiotic reception of them, we also refer to his travel book *America* (Baud-rillard 1986/2010). This book is a combination of Baudrillard's impressions from America and of his theoretical work, and it can be added that a not unimportant inspiration for Baudrillard's per-ception of America is Paul Virilio's *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* (1980/1991). It is striking that Baudrillard describes his experiences

in America with media terminology. For instance, when Baudrillard is driving fast through the New Mexico desert, his perception of the scenery outside the car's windows is like Virilio's description of the aesthetics of disappearance, in which film technology has become a cultural metaphor. Each frame of the filmstrip with duration of a twenty-fifth of a second has disappeared as soon as it has been perceived by the eye, and yet it is still there on the filmstrip, so that disappearance and perpetuity cannot be. (Virilio 1980/1991, 70-71) Baudrillard writes, "The unfolding of the desert is infinitely close to the timelessness of the film" (Baudrillard 1986/2010, 1). In Salt Lake City, religion is characterized as "special effects" (Baudrillard 1986/2010, 2). All in all, both the American desert and its metropolises are "not at any stage regarded as places of pleasure or culture, but seen televisually as scenery, as scenarios" (Baudrillard 1986/2010, 9), and "the American street … is cinematic like the country itself" (Baudrillard 1986/2010, 18). This unreality of America is taken further when Baudrillard states that "America is a giant hologram", and that America dominates the world through being fiction (Baudrillard 1986/2010, 29). Through these observations and now using his theoretical terminology, Baudrillard concludes that in America "Everything is conquered by simulation", and he asks, "if the world itself isn't just here to serve as advertising copy in some other world" (Baudrillard 1986/2010, 32). Through this description of America, we are getting close to Baudrillard's concepts of hyperreality and simulation. The hyperreality of America is caused by its being intermingled with cinematographic fiction. If you, for instance, walk down Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles you will read signs saying something like 'this may be a filming location' as a basic apology for the fact that you, right now, may be a walk-on in a feature film. America becomes a sign of more than itself, as the perception of America must unavoidably include remnants of representations of it in media and film, so that the reality of America and of American places incorporates the simulatory dimensions of hyperrealism and that there is always an aesthetic hallucination tied to the perception American places.

Leaving the travelogue and entering the purely theoretical *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981/1994), we see that, already in this work, America has been banished to the realm of the hallucinatory and the hyperreal. America is only a simulation:

> Whence the possibility of an ideological analysis of Disneyland (L. Marin did it very well in *Utopiques, jeux d'espace* [*Utopias, play of space*]): digest of the American way of life, panegyric of American values, idealized transposition of a contradictory reality. Certainly. But this masks something else and this "ideological" blanket functions as a cover for a simulation of the third order: Disneyland exists in order to hide that it is the "real" country, all of "real" America that is Disneyland (a bit like prisons are there to hide that it is the social in its entirety, in its banal omnipresence, that is carceral). Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, whereas all of Los Angeles and the America that surrounds it are no longer real, but belong to the hyperreal order and to the order of simulation. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology) but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle. (Baudrillard 1981/1994, 12-13)

In the apparatus of Baudrillard's theory the implosion of a real place with hyperreality has wide-ranging phenomenological consequences. For the purpose of this article, we narrow the causality of the creation of the orders of simulacra from the floating signifiers (Poster 1994, 139) and from Baudrillard's so-called "the code" (Poster 1994, 127) to the kind of hyperreality that a place can be situated in when it has been enhanced by intertextual values. These may be direct intertextual quotations or they may stereotypical quotations. We argue that this more specific focus on the hyperreality of a place can be based on the examples mentioned by us above, and we base this focus on the connections Baudrillard has made in his travelogue be-

tween the phenomenological perception of places in America and their cinematic and mediated qualities so that we may term these places *intertextual locations*.

The next part of the article will be about the possibilities that may lie in the employment of places in a peripheral region as media location[1]. These possibilities are based on the preceding observations in the article that have resulted in the construction of a theory about intertextual locations. As a transition, two examples of the merging of places and intertextual locations can be quoted here. The first one refers to the film *Steps*, in which a group of tourists were made characters in the film electronically. This kind of augmented reality is science fiction; but in Berlin and Potsdam, home of the renowned Studio Babelsberg tourists may get close to this experience as they can join a bus ride around in the cities, and – just like a visit to Universal Studios – the bus makes a stop at each place in the city and its surroundings that has been used as filming locations. At each location, the film clip that has been made here is played in the large monitors of the bus, so that the tourists are watching the place in real life outside the windows of the bus and at the same time watching the place as a film location on the monitors. In this way, places, which are both Augéan anthropological places and non-places, are technologically turned into intertextual locations in the tourists' reception of them. On the website of the tours, this special reception quality is stressed with a quote from *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*: "Whoever wants to experience how the city becomes a phantom image, need only take part in the videoBustour to filming locations in Berlin"[2] (VideoBustour 2013), and the Potsdam tour includes 20

2   "Wer je erleben wollte, wie eine Stadt zum Phantombild wird, braucht bloß an der videoBustour zu Drehorten in Berlin teilnehmen."

films and their locations, and some of the highlights of the tour are footage of how Otto Gebühr strolled through the gardens of Sanssouci in the film *Der alte Fritz* (1928), how Matt Damon is chased through the streets of Potsdam in *The Bourne Supremacy* (2004) and the Löwenvilla from *Valkyrie* (2008) with Tom Cruise. And it says: "Experience the most exciting film scenes once more at the original filming locations, and join us in a time travel through 100 years of film history."[3] The Berlin tour is advertised as "Go with our video-Bus as "a rolling cinema" to the locations and actual scenes from famous Berlin films. In front of the very places watch the appropriate clips from films such as *Die Legende von Paul und Paula*, *Lola rennt* und *Goodbye Lenin* on the supplementing monitors in the bus.[4]

Adding to the complexity of hyperreal places of this kind, different intertextual references may even coincide and stumble over each other, because the same street settings can be used in multiple films – for instance, parts of Ole Christian Madsen's *Flammen og Citronen* (*Flame & Citron*, 2008) were shot in the 'same' streets as parts of Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* (2002).

On a technologically more modest scale, the City of Edinburgh prides itself of possessing intertextual locations in its tourist information material. For instance, the magazine *The List* suggests a tourist culture trail through the places in the city that have been used as film and television locations. There are locations from *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1969), *Mary Reilley* (1996), *Shallow Grave* (1994), *Trainspotting* (1996), *The 39 Steps* (1959), *Chariots of Fire* (1981), and *One Day* (2011). The article also recommends visiting the places that have served as direct inspiration for writers such as J.K. Rowling

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3   "Erleben Sie an den originalen Drehorten die spannendsten Filmszenen noch einmal und kommen Sie mit auf eine Zeitreise durch 100 Jahre Filmgeschichte."

4   "Fahren Sie mit unserem videoBus als 'rollendem Kino' zu den Drehorten und Schauplätzen berühmter Berlin-Filme. Vor Ort sehen Sie auf zusätzlichen Monitoren im Bus die passenden Ausschnitte von Filmen wie z.B. 'Die Legende von Paul und Paula', 'Lola rennt' und 'Goodbye Lenin'."

and Anne Fine (Arndt 2013, 146). It has become increasingly commonplace that local places – after insertion in a feature film production – are distinctly marked out by official institutions as intertextual places and tourist attractions. You can for instance go 'location spotting' across Southern Fyn in Denmark with an app for your smartphone in order to find locations from among others Susanne Bier's *Hævnen* (*In a Better World*, 2010). As of January 10, 2014, even the website for the Danish Ministry of the Environment includes a list of films shot in state-held woods, which means that what would be deemed nature becomes mediated and intertextual locations. Returning to Baudrillard, he writes that *simulation* is "the map that precedes the territory" (Baudrillard 1981/1994, 1), which is literally what happens here: Our smartphone and our knowledge from media and fiction precede knowledge about the actual, physical world. In the perspective of tourism and city branding, this comes close to what Can-Seng Ooi and Jesper Strandgaard Pedersen call "pre-visit interpretations" (Ooi & Strandgaard 2010, 321). With reference to substantial tourism research they stress that "this process enriches their experiences". In other words, preconceived images from film and media productions may provide a refined and enhanced atmosphere for a city and a region.

END OF TRANSCENDENCE IN REGIONAL INTERTEXTU-ALITIES

We now intend to transfer these observations about the intertextual enhancement of places to the peripheral area of Northern Jutland in Denmark with the aim of examining whether the concept of intertextual locations can be a potential that can promote film and media production in the region. An important point in this connection will be that there may be a local and peripheral wish to become an intertextual location because this may lead to regional development if successful. The most flourishing illustration of this is Southern Sweden and particularly the small town Ystad that has become a huge tourist attraction by way of Henning Mankell's books situated in

Ystad (Waade 2013, Blomgren 2007). We can, however, already here mention places in Northern Jutland that have achieved status as intertextual locations, be they anthropological places or non-places. Throughout we will propose a few possibilities of creating further intertextual locations in the region.

One highly intertextual location is Skagen, or the Skaw, which is the location of numerous paintings by plein air artists such as Anna and Michael Ancher, P.S. Krøyer and Laurits Tuxen. One of the best known of these paintings, Krøyer's "Hip Hip Hurra!, inspired the Swedish director Kjell Grede to make the film with the same title *Hip Hip Hurra* (*Hip Hip Hurrah!,* 1987). This film intertextually recreated the scenes from some of the paintings and told the darker story about the community of artists through a fascination of the local light on the northern peninsula of Denmark. Bille August's *Marie Krøyer* (*The Passion of Marie*, 2012) did not only retell the actual stories about the Krøyer couple, but he carefully incorporated the poetics of the painters' interest in the special light of the place in the aesthetics of the film. The actual light of the Skaw is, hence, mediated through the brushstrokes of art and the lighting in both Grede's and August's films, which in the hands of the directors become a special second order intertextual reference to Skagen characterized by visual arts aesthetics. The films were both – among other places – filmed on location in and around Skagen. These are but two cinematic examples, but they show how a place, here anthropological, can be substantially mediated and reused in communication about the location. However, this was the case even before Grede and August made films in Skagen.

Aalborg – the largest city in Northern Jutland – has received some attention as narrative location. Aalborg literature has its own part in the national history of literature going from Jacob Paludan's *Jørgen Stein* (1932-33), across Hans Lyngby Jepsen's Aalborg novels, such as *Da kærligheden kom til byen* ([*When Love Came to Town*],1972), to Jakob Ejersbo's *Nordkraft* (*Angels in Fast Motion*, 2003). Actually, within this considerable corpus of literature there may be a potential for locating narratives that could turn Aalborg into an increasingly

intertextual city. Ejersbo's novel paved the way for Ole Christian Madsen's film *Nordkraft* (2005) where the director placed as much production on location as he was able to afford. The film included references to and an inspiration from Niels Arden Oplev's *Portland* (1996) that was situated and shot in Aalborg as well. Both films take the city's underground milieu as a point of departure, and both titles are references to actual, industrial places in Aalborg, places that are non-places in Augé's sense of the term; Nordkraft being a power plant now turned into a home of cultural institutions and Portland being a still existing cement production plant. The references to the actual industry of Aalborg in literature and film are metaphorical attempts to handle and represent local identity constructions. In Danish independent films there seems to be a certain attraction to the crime and gangster drama, which also goes for the indie film from Thisted *Ske din vilje* ([*Thy will be done*], 2013) as well and the indie film *Blodbrødre* ([*Blood Brothers*], 2013) from Vejle (Hansen 2014). There may be literary and/or narrative material for further attention towards the local underground; this may be Sanne Munk Jensen and Glenn Ringtved's recent novel *Dig og mig ved daggry* ([*You and Me at Dawn*], 2013) that effectively focuses on juvenile identity problems and the criminal underground in Aalborg.

When Aalborg entered Den Vestdanske Filmpulje (The West Danish Film Fund) the story in the press was about Aalborg and Northern Jutland as a new and noteworthy location. Lise Thorsøe-Jacobsen's headline on the webpage for DR (Denmark's Radio) was "Film fund should turn Aalborg into Aallywood" and, in the article, a quote from the manager of culture and leisure in Aalborg Lis Rom Andersen reads: "We have fine locations. If a film is produced in Northern Jutland it will tell a Northern Jutland story too."[5] The relationship between local narratives and locations are – within a

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5   "Filmpulje skal gøre Aalborg til Aallywood" / "Dels mener vi, vi har nogle gode locations. Hvis der bliver optaget film i Nordjylland, så fortæller det jo også en nordjysk historie." http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Kultur/Film/2013/06/07/100114.htm. [Accessed 10.01.2014]

quick remark from a hopeful local authority – closely linked, and through the angle of the story related to the world's most popular film attraction Hollywood. The subtext is that if a local story can be told through cinema or television it may attract capital attention even wider. This has – among other projects – resulted in the two Advent calendars for television *Ludvig og julemanden* ([*Ludwig and Santa Claus*],2011) and *Tvillingerne og julemanden* (*The Twins and Santa Claus* 2013). Especially, *Tvillingerne og julemanden* is carefully marked by aesthetic and aestheticized location choices in Aalborg and Northern Jutland, for instance Klarupgaard, Skallerup Seaside Resort, and Aalborg Zoo. Klarupgaard – a large, active countryside farm – was the key location in the series and in itself it provides an interesting case for the hyperreal intertextualization of an anthropological place. The administration has used their intertextual status in their marketing strategy widely and it is, still, possible to book a tour through the settings from the TV-show (see figure 1).

Firstly, this advertisement says a lot about our mediated and hyperreal Christmas mentality, but secondly is also shows how an anthropological place becomes hyperreal through intertextual appropriation in fictional TV-series: Paradoxically enough, the advertisement shown below tells us that at Klarupgaard, you can experience the "real Christmas spirit" ("ægte julestemning") allegedly by walking through the mise-en-scene of TV-fiction. Christmas is no longer a real experience; it is very hyperreal and simulated. Christmas is, by all means, a religious tradition, but communication about Christmas – as in the Klarupgaard advertisement – may be completely void of Christian references. Baudrillard already mentioned that within the "terrains of simulation, the question returns to religion and the simulacrum of divinity"; according to Baudrillard this is a reference to the fact that "deep down God never existed, that only the simulacrum ever existed, even that God himself was never anything but his own simulacrum" (Baudrillard 1981/1994, 4). Metaphysically speaking, this "end of transcendence" does not pose a problem for the practitioner of Christmas because Christmas is no longer really about religious content. Instead, Christmas is a con-

Figure 1: One example of an advertisement from Klarupgaard that appropriates its mediated status.

sumer party, which may be why we, in the Klarupgaard advertise-ment, see only references to consumerism and consumption and no indications of the fact that Christmas is about the birth of Christ. So when a report from The West Danish Film Fund concludes that one Danish crown spent on film and TV production results in the return of four Danish crowns it stresses the economic aspects of turning a place into an intertextual location (Manto A/S, 2012). We are quite sure that the owners of Klarupgaard are reasonably satisfied with their production of hyperreal Christmas signs, and the case shows a very successful local example of effectively turning an anthropo-logical place into an intertextual location. This is no problem to nei-ther the consumer nor producer because what is hyperreal is really perceived as reality; our "real" experience of Christmas is instead shaped by numerous hyperquotes and detached from a, perhaps, originally missing reality in order to create a sound base for what appears to result in local economic growth.

In the Augean sense, this example becomes a question of au-thenticity with reference to both an authentic anthropological place and the authenticity of a festive season. Through intertextual ap-propriation Klarupgaard becomes a mediated and hyperreal spa-tial perception of *experienced* authenticity in the sense that what has been shown (as mise-en-scene) on TV is the 'real' setting of a TV-show. In regional media policy it, in this way, becomes a dream of re-introducing the anthropological places and even non-places through a mediation of it in film and media; but by doing this there is created – in the optics of Baudrillard's hyperreality – non-places because these places are no longer tied to the authentic, but now to the mediated. The experience of a "real" Christmas at a "real" farm is tied to the mediation of the place in which way the *real* anthropo-logical place becomes "real" in inverted commas: *Klarupgaard* comes full circle as the viewer's experience of "Klarupgaard". In this way, Augé's theory of places is paradoxically turned upside down, as places can again be perceived as enhanced anthropological places when they become mediated non-places: i.e., the simulated version is, literally, nowhere to be found outside mediation.

LOCATING LOCATIONS

Are there, then, other potential Northern Jutland narratives or subjects that may undergo this intertextual transformation? The Aalborg administration may be right that Northern Jutland has attractive locations, but how can we locate the stories and the material?

It may be an idea to look back on how Danish media history has provided us with interesting examples of mediated places based on existing material. Danish TV-history has developed from being traditional public service TV to highly commercialised television, but this does not mean that the way places were handled in traditional Danish TV necessarily has to be out-dated. Series such as *Sonja fra Saxogade* ([*Sonja from Saxo Street*], 1968), *Sonja på Bornholm* ([*Sonja on Bornholm*], 1969), and *Huset på Christianshavn* ([*The House at Christianshavn*], 1970-77) all included references to and appropriations of anthropological places. Especially, director Erik Balling's darling treatment of Christianshavn may be a distinct part of a national consciousness about an area in Copenhagen. One place in Northern Jutland that has been significantly placed on the media-map is, of course, Mariagerfjord and perhaps more precisely the area Dania by way of Hans Kirk's two novels *Daglejerne* (*The Day Laborers*, 1936) and *De ny Tider* (*The New Times*, 1939) about cement production in Mariager. These two novels are, though they have not been adapted for other media, still widely used as frames of reference in communication strategies about the place. Dania is the only privately owned village in Denmark and in online marketing material Hans Kirk is still an important part of the geographical mentality. The municipality of Jammerbugt west of Mariagerfjord attaches the same importance to Hans Kirk's debut novel *Fiskerne* (*The Fishermen*, 1928). The narrative of the novel was predominantly placed in Gjøl close to Aalborg. As of January 10, 2014, the tourist site *Visit Jammerbugt*, then, invites us to visit the areas that inspired the novel, while Gjøl Kro – a local, historical inn – refers to the TV-adaption of the novel as a reason why the inn has survived while most other Danish inns have been forced to shut down due to the lack of profit performance. The inn was the only original lo-

cation from the novel that still existed when the TV-series *Fiskerne* (1977) – a milestone in Danish TV-fiction – was produced. According to the website for Gjøl Kro, the inn would not have survived had in not been for the publicity on TV. Even though the intention of public service TV such as the adaption of *Fiskerne* was to provide literary enlightenment for the public at large, it seems to have had similar effects on the local attractions and locations. The same site provides a humorous line from the former owner of the inn: "I had to shut down the inn for two months while the production took place […], but what two months that was – I've never sold that much beer"[6]. Perhaps Hans Kirk and the experience from *Fiskerne* are attractive narratives for the southern municipalities of Northern Jutland; the villages and the scenery of the region are already highly intertextual. In an interview with the authors of this article in January 2014, the commercial consultant of the City of Aalborg, who has specialised in media, Dolan Sund, has pinpointed a field that needs to be developed in the regional development of media businesses. In their focus on technology, the media businesses in the region are already innovative and strong; but today it is *the creation of content* that needs to be prioritized. Script writing and the creation of media concepts, for instance for TV, are fields of priority for the further development of media production in Aalborg and Northern Jutland. Here the attention could be turned to pre-existing material, i.e. literature situated at locations in the region. The texts are there and the locations are there, and they are both an almost readymade source for media adaptations.

To answer our question above we may say: Yes, there are potential Northern Jutland narratives or subjects that may undergo intertextual transformation. Local literature is, basically, the *content* that Dolan Sund is asking for. Of course, the content needs treatment from and adaption to the industry, but here the creative busi-

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6   "Jeg måtte lukke kroen i de to måneder optagelserne stod på […], men hvilke 2 måneder – jeg har aldrig solgt så mange bajere". http://gjoelkro.dk/sider/126.

ness seems to be well attuned. Literature from around the Limfjord is already disseminated through visual communication. The educational website *Limfjordslitteratur* – managed by Lemvig Museum – includes both video links, picture galleries, and links to media communities such as Facebook. The mediated adoption of Hans Kirk's literature – including narratives from his childhood hometown Hadsund – is a noteworthy precedent for the potential in literature from around the Limfjord. The intimate presence of the water is an iconographic pointer in the landscape and the non-place of Aalborg bridge across the fjord is in itself a landmark used and reused in mediated communication. It plays a huge role in Ole Christian Madsen's *Nordkraft*; it is on the book cover of Jensen and Ringtved's *Dig og mig ved daggry* and it clearly situates the narrative in Aalborg; although surprisingly, it does not do so in Martin Werner's book trailer for the novel. However, Werner and the production company Bacon placed the book trailer in Copenhagen for economic reasons, and Bacon has already secured the adaptation rights for the story, which says a lot about the fast-paced media appropriation strategies. It also shows a contemporary example of local production possibilities. In an interview with the authors of this article in January 2014, the director Martin Werner said:

> For a long time, I flirted with the idea of *not* filming the film in Aalborg. But now I think it should be. I saw *Fucking Åmål* again and noticed how the locality moved into the foreground. I've done photographic research in Aalborg and, now, I actively intend to use the city as a location if the project is realised. Aalborg is very cinematic"[7].

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7 "Jeg har længe flirtet med, at filmen ikke skulle optages i Aalborg. Men nu synes jeg, at den skal. […] Jeg genså *Fucking Åmål* [*Show me love*, 1998, ed.] og så, hvordan det lokale trådte frem […]. Jeg har lavet aktiv billedresearch i Aalborg og regner med at gøre aktiv brug af byen som location, hvis filmprojektet bliver til noget. Aalborg er meget filmisk."

However, when asked, Werner does not directly know the possibility of local production support, but he mentions that at this stage Bacon is applying for manuscript development support. Basically this indicates that perhaps local media production support should be a part of a project from its earliest stages. The municipality of Hjørring has set a precedent for this idea by supporting the development of a manuscript for a feature film based on the Advent calendar *Ludvig og Julemanden* (2011).

Returning to Lemvig, a southwestern city in Northern Jutland, the director Charlotte Madsen went another way producing her Danish independent film *Kufferten* ([*The Suitcase*], 2012) by financing the film through local funding (Hansen, 2014). The film is part of a growing independent tendency in Denmark, a tendency welcomed by the above mentioned Dolan Sund, who criticises the Danish film industry: "There are no real investors. That's unhealthy. You are under the grace of the Ministry of Culture", he says. "The alternative is, of course, private funding – that you find private investors. Here, the turnover potential is huge."[8] *Kufferten* and the Thisted production *Ske din vilje* are both small-scale productions, but they indicate that there may be local capital for film out there. Both films are clearly marked geographically and, stressing the local surroundings, the local communities have shown a great deal of internal interest in the projects. Especially, *Kufferten* has seemed viable with national DVD-distribution. In an interview by the authors of this article with the managers of the local educational program Filmmaskinen in Frederikshavn, the project coordinator Jens Ole Amstrup referred to this local interest in local films in Frederikshavn as well. They were especially interested in a discussion of Frederikshavn's threshold position in Denmark, which may connect back to the question of Augéan non-places. The fact that the city holds a position in peripheral Denmark as a place of transit for the neighbouring countries in

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8   "Der er jo ikke nogen reelle investorer. Det er ikke sundt. Man lever på Kulturministeriets nåde. […] Alternativet er jo privat finansiering. At man finder nogle private investorer. […] Omsætningspotentialet er sindssygt stort."

Scandinavia may be a theme for stories in Frederikshavn. Amstrup mentions local interest in a potential film project originating from the annual Tordenskiold Days (Tordenskjoldsdagene); this festival is a large tourist attraction for the city and may hold auspicious potential for a local story bound for better days. Together, these examples show that the search for intertextual potential is already in hand across the region and that the sought for content may be not that far away. For Charlotte Madsen, when she made *Kufferten*, it was natural for her to use her grandmother's memories from the Second World War, so subjects for intertextual appropriation may appear closer than previously thought.

IN CONCLUSION

The article has sought to answer a research question that has a progression from a theoretical step to one about the application of this theoretical level in regional development of the media industry in a peripheral area of Denmark. The theoretical argumentation has sought to establish an addition to Augé's categorisation of places in so far as it suggests an elaboration of it in the shape of intertextual places. This concept is a mode of reception of places that have been augmented by the fact that they are known as film and media locations. The theoretical foundation is Baudrillard's phenomenology, in particular, his idea that real places can implode with hyperreality, and the article has cited examples of this kind of places in film and media where Umberto Eco's intertextual categories have been employed. As a transition between theory and application, the article has described how experience economy in the form of tourism has marketed these intertextual locations in Germany, Scotland and Sweden.

After this transition, the article has considered the potential of the intertextual locations in a peripheral region, Northern Jutland, with the primary aim of developing the media industry there. The regional media policy has focus on the production of media content as recent interviews for the article has documented, and it is the

suggestion of the article that this content can be found in the places of the region that have already, but so far only rudimentarily, been turned into intertextual places in film and media. However, regional literature, which the article gives a brief survey of, is a source of adaptations, and this literature has already made certain places in the region into intertextual locations.

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BERLIN: PLACE AND NON-PLACE IN IDA HATTEMER-HIGGINS' *THE HISTORY OF HISTORY*

Jan T. Schlosser

BERLIN AS PLACE AND NON-PLACE

In the 1920s Berlin was symbolic of a city without history. Especially after 1990 the German capital has been seen as a historical city and it has even reached marked advantages in light of its historicity (Ledanff 2009, 40). In the period from 1990 to 2010 about 40% of Berlin's population has been replaced (Ledanff 2009, 44). The architectural appearance of the city has been changed as well. In the new millennium Berlin is part of the international architecture of non-places as seen at Potsdamer Platz (Ledanff 2009, 48). The ultra-modern world's architecture is often without any history. In the age of "supermodernity" (Augé 1995, 77) non-places are a global phenomenon. As opposites to non-places as replaceable city images, urbane "places of memory" (Augé 1995, 56) such as those defined by Pierre Nora, are found. Their character is subject for discussion and some maintain that Berlin commands an overkill of memory places. The city plays an exaggerated role as a historical city (Ledanff 2009, 52). Are buildings such as *Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas* maybe only an empty shell for history? (Ledanff 2009, 62). Indeed it is a problem that the memory of the Holocaust is centred around a few places, because local memory places are weakened (Ledanff 2009, 77). Apparently Berlin takes aim at an artificial revival of a history that is already separated from that age.

A sensitivity towards Berlin's transformation is characteristic of the intellectual discussion of the city's state of affairs. Cultural critics such as Hanns Zischler – *Berlin ist zu groß für Berlin* (2013) – are opposing the time-spirit of supermodernity, criticising the permanent transformation of Berlin with several changes of culture and positioning themselves as critics of urbanity, as prefaces of places. The Benjamin exhibition *Das Berlin Walter Benjamins* in the Akademie der Künste Berlin from October 2012 to April 2013 defines "Berlin as a place to write, as literary subject and as fate" (folder 2012).

This paper focuses on an analysis of Berlin as literary subject. The idea of non-places is defined on the basis of Marc Augé's theory. His definition of non-places is central in this paper but the field is also expanded. In this article non-places are not defined as living in transit spaces like airports or highways. Non-places also include urban living in permanent transit. To update Augé's idea of non-places in the context of urbanity after the millennium it is necessary to analyse a new fictional text dealing with places and non-places in Berlin, a city that changed and developed remarkably since the early 1990s. It is evident not only to focus on non-places as a phenomenon of supermodernity in Berlin around the millennium. The reading of Ida Hattemer-Higgins' novel *The History of History* (2011) opens the way for expanding Augés idea of non-places to a central text from the interwar period: Walter Benjamin's *Berlin Childhood around 1900* (1932/1933/1938).[1] Both Benjamin's essay and *The History of History* are examples of texts reflecting non-places as a real phenomenon of urbanity and as textual representations.

ABSENCE OF HISTORICAL MEMORY

The principal character in *The History of History* is navigating in a field of tension between Berlin as a place with historical identity

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1   In a Danish review of *The History of History* this is emphasized: "Walter Benjamin is the house god", but *Berlin Childhood around 1900* is not involved as a primary reference text (Skotte 2012).

and a non-place without historical continuity. Margaret Taub suffers from a loss of memory.

In *The History of History* Ida Hattemer-Higgins is not only dealing with a young American woman's loss of memory but also with a cultural loss: loss of historical memory. Berlin after the millennium is characterized by the permanent restlessness of supermodernity and subcultures: "Specifically, then, it was the city of Berlin. It rolled into a new phase all on its own" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 32). "Everything in the city, the buildings too, seemed restless" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 147), Margaret notes. As a student of history at Freie Universität she positions herself in a space of interests, which are rather related to places than to non-places. She is not a part of the 'creative class' "of those alert and artistic young expatriates of the kind that showed up in such numbers in Berlin in the 1990s" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 8), but she notices the "emptiness between the districts" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 177) in the city.

Berlin's character as a non-place manifests itself among others in the traffic. The longest underground line – U7, which is also the title of chapter 33 – from Rathaus Spandau to Rudow is mentioned as a "subway line to nowhere" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 291). In Margaret's optics Berlin is a non-place, characterized by a superficial culture that focuses on an artificial revival of history. On the other hand she "looked for a place" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 171). Her superior project is to rediscover places which have lost their historical dimension in the city image: "Was anyone or anything in this city a continuation of what it had been – either for good or evil? Was there any continuity at all?" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 157). Berlin has to be re-established as an anthropological place with historical identity: "She memorized dates, causes and effects, uprisings and assassinations, theories and countertheories" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 8). The place is a memory space: "A work of perfect meaning, that is, of perfect pregnancy […] is the opposite of oblivion. It is the linking node between fantasy and reason, at which point all is remembered and correlated" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 25). Margaret wishes to create continuity in her own biography as well as in Ber-

lin's and Germany's history: "She thought she would read the story again straight through from the start" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 86).

For Margaret places represent a specific cultural identity and vital collective memory.

THE PLOT

The novel's narrative starting point is Margaret's rough awakening in the forest of Grunewald. A morning in 2002 she awakes with her clothes torn, without a sense of locality and without memory. She strives to find her memory of the past two years again. In the novel the secrets of her family are displayed, primarily the Jewish roots of her mother, her father's past life in the SS and her own life in Berlin around the millennium.

When Margaret's love affair with the married American academic Amadeus results in a pregnancy, he breaks off the engagement. Margaret gives birth to the child and places it on the stairs of his flat on Prenzlauer Berg to force him to take responsibility. Unfortunately Amadeus only returns after several days. Margaret buries the dead child herself in Grunewald. This is the background for her confused awakening in the forest in the first chapter of the novel, because "time will pass very quickly, if you are convinced it is already over. Two years rolled away, never to be seen again" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 10). Obviously Hattemer-Higgins refers to the acceleration of history outlined by Augé.

HISTORICAL PLACES IN BERLIN?

Margaret works as a tourist guide in Berlin. She guides visitors to historical places, but she does not think of them as historical places herself. *The History of History* reflects an essential problem in the age of globalization. The globalization erodes the specificity and significance of places (Mønster 2009, 358). While places make an existential connection possible, non-places are defined as "places that make it difficult for man to connect with his surroundings" (Mønster 2009,

365). As a tourist guide Margaret is confronted with commercialised places. In Berlin she is rather navigating in a transit space than in an anthropologically founded place. Margaret "is infatuated with the nonexistence of the past" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 23). Although she navigates in a Berlin where new memorials of the crimes of Nazism are raised constantly, she doubts the memorials' character as anthropological places: "They came to the large raked-earth building site, where the new Holocaust memorial was under construction […] They came abreast of each long aisle, trapezoids appeared, flattened, and then disappeared as the perspective changed, each long, empty aisle a reminder of emptiness to come" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 212-213). The memory of the crimes of Nazism is apparently omnipresent in Berlin, but the ideological substance of Nazism is nowhere to find in the city: "Two generations after the war, and the book that had once been in every house was nowhere to be found" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 95). Margaret buys *Mein Kampf* illegally at a jumble sale near Ostbahnhof. The years 1933-1945 she interprets as the "missing time" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 270), both in her family and in a historical way.

In *The History of History* Germany's national trauma is discussed in the field of tension between place and non-place. Margaret's reflection of Nazism is part of a modernist critic context. Nazism is characterized as "the first twitches of modernity" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 277).

FLESH AND MRS. GOEBBELS

Margaret Taub's optimistic impression of supermodern Berlin changes and becomes a nightmare of hallucination when the buildings in the city turn into "human flesh and bone" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 32) and "every possible horror was now a latent possibility" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 34). Margaret's horrible fantasies about victims of Nazism manifest themselves as spaces of memory and they make an approach to places possible: "After the days without sleep, I was somewhere far away. Thinking back on that time, I have

memories, very vivid memories. For days on end, I left my body and went to some place of hallucination" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 247). Margaret observes blood in the streets and ghosts from Berlin in the 1940s: Magda Goebbels – wife of the minister of propaganda who poisoned her children in 1945 – and the Jewish woman Regina Strauss who committed suicide with her husband and their three children to avoid deportation. Margaret shows intense interest in the two women's very heterogeneous biographies which play an important role in her thoughts.

Margaret wishes to be part of a historical entirety and develops "the very idea of a Regina, of a good visitor from the past who infiltrates the present and makes a beating counterpoint there, delivers meaning there" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 163). The anthropological place in Regina's life equates with Margaret's quality of life: "The iron grates of balconies, the engraving on the lid of a silver pocket watch, the handles of rococo forks and spoons [...] it all opened up before her, conduits to a better life" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 163). Margaret's interest in the past indicates her fundamental loneliness in supermodernity. Her interest in Regina, Magda Goebbels and her lover Amadeus is an expression of her isolated life without social relations in the non-place Berlin.

THE HOLOCAUST

The official memory culture is an inadequate basis to establish historical continuity. Margaret also recognizes this during a visit in the concentration camp Sachsenhausen north of Berlin. She accentuates "the unwillingness of this place to curve toward comprehension" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 108), because the camp is an "untouchable monument over the many dead" (Kidal 2012). The 'place' implies a risk of instrumentality of history, for instance by Holocaust denial. *The History of History* turns against interpreting the Holocaust as a comprehensible phenomenon:

But there was a problem: there was no realistic picture to return to. No one knew how it had really been. No one could ever know. Even the survivors who had lived to tell the tale did not entirely know how it had been; the experience was too large for that. There are magnitudes of suffering that cannot be held in the mind […] You want to understand? But here's what there is to understand: there's nothing for knowing minds to glean. The more you see this place, the farther away it is. (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 107)

No version of the horror tale of the Holocaust is apparently realistic or true. The Holocaust has become "an untouchable myth, a simply story about the good against the bad" (Andersen 2012).

During a walk in Berlin Margaret meets Arthur Prell, an alter ego of Rochus Misch, a former member of the inner circle around Hitler. Prell shouts "That's how it was!" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 130) and his monopoly of knowing the historical truth is reduced to absurdity in *The History of History*: "And then at some precise moment, it struck her that Arthur Prell was the only place, in her own life, where the past was still alive. Could he be called a chink in the armor of vengeancelessness, could he be called a hole in the shield of lost opportunity and vanished time?" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 278). Margaret's conclusion of the absence of the official memory culture is: "One of the unspellable horrors of the Holocaust is that there is no vengeance to be had. Millions killed by millions more – there is no justice there. There will be no restitution. The victims are too many; the perpetrators are legion" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 277).

CONTEXT: WALTER BENJAMIN

The History of History includes the subtitle *A Novel of Berlin*. Hattemer-Higgins writes herself into a major frame of reference on texts about Berlin's modernity and identity as a large city. On the lines of Alfred Döblin's novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929) it is the city of

Berlin that actually is the principal character in *The History of History*. One text exists, however, that constitutes a more concise frame of reference than *Berlin Alexanderplatz* or Franz Hessel's *Spazieren in Berlin* (also 1929). Particularly on the background of the interest in the formation of a continuous memory in *The History of History* it seems relevant to do research into textual references to Walter Benjamin's *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, in which the individual experience of the city manifests itself as preformed images of memory of late collective historical experiences.[2] In Benjamin's text Berlin is transformed from place to non-place and the search after adequate keys to the past is important. These keys give access to a general perspective, in which past and present are united in a city space with historical identity. Continuous memory is tied to places. Like Benjamin, Hattemer-Higgins is searching for Berlin's place in the past. She follows Benjamin's culturally pessimistic diagnosis:

> She felt that somehow, somewhere […] time had come to an end. Now it was only a matter of a short interval before the world faded out entirely. Sometimes she was even gripped by a strange suspicion, unlikely as it seemed, that every last thing was already gone. All that now met her ears and eyes was a vestigial flare or after-impression. (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 9)

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2   It is hardly accidental that Margaret falls in love with a historian. She identifies the professor, Amadeus, with places: "The first glimpses of Amadeus, walking toward her on the station platform, were as beautiful later as they were the first day. It was these meetings in public places that were somehow the core of her happiness" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 219). Also the relationship to Amadeus is part of the field of tension between places and non-places, rather on the side of non-places: "There were no sporty walks in the woods, no vacations to peaceful, pressure-releasing locales, only the thunder of city life with its heavy, woolen veil of architecture, its gin tonics and endless subway rides under the fluorescent lights" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 221). For Margaret Amadeus' attraction depends on his knowledge of Benjamin: "They talked for a long time about Walter Benjamin. Amadeus did most of the talking, since Margaret didn't dare say much in German on a topic that meant so much to her" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 222).

Benjamin's position as an important frame of reference for *The History of History* appears from the quotation that is placed as motto for the novel's first of three parts: "The coming awakening stands like the Greek's wooden horse in the Troy of dream" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 1). About Margaret's awakening it is stated that "she was as fresh as a child" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 3). This reference is not only about Margaret's dead child but also about the specific status of childhood in *Berlin Childhood around 1900*. Already in his review of Franz Hessel's *Spazieren in Berlin* Benjamin defines the *flâneur* as a person that "lives his childhood at a place" (Benjamin 1929). According to Benjamin urbanity could be described more adequately by looking back in time. Not the restlessness of modernity but the patient look opens the possibility to an understanding of the city.

THE FRIEND BENJAMIN

Margaret's friend of the same age as her is named Benjamin. His apartment is described as a place that is a catalyst for Margaret's process of memory:

> Just a moment before, standing in the hallway ringing his bell, she had had no image of his apartment; the door to his flat seemed as if it would open onto nothing at all, as though part of a stage set. But now inside, she discovered she knew the place in every detail, was sure that almost nothing had been moved since she was last here […] The fact was that in this location – with the old, precariously tilting stacks of records around her, the smell of curry and mildew, Benjamin's kind, impossibly familiar face – the events of the last weeks seemed remote. (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 69, 71)

Childhood is of great importance in Margaret's conversations with Benjamin. The sentence "*Nothing will ever be the same*" (Hattemer-

Higgins 2011, 74) summarizes Hattemer-Higgins' reading of *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, where the following is underlined in "Boys' Books": "We can never entirely recover what has been forgotten" (Benjamin 2006, 140). Walter Benjamin is searching for an experience of totality in childhood. The radical break with all traditions resulting from modernity seems to be irreversible. 'Wiederverzauberung' through memory is a very problematic project.

Benjamin's longing for the place stems from a longing for bygone days (Hornbek 2001, 109). In *A Ghost* it is made clear that the place does not exist anymore:

> All day long, I had been keeping a secret – namely, my dream from the previous night. In this dream, a ghost had appeared to me. I would have had a hard time describing the place where the specter went about its business. Still, it resembled a setting that was known to me, though likewise inaccessible. (Benjamin 2006, 101)

PLACES AND NON-PLACES IN *BERLIN CHILDHOOD AROUND 1900*

Walter Benjamin represents the childhood as delivered culture. His childhood around 1900 seems like an 'Endzeit' that already is marked by the acceleration of modernity. Prospective social experiences are preformed in the 'Bilder' of bourgeois childhood around 1900. The childhood is a place in which preformed knowledge of perishability and fruitlessness figures. De facto, the childhood was already a non-place, but was still experienced as a place by the child Walter Benjamin:

> I had my abode in the nineteenth century, which now lies hollow before me like an empty shell. […] "Listen to my tale of the mummerehlen." The line is distorted – yet it contains the whole distorted world of childhood. Muhme Rehlen, who used to have her place in the line, had al-

ready vanished when I heard it recited for the first time. (Benjamin 2006, 98)

Under influence of his exile in the 1930s Benjamin emphasizes that although the past is irrevocable, it has remarkable merit as a basis of experience.

Already in the first text of *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, "Loggias", Benjamin reflects "the law of the place" (Benjamin 2006, 40). Berlin manifests itself as an unchanging city, as a city of place. Benjamin emphasizes the historical place as a place which possesses the quality to create identity. This quality finds expression in the perishability of the balconies:

> In the years since I was a child, the loggias have changed less than other places. […] They mark the outer limit of the Berliner's lodging. Berlin – the city god itself – begins in them. The god remains such a presence there that nothing transitory can hold its ground beside him. In his safekeeping, space and time come into their own and find each other. (Benjamin 2006, 42)

Berlin Childhood around 1900 is a manifesto against all oblivion of the city Berlin. Although the place guarantees identity for Benjamin, places are changing to non-places during the acceleration of modernity. The places are not modern anymore. As an example of that "The Victory Column" is transformed from a historical place into a monument over the end of history. With the ringing tone, an "alarm signal" (Benjamin 2006, 49) of the danger of modernity, "The Telephone" transforms the residence into a non-place. The bourgeois apartment is no longer a place marked by safety, continuity, history and memory. The pre-modern complacency of the city is abolished around 1900.

BENJAMIN'S SOCK

The "Otter" is not only living in Berlin's Zoo but also at a certain place, the place to come:

> It was a prophetic corner. For just as there are plants that are said to confer the power to see into the future, so there are places that possess such a virtue. For the most part, they are deserted places – treetops that lean against walls, blind alleys or front gardens where no one ever stops. In such places, it seems as if all that lies in store for us has become the past. (Benjamin 2006, 79)

The acceleration of modernity points into the future but exclusively to display the past.

One of the most remarkable texts in *Berlin Childhood around 1900* is "The Sock". Although this text is not mentioned in *The History of History*, nevertheless Hattemer-Higgins' novel deals with "the inkling of lost and hidden things" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 312) – an anticipation that drives the child Walter Benjamin to examine the chest of drawers. In Margaret's optics this is the city of Berlin: "The sleeve turns itself inside-out then rolls rightside again" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 310): "'A sleeve of time' she called it, a carousel of amnesia, in which all moments are fixed for eternity as soon as, and precisely because, they are forgotten" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 318).

In "The Carousel" the child positions itself as a ruler over the world but: "The eternal return of all things has long since become childhood wisdom […] The carousel becomes uncertain ground" (Benjamin 2006, 123). Benjamin's conception of memory includes the childhood but also anticipates the Utopian future. The future comes back because its significance already existed in the past (Stüssi 1977, 56-57, 89).

In *The History of History* memory is defined according to Benjamin's terms. Margaret's reflection on the loss of memory ends in a tribute to Benjamin's sock: "For good or ill, whether it be necessary to outgrow it or not, the mystery inside the ever-inverting sleeve

is an engine to power the task of living, or conversely, a form of deathlessness" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 312). A nihilistic interpretation of "The Sock" is rejected. Although the case and the unseen are identical, Margaret is able to display the truth about her own and Germany's past. Benjamin states that in "The Sock": "It taught me that form and content, veil and what is veiled, are the same. It led me to draw truth from works of literature as warily as the child's hand retrieved the sock from 'the pocket'" (Benjamin 2006, 97).

PLACES

The place is re-established through the narrative. While Margaret's history is told, it appears that "she already knew the place" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 14). This quotation is referring to a private hospital in a house that resembles Benjamin's childhood home: "The building itself was patrician Gründerzeit, with balconies heavily filigreed, and a cool, damp, white facade" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 14). This place is characterized by an "atmosphere of Wilhelmine brass" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 16). Margaret's apartment looks like this: "These rooms, built spacious, gracious, and light, had almost nothing in them to remind of the fine old days" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 156), because "Berlin had fallen" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 157). Margaret reflects the "lost happiness of childhood" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 134). "She thought of the time she had lost" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 30) referring to Walter Benjamin who reflects a lost culture of living that is in contrast to modern architecture. This architecture transforms human living space into a transit room (Benjamin 1929).

Margaret lives in the less fashionable area of Schöneberg where the houses were built in the years of Benjamin's childhood:

This street, the Grunewaldstrasse, was a commercial paradeway, assembled during the hustle and razzmatazz of the 1890s; for years now, nothing but an old dog waiting to die [...] It huddled between two buildings more ornate

than itself, but still it was apparent that Number 88 had once been a grand place to live. (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 33, 233)

Grunewaldstrasse corresponds with Benjamin's birthplace at Magdeburger Platz in the former elegant Alter Westen. After the destructions of World War II Alter Westen is today a very heterogeneous quarter with buildings from the 1950es and 1960es and with evident social problems.

In *The History of History* there are several examples of how Margaret visits "the ruins of the once palatial train station" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 41), here the Anhalter Bahnhof. "In some places the skin of the flesh seemed to have become dry and fallen away" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 169). In continuation of Benjamin she produces herself as a seismograph of Berlin's anthropological transformation from place to non-place: "The city had changed, but only for her" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 33). The former address of the Strauss-family she looks at with an elitist, nostalgic look:

Inside, it was quiet, as the homes of the wealthy are always quiet, with thick, grey carpets over blue tiles. […] The walls were decorated with elaborate plaster moldings. […] She felt flattered to be included. […] Margaret went out the back entrance of the foyer and into the courtyard garden beyond. The sun came through from above and the place was rich with pine. (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 159)

In Grunewald she visits "an old place, a summer resort for the Wilhelmine petite bourgeoisie. Margaret could feel the women of 1910" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 187).

When Margaret is arrested, as responsible for infanticide, at the end of the novel she is able to see the place. The Königs-Kolonnaden, placed near Alexanderplatz until 1910 and later moved to Kleistpark in Schöneberg, are an exemplary place of memory: "O

colonnade! How beautiful it was. The colonnade, archway upon archway, was detailed, gentle, ordered, moderate" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 319). Now "Berlin spread in every direction, and it was nothing but Berlin. […] The arrest was a sign, a long-awaited sign, of an orderly universe. The apocalypse had come, and the apocalypse had gone. […] But she would also admit that she had been a part of something hideous" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 319). The place of memory manifests itself as a place where everything can be remembered. Margaret's loss of memory is removed. Watching through the Königs-Kolonnaden people can see a building that housed the so-called 'Volksgerichtshof' where the show trials against many Nazi opponents, like the men from July 20th 1944, took place.

Ida Hattemer-Higgins' *The History of History* follows the critical nostalgic Walter Benjamin's instructions: the 'truth' is filtered from the narrative text with care. The text: a place, "at which point all is remembered and correlated" (Hattemer-Higgins 2011, 25).

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IMAGINED PLACES – LOCATION IN LARS VON TRIER FILMS IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF CARL TH. DREYER AND ANDREY TARKOVSKY

Gunhild Agger

LOCATION AND IMAGINED PLACES

Every film is dependent on its choice of location, but location does not mean the same to every film. In certain films, location is an integrated part of the genre image, such as westerns or film noirs. It is hard to imagine a western without some kind of scenery from mountains, deserts and small communities. Likewise, a film noir without mean streets and bleak cityscapes is rare. My assumption is that art films are just as dependent on their choices of location as are genre films, but in more unpredictable ways. In this article I shall highlight the concept of imagined places in art films, focussing on a tradition that can be delineated from Carl Th. Dreyer and Andrey Tarkovsky to Lars von Trier.

Location in the oeuvre of Lars von Trier represents quite a riddle. Therefore it is well suited as a case investigating the implications of that simple concept, location, in art films. It is striking that the locations in Trier's films are so unspecified and obscure, yet highly suggestive, emotionally appealing and charged with all sorts of meaning. As opposed to a prevalent trend during recent decades, Trier's choice of places certainly does not aim at promoting our sense of place.[1] In terms of topography, where would his 'Europe'

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1   So far, two of Trier's feature films can be said to deal with location in a more direct sense – *The Idiots* and *The Boss of It All*. Both of these make use of the Danish language, and so does *Medea*.

be in the Europe trilogy? Probably somewhere in or near Germany and Poland, but precisely where is hard to tell. The 'Halbestadt' in *Element of Crime* (1984) does not exist in ordinary geographical maps. Yet, a town called Halberstadt does exist in the former DDR.[2] In *Medea*, the TV film (1988), the primary quality of the landscape is its antiquarian timelessness emphasised by its use of the four elements. Copenhagen and the venerable hospital 'Rigshospitalet' constitute the setting of the TV serial *Riget* (*The Kingdom*, 1994/1997). Under the impact of the hand-held camera, the tainted colours and the leaps in time, both locations are estranged from a more reality based perception of the Danish capital and the nation's top hospital. The so-called America in *Dogville* (2003) is hardly visualised at all, but reduced to some chalk lines on a floor. In *Antichrist* (2009), the chosen location is called 'Eden' – a remote forest apparently governed by its own rules and rites. In contrast, the primary location of *Melancholia* (2012) is recognisable as the film was shot at the Swedish Art Nouveau castle Tjolöholms Slott. But in the cosmic light of the Apocalypse, the image of this castle and its surroundings is as abnormal as Rigshospitalet. All of these locations share one denominator: They were shot as imagined places, supporting the atmosphere or tone of the film and mirroring the state of mind of its characters. Why and how is this done?

In his *Sculpting in Time*, Tarkovsky gives a critical summary of a dominant tendency among critics: "Works of criticism tend to approach their subject in order to illustrate a particular idea; far less often, unfortunately, do they start off from the direct, living, emotional impact of the work in question" (Tarkovsky 1987, 46). In this article, I wish to illustrate a particular idea, namely the idea of imagined places in selected productions by Lars von Trier, and the questions it poses. However, there can be no denying that the idea of tracing the concept of imaginary places stems from the "emotional

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2   I should like to express my gratitude to my anonymous peer reviewer who has contributed to heightening the level of this article with factual information, e.g. about the really existing Halberstadt.

impact" of the films in question, as they are extremely emotionally appealing, equally fascinating and repulsive.

The affiliation between time and space has been an object of philosophical enquiry since antiquity. Even if cinema, as suggested by Tarkovsky, is primarily a medium "*to take an impression of time*" (Tarkovsky 1987, 62) – to go back, to repeat, to prolong or shorten time – it cannot be performed without a location where this 'sculpting in time' takes place. Mikhail Bakhtin has coined the concept of chronotope to indicate the impact of the combined dimensions of time and space, and basically, this combination points out that the relationship between time and space can be organised with different accents. Space of some kind is a precondition of filming. The metaphor of sculpting presupposes space. But how is a film location transformed into an imagined place? By which means does this transformation take place and for which purposes? Involving two of the most influential sources of inspiration for Lars von Trier, namely Carl Th. Dreyer and Andrey Tarkovsky, will serve to illuminate this issue. Both Dreyer and Tarkovsky were auteurs like Trier. Both were deeply involved in exploring the inherent possibilities of the filmic image. Both rejected genres, Tarkovsky more relentlessly uncompromisingly than Dreyer: "The true cinema image is built upon the destruction of genre, upon conflict with it" (Tarkovsky 1987, 150).

It is my understanding that Dreyer's and Tarkovsky's ideas of the relationship between time, space, place and location as implemented in their film practises have had a deep impact on that of Trier, and that in many ways, Trier's choices pay homage to them and also demonstrate an ambition to further develop their imaginary visions and methods. I shall show how this is developed in *Medea* and *Antichrist*. One of the most salient issues in *Medea* is *the spatial destabilisation* taking place, illustrating that time is out of joint. *Medea* is based on a manuscript written by Carl Th. Dreyer, thus constituting a direct link between the two auteurs. First and foremost, it illustrates the spatial destabilisation so typical for imagined places. *Antichrist* was dedicated to Andrey Tarkovsky and is chosen because the

impact of symbolic place is so evident in this film; it comments on *the mental destabilisation* of the characters, underscoring the role of the imagined place. Before following this trace, however, it is necessary to establish the implications of the concepts of place, space and time in this context.

CONCEPTS OF PLACE, SPACE AND TIME

According to Marc Augé, supermodernity is – in a contradictory way – characterised by three distinctive features that are all connected to the phenomenon he labels "the image of excess" (Augé 1995, 30). These features are: 1) "the excess of time" or "the overabundance of events in the contemporary world", which makes it difficult to evaluate the recent past as well as the overwhelming number of contemporary developments, 2) "spatial overabundance" exhibited on a daily basis by cinema and television in factual genres as well as in fiction: "Texas, California, Washington, Moscow, the Elysée, Twickenham, the gruelling stages of the Tour de France or the Arabian desert; we may not know them personally, but we recognize them" (Augé 1995, 32), and 3) "the figure of the ego" or "the individualization of references" exhibiting factors of singularity such as "the singularity of objects, of groups or memberships, the reconstruction of places; the singularities of all sorts that constitute a paradoxical counterpoint to the procedures of interrelation, acceleration and de-localization sometimes carelessly reduced and summarized in expressions like 'homogenization of culture' or 'world culture'" (Augé 1995, 40).

As a result, the habitual anthropological definition of place as "the one occupied by the indigenous inhabitants who live in it, cultivate it, defend it, mark its strongpoints and keep its frontiers under surveillance," (Augé 1995, 42) is vanishing. In its place, Augé introduces the seminal concept of non-places: "If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place" (Augé 1995, 77).

During the past few years, cinema studies have experienced a 'spatial turn' in the sense that film scholars have begun exploring in detail different aspects of space, place and location in film (Lefebre 2006, Koeck and Roberts 2010). Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Aumont make a useful distinction[3] between space as a transhistorical category and place as a category related to a certain historical period (Huillet and Aumont 2006, 8). Koeck and Roberts argue that the spatial turn has resulted in a certain 'disorientation' that needs to be met with an engagement in "more empirically focused analyses of film, space and urban imaginary, particularly in relation to historical geographies of film" (Koeck and Roberts 2010, 5). Focusing on the city, they basically distinguish between 1) the "virtualized spaces of representation that have increasingly come to define the phantasmagoric landscapes of postmodern cities", 2) representations based on the touristic attractions of cities, connected to marketing and consumption, and 3) "the *lived spaces* of everyday urban practice" rendered via expanding, penetrating mediatisation. Provisional as this typology may be, it does point out characteristic ways of cuing space in modern films. Although the concept of 'space' is overriding, there is still room for the concept of place in the two last categories. In all its indeterminacy, the first notion corresponds to Huillet and Aumont's definition of space as a transhistorical category.

In addition, Lefebre suggests another useful distinction targeting the role of landscape in cinema. Landscape is different from setting in so far as "landscape, at least in the visual arts, is *space freed from eventhood* (e.g. war, expeditions, legends)" (Lefebre 2006, 22). Although the narrative mode often prevails, cinema as a medium also offers a visual spectacle appealing to a "*spectacular mode*" of watching, contemplating "the intentional landscape" (Lefebre 2006, 29). As an example, Lefebre points to films quoting specific landscapes or reproducing well-known landscape paintings in different ways (e.g. Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* 1975).

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3   Originally suggested by Pierre Francastel 1967, cf. Lefebre 2006, 17.

The transhistorical notion and the notion of the possible autonomy of the filmic landscape (or in this case, cityscape) are further pursued by Charlotte Brunsdon in her article "Towards a History of Empty Spaces". Here she suggests that cinematic empty spaces can be interpreted as "places of hesitation". In such places, the fictional world of the narrative lingers, and self-reflexive moments of the empty space can be enhanced. This type of setting often has an "un-regulated, liminal quality" (Brunsdon 2010, 91), e.g. the bomb-sites in post-war London or the East London Beckton gas works used by Stanley Kubrick in *Full Metal Jacket* (1987). Such sites are provisional, full of symbolic opportunities. Rather than places understood as places of identity, relations and history, they are non-places – or empty spaces, "empty of narrative" and "spaces in which something might happen. Something might be found, someone might hide." The spaces are emptied rather than empty: "bearing traces of former settlement, labour or industry". They are also empty of the usual characteristics of social order (Brunsdon 2010, 99). The lack of concretion and the vague suggestiveness so typical of empty spaces strongly support the tendency to make them function as an aesthetic expression of common human states of mind, such as grief, sorrow, despair, agony and melancholia – states of mind that keep recurring in the films of Lars von Trier and his predecessors.

It is tempting to combine Augé's concept of non-places with Brunsdon's concept of empty spaces[4] to understand the choice of locations and the attitude to place, space and time in the films of Lars von Trier. The notion of non-place embraces the prevalent feeling of timelessness, non-historical approach and singularity prevalent in Trier's films. However, the concept should be significantly widened and reinterpreted to be meaningful in this context, which is why the notion of empty spaces is needed. Trier directs our attention to places that do not exist, in my terminology imagined places, and in

4   Brunsdon mentions Augé's concept, but its implications for her own purpose and conceptual framework remain unclear.

that sense, his locations are non-places. They are characterised by excess, as is so convincingly exhibited by the Art Nouveau castle in *Melancholia*, but not in the sense indicated by Augé. Far from being linked to supermodernity, they exceed a binding to a specific period. Being places of blurred history, of hesitation and lost possibilities, of hide and seek, continually inscribed with symbolic meaning, non-places in this sense possess the characteristics of empty spaces. Consequently, the void places express an invitation to mirror time in all its different manifestations – as duration, timelessness, repetition, on par with Lefebre's transhistorical category. With these suggestions in mind, let us investigate if this notion of non-places, which in the following will be called imagined places, can be useful to characterise the handling of place and space in films by Carl Th. Dreyer and Andrey Tarkovsky.

CARL TH. DREYER

Thematically as well as aesthetically, the close relationship between Lars von Trier and Carl Th. Dreyer has often been pointed out (e.g. Schepelern 2005, Bainbridge 2007). Both Dreyer and Trier define their work primarily in an international context; both are outstanding developers of style and cinematic innovation; both seek to move above the mundane level into more philosophical or existential layers. In accordance with the auteur notion, both resent film genres – but they do not hesitate to make use of genres for their specific purposes, commenting on them, in Trier's case often for the purpose of deconstructing them.[5] I shall illustrate briefly how the notion of imagined places works in two of Dreyer's well known international

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5   In her survey of Dreyer's films, Marguerite Engberg (2005) uses the concept of genre. For analyses of *Melancholia* as a genre film deconstructing the traditions of wedding films and apocalyptic films, cf. Agger 2012 a, 2014.

genre films – *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928) and *Vampyr* (1932).[6] These two films illustrate two different ways of establishing location by elaborating the notion of non-place or empty space.

La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc is a historical silent film with elements of bio-pic. It is based on the protocols of the trial of Jeanne of Arc, focussing on the very last day of Jeanne of Arc's life. *Vampyr* is a vampire film, inspired by Sheridan le Fanu's short story "Carmilla" from "In a Glass Darkly" (1872). None of these represent typical genre films; they are independent, ambitious and innovative, curiously investigating what the notion of genre can mean. Both were produced in France.

La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc represents Rouen, the place of Jeanne of d'Arc's trial, as a stylised medieval French town. According to art historian Britta Martensen-Larsen (1993), the interior set was built up from the ground in an empty hall belonging to the Renault factories in Billancourt. The outdoor scenes were shot at a field in Petit-Clamart near Paris where an entire town centre designed by Hermann Warm, the German film architect,[7] was established in concrete and timber, complete with a church, narrow streets, town walls and towers surrounded by a moat. To the disappointment of Société Générale de Films, the production company, the magnificent and costly decorations mainly served as a background for the moving display of Jeanne's and her accusers' facial and bodily expressions during the trial. Notwithstanding this focus, the background does play a prominent role in the dialectics between suppression and female agony on the one hand and manifest male power on the other.

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6   The title of the film has been subject to questions. Jean Sémolué, the French film scholar, asked Dreyer: "Comment faut-il expliquer l'orthographe de Vampyr (et non Vampire)?" (27/10 1961). Dreyer answered: "VAMPYR instead of VAMPIRE is a mistake by the distributors, since VAMPIRE both in France and in England is the correct word. In German the word is spelled VAMPIR, so I do not understand at all from where the word VAMPYR originates". http://www.carlthdreyer.dk/Filmene/Vampyr/Kommentarer.aspx

7   Hermann Warm created the expressionist scenography for *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (1919) and Henrik Galeen's *Der Student von Prag* (1926).

The set models from La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc

As a special device, Dreyer and Rudolf Mathé, his photographer, had installed hidden trenches and holes in the set in order to focus on the characters from below. It is part of the vision that the spectator should experience a position similar to Jeanne's, a downcast position that does not allow any option of survey. As Jeanne, the spectator is emerged in the dramatic dialogue, its traps, hesitations and final decisions in the battle between hope and despair, the truth as Jeanne perceives it and the ruthless search for the pre-defined issue of her opponents. The naked face of Jeanne (Maria Falconetti) became emblematic as a symbol of female faith and strength, innocence and insistence. Nevertheless, the medieval setting distinctly served as a foil to the ongoing battle of determining what truth is. The belief in power expressed in the faces of Jeanne's accusers is strongly supported by the massive walls of the church and the castle. Dreyer aimed at rendering the medieval atmosphere in a simple and severe style.

The very solidity of the setting underscores that this battle is never-ending: It will go on in other versions at other times. In this way, Dreyer focusses on transhistorical space imbued with a feel-

The naked face of Jeanne d'Arc

ing of duration, timelessness and repetition.[8] The dialogue is built on the historical protocols of the case, but the imagery of the naked faces contrasted by the solid walls clearly aspires of transcending the inherent historicity transforming the Rouen of the film into a transhistorical imagined place.

In contrast, not a single set was built for *Vampyr* (1932). In this case, Dreyer simply rented an old castle, a water mill, an abandoned ice factory and a village inn (Larsen 2010). Again, Hermann Warm was in charge of the production design, and Rudolf Mathé was the photographer. Although the location is real, the concept of an imagined place is more than appropriate. The liminal quality of the images is enhanced by the introduction: Allan Gray, the protagonist, is transported across a river by a ferryman; the manner of transfer points directly to the notion of Styx, and consequently, the place to

8   Cf. the term in De Cleene and De Cleene 2013 used to characterise the special use of space in *La Passion de Jeanne D'Arc*: "The Obtuse Space".

Styx in Vampyr leading to the imagined place

which Allan Gray arrives is as void of contours as his name. Allan, his first name, may refer to the Danish and German 'alle', e.g. all, and his surname to grey, the least spectacular colour. In short, Allen Gray represents everyman. The landscape behind the river is a place of hesitation. It is difficult to determine the status of what is going on. Gradually, the belief in vampires is introduced; the visions of the two weird sisters in the castle and the shadows in the mill reinforce the indeterminacy culminating in the splitting up or doubling of Gray and the dream in which Gray observes himself dead in a coffin.

Gray's visions cooperate with the atmosphere in the enchanted castle and its nebulous surroundings to create an image of Gray's insecure, ambivalent state of mind. The location represents a trans-historical non-place, a place where your identity is questioned and vanishes. The mill has the aura of obsolete industry mentioned by Brunsdon, and no social institutions exist to take care of transgressors; and if they did, they would not be able to do anything as the

Alan Gray confronted with his own death

realm beyond the river is dominated by its own odd laws. Neither Gray nor the spectator can ever be sure of the status of the appealing images, and this fundamental doubt is emphasised by the untraditional camerawork in this place more imagined than real. *Vampyr* was Dreyer's first sound film, but it retained the traditional text boards providing anchoring information in this strange universe.

In different ways, the locations in the two films can be regarded as imagined places, the first one set in a stylised medieval Rouen representative of the powers of all times, the second one set in a misty everyman's land. In both cases, time is suspended, e.g. in *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* by Jeanne's recalling her guilty plea, and in *Vampyr* by the doubling of Gray. This handling of time is supported by the status of the locations mirroring human conditions and states of mind. In both cases, the fatal narratives are immersed in images.

ANDREY TARKOVSKY

It is evident that the international directors' generation of Jean-Luc Godard, Federico Fellini, Ingmar Bergman and Andrey Tarkovsky

has represented a primary source of inspiration for Lars von Trier (Grodal 2005 b, Bainbridge 2007). For instance, Trier keeps referring to Andrey Tarkovsky: "One of my biggest idols is Tarkovsky. He inspired me very much early in my career".[9] On this background, the dedication of *Antichrist* (2009) to Tarkovsky is only logical: "I feel related to him. […] If you dedicate a film to a director, then nobody will say that you're stealing from him, so this was the easy way out" (Hunter 2009). To sum up, it was the stylistic courage to delve into detail in an unpredictable way that first caught Trier's attention, but his fascination with the way in which Tarkovsky made his films continued. My assumption is that the particular attention to the relationship between time and space in the images of Tarkovsky's cinema paved the way for this fascination, which we can trace into the Trier's film.

The subtitle of Nariman Shakov's book about the cinema of Tarkovsky – *Labyrinths of Space and Time* – directly targets the essence of Tarkovsky's films. They all address the relationship between space and time, imitating the ways of a labyrinth. In his diaries, Tarkovsky often refers to Hamlet's notion that 'Time is out of joint'. Shakov adds: "However, the argument of this book is that space is also out of place, and this displaced place is an intrinsic part of the 'out of joint' time, for *joint* refers to a junction at which two entities (that is space and time) are joined or fitted together" (Shakov 2012, 5). In Tarkovsky's own words, he seeks a principle of administering time and space, which allows him to show "the subjective logic – the thought, the dream, the memory – instead of the logic of the subject" (Tarkovsky in an interview 1983, Shakov 2012, 13). In this way, time and space are mingled: "Every point in space 'remembers' events at different dates, while every instant of time is 'filled' with events at different places" (Shakov 2012, 13).

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9   In the same interview, he speaks about his first meeting with a film by Tarkovsky, a scene from *The Mirror*, screened in a clip on TV. He was caught by the very long camera tracks and taken in by the magical atmosphere, the unpredictability, the seeming lack of a definite purpose, and not least the carefully elaborated details: "It was the small details that got my attention" (Trier 2012).

Screenshot. 6:55. The ending of the flight in Andrey Rublev: The horse by the water symbolizes death

The absence of a narrative based on the logics of cause and effect in Tarkovsky's films reflects this ambition. Instead, different levels mingle, where dreams and visions, memories and phantasies appear as vividly and suggestively as events based on some kind of reality, and animals replace human beings to express the intensity of an event. E.g. in *Andrey Rublev,* the initial death of a man trying to fly is shown by a horse lying on the river bank. The resemblance to Trier's special preference of horses is evident: In Trier's oeuvre, horses are often used to illustrate suffering, in e.g. *The Element of Crime*, *Medea* and *Melancholia*.

In Tarkovsky's films, an often visualised chronotope is the figure of the labyrinth. This figure also penetrates his reflections on cinema. In *Sculpting in time,* he defines the main purpose of the book: "to help me to find my way through the maze of possibilities contained in this young and beautiful art form" (Tarkovsky 1987, 11).

Among Tarkovsky's films *Solaris* (1972) and *Stalker* (1979) are excellent examples of his fascinating images mingling times – past, present and future – unfolded and connected by the spatial figure of the labyrinth. *Solaris* takes as its point of departure an idyllic wood-

Screenshot. 52:24. In Medea we follow a cross cutting between Glauce placing the poisoned bridal crown at her head and the horse having touched it, galloping towards its death

en country cottage in a prototypical Russian landscape near a river, suggesting a friendly and homely location. However, at the end of the film, after a journey to Solaris, a sea of magic influences, the very same setting is eerily visualised in a top shot among all the islands emerging in the sea. This suggests the possibility of a double existence or, rather, that the inner image, the dreams or memories of man can prevail and assert their existence as vividly as everything we normally believe to exist. In these films, spatial and mental destabilisation are combined.

Consequently, the space station near Solaris in all respects represents a disturbing place. Kris Kelvin, the protagonist, and his two fellow space travellers, doctor Snaut and doctor Sartorius, are left with their inner resources – and the body of the scientist who chose to take his own life. They are easy victims to all sorts of thoughts and extraordinary experiences. Kelvin, who is also a psychologist, is alternately haunted and enchanted by the apparent resurrection of his dead wife Kari – at least for a time. The disturbances by all these visions and memories are commented upon in a singular way by a painting: Pieter Breughel's "The Hunters in the Snow" (1565),

which is subsequently part of the imagery in Trier's *Melancholia*.[10]

In two long takes, this painting is scrutinised by the camera, revealing every single detail, obviously suggesting a connection between Breughel's winter scene and the situation in the film across history. This is an example of a visual spectacle, appealing to a "*spectacular mode*" of contemplating "the intentional landscape", cf. Lefebre, 2006. The investigation of the painting points to the subsequent freezing of time, resulting in the so-called elevation scene, where the laws of nature are dissolved, and Kelvin and Kari fly accompanied by Bach's choral prelude in f minor (BWV 639).[11] This state is only temporary, and the sequence ends with a broken glass, indicating breakdown. But in the end, the dissolution might be followed by a kind of resurrection as Kelvin's domestic environment back in Russia gradually discloses itself in the sea of Solaris.

The metaphor of the maze is doubly present. It is not easy to find your way in the space station with its long corridors, its opaque rooms, locked doors, cracks and slots and difficult outlets; basically, the interior is visualised as a labyrinth, playing hide and seek with its inhabitants as well as with the audience watching it. The angular labyrinthine structure created by man is different from the organic labyrinth of Solaris, depicted as huge, turning clouds of water turning in space, resembling a maelstrom or perhaps a vision of the origin of creation.

In *Stalker* (1979), Tarkovsky further develops his exploration of time, space and labyrinthine structures. Technically, it is special by the domination of very long takes. According to Shakov (2012, 141), there are only 142 shots in 161 minutes, which provides the film with an extraordinary slow pace – and enough time to delve into the exquisite images. As in the case of *Solaris*, the chronotope highlighting a very special relationship between time and space can

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10   Cf. my analysis in Agger, 2014.

11   Trier uses the same music in *Nymphomaniac*, reconfirming his close relationship to Tarkovsky.

The intentional landscape as freezing of time: Solaris is occupied by in detail exploring "The Hunters in the Snow" (1565)

be said to form the predominant theme of the film. In Shakov's precisely chosen words, *Stalker* is "a *temporal revelation* housed by the *abnormal space* of the Zone."

Accordingly, the topography of the zone is characterised by ruins and decay: "Concrete tunnels, abandoned railways, dilapidated factories and office buildings (in which some telephones and lights are still working) constitute the topography of *Stalker*. […] This spatial decrepitude has temporal implications: the passage of time in *Stalker* reveals itself through the space of the Zone, which is immersed in the process of artefacts and polluted lakes and forests" (Shakov 2012, 144). The routes are characterised by death traps and a general dislocation, which corresponds to the inner state of mind of the three nameless perpetrators – the Stalker, who performs the task of tour guide as well as spiritual guide in the zone, the Professor and the Writer, who are visitors in search of the ultimate challenges of the Zone as well as their own hidden secrets.

The Soviet power was not pleased with Tarkovsky's films, and

it was increasingly difficult for him to get financing and approval for his ideas and projects. An obvious interpretation of his intermingling of time and place may be related to these conditions of creating. On the one hand, he had to restrict himself not to be too blunt in his criticism of the social and spiritual climate in the Soviet Union, hence the level of abstraction. On the other hand, he aimed at creating films transgressing the limits of time and borders, hence the ambition of rendering the language of the images as appealing as possible in his search for the right artistic expression. From this discrepancy stems his all-permeating use of "the subjective logic – the thought, the dream, the memory" as disclosed in his choices of imaginary places.

MEDEA

Trier directed *Medea* (1988) on the basis of a script by Carl Th. Dreyer – the only adaptation yet made by Trier. Trier's attitude to Dreyer is clearly signalled by his statement before the introductory sequence in *Medea*: "This is not an attempt to re-construe a "Dreyer-film", but out of reverence for the material, a personal interpretation of the manuscript and as such a desired homage to the master."[12]

Schepelern introduces his chapter about *Medea* by the subheading "Tracing Dreyer" (Schepelern 1997, 136). According to Schepelern, Trier and Preben Thomsen, the co-writer, follow the original manuscript by Dreyer closely as far as the main line and the dialogue are concerned. The most remarkable changes take place in the initial sequence, where Medea's situation is indicated by her position at the beach in and below the waves. This is Trier's way of cueing his audience: water plays a prominent part in the tragedy. Water unites and divides. Medea and Jason came by boat, and

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12   The passion for film is the cardinal point in Trier's relationship to Carl Th. Dreyer, which is underscored in a brief essay by Trier in the film journal Kosmorama: "Carl Th. Dreyer was a modest man, as were his sitting room and, later, his grave. Carl Th. Dreyer possessed the pure heart and natural humility of the passionate individual. Carl Th. Dreyer's passion was FILM" (Trier 1989, 45, quoted in translation by Schepelern 2010).

eventually Medea will disappear again by boat: *Medea* is framed by water. The sequence where Medea murders her children also represents a change as it is significantly altered and not least prolonged. In Euripides' original text from 431, the two boys do know what is going to happen, and we hear the smaller boy appeal to his older brother for help.[13] Trier takes this as a cue to further explore one of his favourite themes – the dialectics between victim and executioner (cf. Grodal 2005b). In tacit understanding with his mother, the older brother assumes the role of helping her to fulfil her revenge: "I know what is going to happen." The youngest son cries and tries to escape, but is brought back by his brother, and ultimately he helps her knotting the string, and he puts it around his own neck.

The special use of space in *Medea* has attracted attention ever since the first screening of the television play during Easter 1988, and it has been the object of several articles, e.g. Troelsen 1991, Pryds 1991, Christensen 2004. According to Schepelern, the production was shot in three different Danish locations: the tidal area in the south-western part of Jutland, in Mols assuming the characteristics of an archaic landscape, and in the Mønsted limestone quarries. All of these locations are surprisingly estranged and changed into imagined places exhibiting the essential qualities I have discussed above, combining elements from Dreyer with elements from Tarkovsky.

Pryds analyses *Medea* as a meta-conscious production, aesthetically exploring the cross-media relationship between film and TV. Technically, the production was originally recorded on videotape, transferred to 35 mm film, subjected to post production in paintbox and blue screen to be copied back on videotape. The result is a coarse image with a hybrid, less saturated expression, but also with an unusual aesthetically appealing quality. It is typical for Trier's

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13   "FIRST SON (within) Ah, me; what can I do? Whither fly to escape
      my mother's blows?
      SECOND SON (within) I know not, sweet brother mine; we are lost." Medea.
      Translated by E.P. Coleridge. http://classics.mit.edu/Euripides/medea.html

approach to combine advanced technological experiments with an attempt to visualise a large degree of emotional tension. In *Medea*, this is primarily done by giving the vision of the archaic landscape and the ever-present sea the same qualities as the human's creations – the castle of Kreon and the house of Medea. Nature as well as buildings and ships are highly stylised, and so are the characters and their emotions. Pursuing similar trains of thought, both Troelsen and Christensen trace the unusual use of space in *Medea*, highlighting the dissolution of borders by means of water, fog and uneasily defined contours.

The destabilisation of space is typical of *Medea*. This destabilisation is ever present in the sense that we as spectators are lacking means of orientation. General dislocation takes place, corresponding to Medea's troubled attempts to find a direction through the chaos she has been thrown into by Jason. This is obvious from the very first sequence, where we are watching Medea in a frontal shot, immediately replaced by a shot from above; subsequently, Medea is seen lying down in the sea, flooded by the waves, disappearing for at last again to manifest herself before our eyes, resurrected. This sequence is a foreboding of what is to come. It is also an early demon-
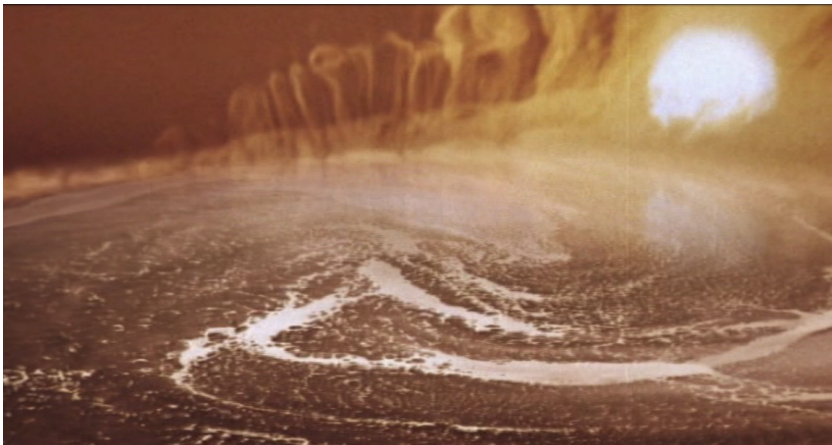
Screenshot. 2:15:22. Solaris: the labyrinthine sea

stration of the prerogative of the image – our interest is not directed towards the level of narration, the background or the psychology of Medea. The image aims directly at catching our attention at the level of the visual spectacle (cf. Lefebre 2006). Often, images do not illustrate the narration; it is the other way round: the fatal narrative is immersed in images, retrieved by an almost autonomous camera. This is illustrated by the introductory take of Medea, where she is turned about as in a whirlpool.

Correspondingly, the sound track does not help us to orientate ourselves. On the contrary, it supports the destabilisation of space. The dialogue is meagre and deliberately estranged by way of an artificial intonation, very far from realistic, on the part of the actors. Besides, two parts are replaced by other voices.[14] Obviously, the characters do not communicate. Often we just hear the wind, the waves, the birds – or the silence. Part of this production design is the imitation of the modus of a silent film in a stylised fashion. The takes are unusually long, and the cutting rhythm is slow, which underscores the affiliation with the silent film. Pointing out the power of the images is presumably a part of the homage to Dreyer. The insistent presence of the sea shows that the limits between water and air are fluid, that the air may be invaded by water and vice versa. This supports the prevalent feeling of spatial disorientation.

It is indeed a country of metamorphoses. As in the films of Tarkovsky, nothing is solid, and you cannot rely on anything. Even the walls are permeable, as illustrated in the wedding hut where only the sheets separate Jason from Glauce; but these sheets are as solid as rock: Glauce has sworn that she will not consummate the marriage before Medea has left the country. In Kreon's castle, the opposite is the case. Here the walls seem as solid as rocks, but Medea's poison is able to penetrate them. The labyrinthine space found in Kreon's castle is reproduced in the enchanted landscape where Jason seeks to prevent the inevitable – Medea's murder of his and

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14 Jason's voice is not Udo Kier's but Dick Kaysø's, and Glauce's voice is not Ludmilla Glinska's, but Mette Munk Plum's.

Screenshot. 1:12.. Spatial destabilization: Medea (Kirsten Olesen) revolving in the water

her children. The fact that Medea is in possession of the initiative is underlined by the weaving sequence: she determines the texture, and in her pattern, Jason is reduced to nothing. Medea enacts a human metamorphosis oscillating between the need to kill and the sorrow it causes herself, between determined action and remaining doubts, life and death for her children. This metamorphosis is reenacted by other human beings. The luminous Glauce is transformed into fire, and her fate is repeated by Kreon, her father. Jason is rapidly changed from a ruler and husband into a lonely, desperate man, riding through the yellow grass, bereaved of his children and heirs, as their mother changed into a furious revenger.

The detail of the small naked tree standing alone in the midst of the yellow grass is introduced early, and we keep it in sight for a long time as Medea slowly approaches the fatal place, revealing the degree of symbolism in the landscape. The tree is almost too small for a hanging; the proposed victims being children makes it convincing, however. The striking detail in the landscape, the single naked tree, inevitably catching the eye, bears a strong resemblance to another small and single naked tree. It is ostensibly exhibited in

Screenshot. 29: 16. Spatial destabilization: mirror effects in Medea's garden

Tarkovsky's *The Sacrifice* (*Offret* 1986), and in mysterious ways, the whole story is revolving around this tree, which seems to possess its own life or – in *Medea* – death. In *The Sacrifice*, the tree is connected to life.

As *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, *Medea* is a tale about an exceptionally strong woman in a man's world, allied to fatal forces, larger than life. The agony of Medea is shown by the tight cap she wears until her hair unfolds in the last moment of the film – it encloses her passion. *Medea* can be interpreted as a comment on *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc.* In the case of Medea, the roles of victim and executioner are reversed or rather concentrated into one person – Medea. The location of *Medea* combines the characteristics of an ancient place characterised by timelessness and duration, supported by the presence of the four elements, with marked spatial destabilisation, supporting the tragedy.

ANTICHRIST

In *Antichrist*, we get one brief cue of the film's supposed geographical location. In a glimpse, we catch the return address of the autopsy report that the male protagonist of the film places in his pocket. The main characters remain nameless as 'he' and 'she', but the address is precise: "King County Medical Examiner's Office, 297 Harbor View Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104".[15] Such detail constitutes a teasing exception.

This preciseness is contrasted by the mythical level emphasised by the fact that the location is called 'Eden' and basically rendered as an empty space of a timeless character, turning into a true hell for the man and the woman who had hoped to find help in nature. The cottage in Eden has no connection to the rest of the world, there is no telephone, no media, no neighbours, nothing but the surrounding woods, and the unhappy couple hardly eat at all.[16] Basically, they are reduced to Adam and Eve in the garden of Paradise, in a miserable condition struck with guilt having eaten the fruit of knowledge, but not knowing how to administer it at all. He tries a series of well-known psycho-therapeutic methods, transgressing the fundamental rule not to treat a person of kin. Via crosscutting, the basic urge for sex is made to cause the boy's death at an unguarded moment. Cursing sex as the original sin, she violently attacks him as well as herself, culminating in her demolition of his as well as her own genitals. She represents a destructive principle, in line with the maenads in the Greek tragedy (cf. the title referring to Nietzsche's *Antichrist*, 1895).[17]

"Nature is Satan's church", the recurrent theme, is discretely introduced in the first chapter as she is lying in hospital trying to recover after the chock of her boy's death. The theme is indicated

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15   This equals an authentic address, King County Medical Examiner's Office, Harborview Medical Center, 325 Ninth Avenue, Box 359792 Seattle, WA 98104-2499.

16   Returning to life, he is seen eating raspberries in the Epilogue.

17   For an analysis of the relationship to Nietzsche, cf. Agger 2012 b.

by the camera stopping at the vase in the room. The flowers are the only natural element in the impersonal, secluded hospital room dominated by white colours. Time has stopped: she is in bed, bereaved of the sense of time whereas her husband comes and goes, trying to help her. He has a purpose in life, she does not. The camera zooms at the stalks in the muddy water of the vase and freezes in an ultra-close shot. Nature following its own laws in the water is demonstrated by the small independent excrescence emerging at the bottom. The flowers are beautiful and blue, but beneath the surface they are leading their own hidden life. The stalks are part of organic material in a process of change, hardly visible in the microscopic parts of plants falling down – imitating the slow movement of the snow in the Prologue.

Cultivated nature in the microcosm of the vase is scary, as is exterior nature in the secluded woods. Through the repeated shots of the environment at their arrival, nature is made strange in several ways – by the angle of the shots, by the use of slow motion or dreamlike vision, by the unidentifiable sounds. As in *Medea,* the branches and twigs of a decaying tree protrude as a sign of the death inherent in nature. In *Antichrist* this does not forebode death by hanging, but death by strangling and subsequently burning. Silence prevails.

The theme of falling was unforgettably introduced by the fall of the child from the 3rd floor in slow motion, accompanied by the Handel's soprano aria Lascia ch'io pianga from *Rinaldo* (1711). In the woods, everything keeps falling, indicated by the sound of acorns bombarding the roof of the cottage. Living plants and trees form the realm of the green to which he, in his guidance at the train, urges her to succumb. However, the nature of Eden is not a resting place. The first night in the cottage, he is attacked by leeches. The three animals symbolising grief, pain and despair at the end of the first three chapters are all in a strange and painful condition: The deer is marked by a dead fawn hanging halfway out of its womb. The talking fox disembowels itself and speaks: "Chaos reigns", whereas the raven that keeps screaming betrays the hiding place of the man to the woman pursuing him.

Screenshot. 31:47 Nature morte in Antichrist

Eden is certainly not a place succumbing to ordinary laws of nature. Like the land beyond the river in *Vampyr,* it corresponds to the human chaos that dominates the characters' states of mind. In both cases, exterior nature is destabilised, ironically commenting on the mental destabilisation of the characters and their perceptions and the falling apart of the characters' humanity. And the characters keep falling apart, in different ways, with different twists, due to gender. In the hell of the labyrinthine Eden, at last only the fight for survival remains. The destabilised perception of space is reminiscent of Tarkovsky's *Stalker*. Just like Eden, the zone in *Stalker* represents a strange, secluded area governed by its own laws. Human beings seeking the essence of their existence and wishes visit the place to be changed, but only to be disappointed. Expressive animals figure as sudden visualisations of other dimensions of being. The beauty inherent in the desolate industrial zone and all the traps and surprises it contains correspond to the enchanted Eden of *Antichrist*; the inherent criticism of contemporary civilisation and the search for a meaning is envisioned in related manners. As in *Stalker*, a narrative based on the logics of cause and effect does not exist. Instead, the impact of symbolic place is evident; emphasising the
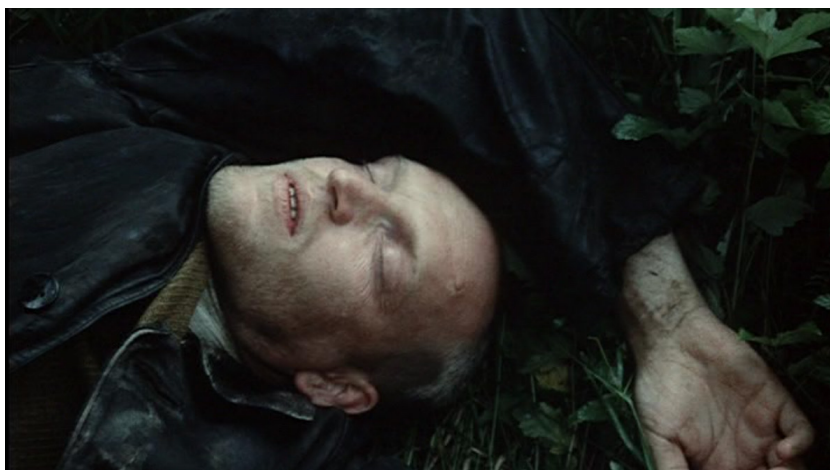
Screenshot. 43:21. Nature morte in Stalker

role of the imagined place, it takes part in and ironically comments on the mental destabilisation of the characters.

CONCLUSION

I started by asking how location in art films can be transformed into an imagined place, by which means and to which purposes. Taking my point of departure in Dreyer's and Tarkovsky's constructions of imagined places, I contended that Trier's choices represent homage to them as well as an ambition to further develop their visions and methods. The films I have considered in this context demonstrate that the concepts of non-places, empty space and imagined places can be used in several ways. A key notion common to all the concepts is spatial destabilisation, which we have seen in *Vampyr* as well as the in the films by Tarkovsky: the labyrinth of *Solaris* and the Zone of *Stalker*.

This spatial destabilisation is further developed by Trier in *Medea* and *Antichrist*. In *Medea,* the audience is bereaved of the means of orientation in an ancient yet modern stylised world dominated by the four elements – and the element of vehement female anger.

The whirlpool in which Medea first is visualised is an emblem of the spatial disorientation dominating the entire universe. The long takes, the helicopter shots and the experimental attitude to colours (paintbox, blue screen and transfer between media) contribute to this destabilisation in a manner reminiscent of Dreyer's, but even more radical. In *Medea*, however, there is no mental destabilisation, no psychology at all. The plot of the tragedy is kept simple.

In contrast, the theme in *Antichrist* is psychological: mental destabilisation. This is supported by the spatial disorientation caused by the use of location. The concept of Eden combines ancient layers from the Bible and the Middle Ages (as seen through the *Malleus Maleficarum*, 1486), and the aesthetically appealing images from the wood strongly suggest the correspondence of exterior and interior nature. In a vision, she gives herself back to earth, assuming the green colour of grass. Animals talk and act, and in the last picture of the Epilogue, the wood appears to be alive as a myriad of identical but anonymous women slowly approaching the survivor, accompanied by Lascia ch'io pianga, framing the film. This strange vision of the living wood can represent a comment on Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, presenting dimensions we usually underestimate, provided by our dreams, visions, phantasies and memories. They occupy their imagined places at a juncture where space and time meet in obscure dreamlike, surprising images where extinct trees have their places.

In this article, I have concentrated on two of Trier's productions. As initially indicated, his entire oeuvre represents a major contribution to exploring imagined places.[18] Often he further elaborates dimensions previously explored by other artists, such as Dreyer or Tarkovsky. I have mentioned Pieter Breughel's "The Hunters in the Snow" (1565) as a part of the imagery in both *Solaris* and *Melancho-*

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18   Other scholars confirm this, e.g. Angelos Koutsourakis. In connection with *The Element of Crime*, he applies the term "nonplace" to the landscape in *The Element of Crime*, just as he makes use of the concept "empty space" characterizing the presentation of space in *Dogville* and *Manderley* (Koutsourakis 2013, 55 and 161).

lia. In *Melancholia*, "The Hunters in the Snow" replaces the modern paintings at the castle of Tjolöholm, indicating that we should apply an older perspective to the combined issues of melancholia, depression and the end. This is typical of the way in which Trier combines and comments on the connections between time and place. And Trier's oeuvre may be representative of the way in which art film deals with location.

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THE WELFARE STATE AS NON-PLACE IN DANISH LITERATURE: ANDERS BODELSEN AND LARS FROST

Jens Lohfert Jørgensen

In this article, I will argue that the concept of the "non-place" has a pronounced pertinence to the literature of the welfare state in a Danish context; that is, literature written during the 'golden age' of the welfare state between 1950 and 1980 that has the development of society in this period as its theme. In this literature, the abstract features of the non-place appear as the result of a specific, political practice, which marks the consolidation of the welfare state. After a short clarification of how I use the concept of the non-place in the article, and how I conceive of its relation to literature, I analyse the relationship between the non-place and the welfare state in two short stories by Anders Bodelsen; namely "Success" ("Succes") and "The Point" ("Pointen"), which both appeared in the collection *Rama Sama* in 1968. Putting this analysis into perspective, I finally discuss, how the relationship appears in a contemporary work; Lars Frost's novel *Unconscious Red Light Crossing* (*Ubevidst rødgang*) from 2008.

NON-PLACES AS REAL PLACES AND AS LINGUISTIC PHENOMENA

Non-places are real places (for instance motorways, shopping malls and airports) that have emerged in hyper- or supermodernity.[1] Marc

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1   The concept of hyper- or supermodernity is commonly used to designate a society characterised by an elaboration of the features of modernity such as complexity and rationalism. Augé however, uses it to describe a society, in which old and new are not interwoven, but self-contained.

Augé defines them negatively in *Non-Places. Introduction to an An-thropology of Supermodernity*, originally from 1992. Partly, non-places are not what the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty refers to as anthropological places, which is to say that they do not constitute "the scene of an experience of relations with the world on the part of a being essentially situated 'in relation to a milieu'" (Augé 1995, 80). Partly, non-places are ahistorical in the sense that they emerge in isolation from historical places and maintain a dis-tance to them. But as Augé points out, non-places are also linguistic phenomena: "The link between individuals and their surroundings in the space of non-place is established through the mediation of words, or even texts" (Augé, 94). Non-places are defined by utter-ances in the shape of instructions, prohibitions, advise and general information, and these utterances constitute their 'user manuals'.

Since non-places are, in this sense, mediated by language, one can argue that literature has a special relation to them. In addition to real places, I understand non-places as so-called "symbolic forms" in this article, with the concept developed by the German neo-Kan-tian philosopher Ernst Cassirer; that is, as historically and culturally determined mental models that make it possible to grasp a diver-sity of sensuous data as manageable totalities and thereby create a picture of reality. The diversity of sensuous data is, in this case, the individual's relationship to its surroundings in supermodernity. According to the Danish literary and cultural scholars Frederik Tyg-strup and Isak Winkel Holm, a given culture is first and foremost characterised by the models, offered to the individuals within this culture, for how to relate to existing sensuous data (see Tygstrup and Holm 2007, 150). Symbolic forms are such models, and the cul-ture's selection of symbolic forms constitutes its "cultural poetics".[2] Living within a culture implies assimilating the cultural poetics, so that one is able to handle the sensuous data in a way that is recog-nisable for fellow citizens.

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2   The quotes from Tygstrup and Holm's article are translated from Danish by me.

The literature of a given culture forms a part of its cultural poetics. It produces and reproduces pictures of reality. In this sense, no specific literary symbolic forms exist. But literature constitutes a particular discursive frame. Compared to other discourses, literature has no "unambiguous pragmatic function" (Tygstrup & Holm 2007, 158). As mentioned above, literature shares the cultural poetics' symbolic forms, but they are "in a sense out of work and wanton" (Tygstrup & Holm, 159), when they appear in literature. As a consequence of this irresponsible freedom, literature can work as a laboratory for experiments with the culture's selection of symbolic forms that it can convert and transform. It is this function I believe the literature of the welfare state has in relation to the non-place.

THE WELFARE STATE IN ANDERS BODELSEN'S BODY OF WORK

According to the Danish sociologist Gøsta Esping-Andersen, the Scandinavian, including Danish, welfare state rests on three pillars (Kjældgaard 2010, 67-68). The first pillar is the principle of universalism, according to which all citizens have the same access to welfare services, regardless of ethnical background, income and health condition. The second pillar is the principle of decommodification, which enables the citizens to maintain a certain level of independence in relation to the work market, because the state supports the ones who are unemployed or unable to work. The third pillar is the principle of defamilialisation, according to which the state relieves the strain on the families by offering services that have traditionally been the responsibility of the family, such as child and elderly care.

The Danish author and philosopher Villy Sørensen considers social security to be the common focus of these pillars – that are, by the way, all undergoing erosion presently (Sørensen 1979, 220-222). But social security is, according to Sørensen, not to be understood as the final goal of the welfare state. It is, on the contrary, a means, which, if administered well, can lead to personal freedom, and, if administered badly, to personal stagnation.

This complex of social security, freedom and stagnation appears in Anders Bodelsen's *Rama Sama*. Bodelsen established himself as one of the leading critics of the welfare state in the 1960s, and his works were explicitly read in this context. In his review of *Rama Sama* in Politiken, the author and critic Henrik Stangerup for instance characterises Bodelsen as "The welfare state's most exciting, young, realistic poet." Later, Bodelsen's work lost some of the cultural capital, attributed to it at the time of its publication, and one has typically been able to find his books in antiquarian booksellers' jumble boxes. Recently though, his work has been subject to renewed attention as part of the general interest in the literature of the welfare state.

Rama Sama illustrates the connection between the welfare state and non-places. The short stories take place in two places: partly, in the transit zones that Augé discusses such as office buildings and shopping premises, charter hotels and motorways. This is the case in "Success". Partly, the stories take place in the family home, which is new, and to be found in suburbs, satellite towns and dormitory towns surrounding Copenhagen. This is the case in "The Point". These two places are not represented as opposites. In Bodelsen's short stories, the family home, which by tradition par excellence constitutes a place, is attributes features of non-places, which goes to demonstrate Augé's point that "[t]he possibility of non-place is never absent from any place" (Augé 1995, 107).

THE LEVELLED TEXTUAL UNIVERSE OF "SUCCESS"

"Success" deals with the theme of positioning oneself, figuratively as well as in reality, in professional life and in traffic; a theme, which is dealt with in terms of action rather than in terms of psychology. The first half of the short story gives an account of a meeting in an anonymous company from the point of view of one of the middle managers, Thykjær. As the only person present, Thykjær has a clear agenda for the meeting, which concerns the company's staffing situation after the most gifted employee has been headhunted

by a competitor. In a well-considered manner, he 'doses' his contributions to the discussion; 'puts the brake on', when it is heading in an inappropriate direction, and 'speeds it up', when it is about to stagnate. Instead of hiring a successor, Thykjær is advocating a reorganization of the company, which shall place him in the position held by his retiring colleague. He cleverly 'plants' the idea during the meeting, and later refers to it as the director's own. By the end of the meeting it is indicated that the director has adopted the idea.

The scenic depiction of the course of the meeting is only interrupted by Thykjær's reflections on the traffic out of town, which can be heard more and more clearly, as the time is approaching four o'clock. Instead of hurrying to his car in order to avoid getting stuck in traffic, as he usually does, the second half of the short story describes how Thykjær rewards himself for the successfully completed meeting by going to car dealer to look for a replacement of his two and a half years old Ford 17M, which is not worn, but just has "assumed a dull stamp of use" (Bodelsen 1967, 24).[3] Subsequently Thykjær starts his home journey on the radial roads of Copenhagen. The short story gives a detailed description of his style of driving, which is extremely aggressive. In several readings of "Success", it is stated that Thykjær's behaviour in the car reflects his behaviour in the meeting room (Nielsen 1978, 76–77 and Andersen et al. 1985, 426), but actually the two modes of behaviour are depicted in opposition to each other. In traffic, he acts irrationally: "it was one of the mistakes he continued to repeat; he entered the fast lane by default and forgot that it sometimes was the slowest" (Bodelsen 1967, 28). And while his behaviour makes progress at work, he runs into congestion in traffic.

The cause of the tailback is an accident, which appears as a *deus ex machina* in the short story. It introduces death as an uncontrollable existential condition in Thykjær's consciousness. The experience gives rise to a chain of defensive feelings that appear in stark

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3   The quotes from Bodelsen's short stories are translated by me.

contrast to his behaviour and make him re-evaluate the course of the day. The most pronounced of these feelings is his recollection of a childhood book, where a picture appeared of "a truck with headlights as eyes and the front drawn as an angry face" (Bodelsen, 1967, 31). The picture scared Thykjær as a child, and the memory of it deposits itself in his consciousness as a sensation of a hidden, lethal threat emerging from his surroundings.

The growing traffic intensity was one of the clearest welfare markers in the 1960s. The number of cars per person in Denmark rose significantly in this period compared to the preceding and succeeding decades.[4] In 1956, The Danish Road Directorate furthermore started the construction of the Danish motorway network, the so-called "capital H", which was completed in 1994 (see the entry "Motorvej" on www.denstoredanske.dk). This is a recurrent motif in "Success": cars' invasion of the welfare state, and car driving's invasion of the individual citizen's private life.[5] This is illustrated by the description of the view from Thykjær's window to a General Motors assembly factory, from where a new car rolls out every couple of minutes: "it had been like that year after year" (Bodelsen 1967, 16). The need for new cars in the welfare state is seemingly insatiable.

It is, primarily, via Thykjær's relationship to cars that the short story provides an insight into his psychology. At the car dealer, he devotes all his attention to a coupé model, instead of the obvious choice; namely to replace his car with a new Ford 17M or to upgrade to the slightly bigger Ford 20M. It is the sporty car with the low top line and scanty rear seat space that matches Thykjær's self-image after the meeting.

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4   According to Statistics Denmark, there were 0,01 cars per person in 1945, 0,09 per person in 1960, 0,22 per person in 1970, 0,27 per person in 1980, and 0,31 cars per person in 1990 (Danmarks Statistik 2008, 19).

5   A relevant intermedial reference could be the French director Jacques Tati's film *Trafic* from 1971, which does not leave any aspect of motoring unturned.
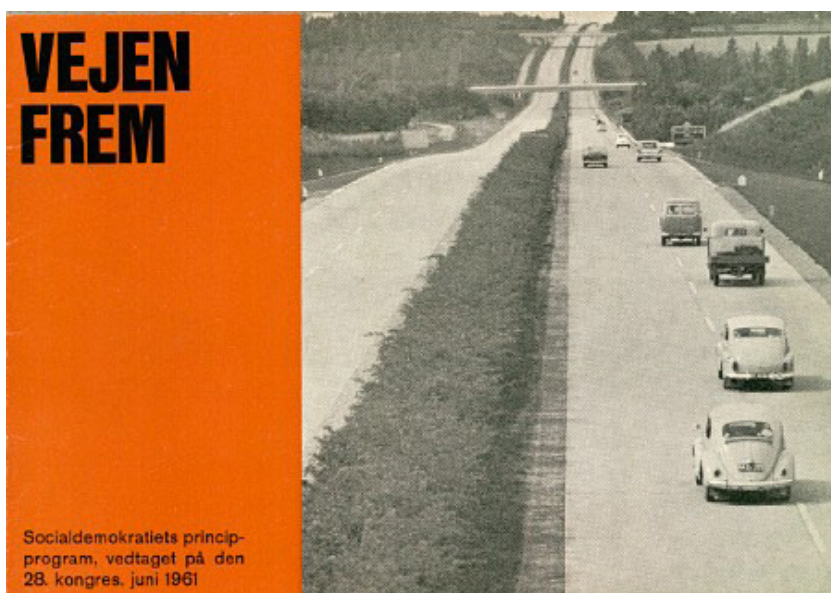
There is only one way! Motoring was not just an important theme in the political debates of the 1960s. It was also used by the parties as an icon of the time. Source: The Royal Library.

However, all the positive symbolic value possessed by the car while it turns around on an exhibition platform in the Elysian light of the showroom, emitting odours of rubber, nylon and cellulose paint, is lost on the motorway. Here, it is not an exponent of unrestrained force and freedom, but of being cooped up and being subject to the surroundings. Thykjær comes to a standstill in the tailback, enveloped in "a cloud of diesel smoke, which settled as a film on his windscreen" (Bodelsen 1967, 28). It is telling for his disabled state that the liquid container of the windscreen washer is empty and that he has to turn off the car's ventilating plant, since it was "after all the same air that it drew in" (Bodelsen 1967, 28).

This feeling is increased by the fact that Thykjær's reflections and the narrative of "Success" in general focus on driving itself. The goal of driving, Thykjær's home, is only referred to in a short telephone conversation between him and his wife. In this sense, the

roads of the short story lead to nowhere. This is an important point in the perspective of non-places. In his car, Thykjær becomes a prototypical representative of "a world […] surrendered to solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and the ephemeral", as Augé expresses it (Augé 1995, 78).

Non-places such as car parks, show rooms and motorways are, however, not just represented in "Success". The short story also generates the non-place as a textual effect in the sense that it performs the very lack of identity, relations and history that, according to Augé, characterises the individual's relationship to his or her surroundings in supermodernity. This performance takes place via a general levelling of the textual universe as a result of a narrator perspective, which does not differ between the characters' relationship to themselves and each other and their relationship to the things, they are surrounded by.

Bodelsen himself addresses this materialism of his texts in the essay "Facts, dead load or poetry" ("Facts, dødvægt eller poesi") from 1966. In the essay, he attempts to identify the features of the so-called "new realism" in Danish literature in the 1960s in connection to contemporary Modernism and earlier realistic currents. Contributing to the newness of the realism in the 1960s is its relationship to facts. On the one hand, Bodelsen writes that the readers' mere recognition of textual fact, as for instance "Lyngbyvej at half past five on an everyday afternoon" (Bodelsen 1978, 217),[6] can be of artistic value, but on the other hand, he maintains that these facts are "artistically meaningless, if they are not an expression of an attitude and a context, which convince the reader that they are meaningful" (Bodelsen 1978, 218). According to Bodelsen, the new realistic literature opens itself up to facts to a higher degree than seen earlier. These facts are, however, not to be understood as what the French literary theorist and semiotician Roland Barthes refers to as "reality effects" in his essay with the same title from 1968; that is, the small

6   The quotes from Bodelsen's essay are translated by me.

textual details, which do not contribute to the text's generation of meaning, but merely endows it with a 'real' atmosphere (see Barthes 1989). For Bodelsen, facts carry a pictorial value.

Bodelsen's poetic practice is, I will claim, more radical than his poetological reflections. "Success" and his other short stories are full of minute descriptions of things and the characters' mechanical handling of them, and certain aspects of these descriptions resist figurative readings. Thykjær brings a note pad and a Bic ballpoint pen to the meeting with his boss and colleagues: "He pushed the end of the ballpoint pen into the Brazilian rosewood table top, so that the tip appeared; after that he released the spring mechanism with his thumbnail, and the tip disappeared again" (Bodelsen 1967, 13). The depiction of the course of the meeting contains more references to this extraordinarily mundane pen. Pictorial value *can* be attributed to it. One can relate it to Thykjær's present social status: he has not yet taken the plunge and bought a more expensive steel ballpoint pen, which does not signal interchangeability to the same extent as the Bic pen. Furthermore, one can claim that Thykjær's handling of the pen illustrates his readiness for the coming meaning, and perhaps even attribute a phallic aggression to it.

But the concentrated focus on the ballpoint pen also simply emphasizes its banal, physical presence. There is a pronounced, 'anti-literary' aspect to Bodelsen's depiction of things, which one recognizes from user's manuals, and the detailed description of Thykjær's fidgeting with the pen has exactly got a user's manual-like character; especially the formulation "after that he released the spring mechanism with his thumbnail". That is how you do it! Utterances like this occur throughout the short story. As before mentioned, Thykjær attempts to remove the sight and smell of the surrounding diesel smoke, as he is cooped up in his car on the motorway: "Then he operated the pump of the windscreen washer with his hand, but the water container was empty" (Bodelsen 1967, 28). The form of the description mirrors the content: to "operate the pump of the windscreen washer with his hand" is a – pronounced – mechanical description of a mechanical action.

My point is that Bodelsen's downgrading of human relations in "Success" and the other short stories in *Rama Sama*, and his simultaneous upgrading of the characters' relation to things approximate the world of humans and the worlds of things to each other. This approximation or levelling is, I will claim, characteristic for the non-place, and it is via it that the non-place is performed as a textual effect in "Success".

Augé notes that non-places create a common identity between airline passengers, customers in shopping malls and car drivers on the roads: "No doubt the relative anonymity that goes with this temporary identity can be felt as a liberation, by people who, for a time, have only to keep in line, go where they are told, check their appearance" (Augé 1995, 101). This freedom – from oneself, from one's relations and from history – brings new aspects of reality into our field of vision; aspects that our usual attention to these existentials has a tendency to overshadow. Our relation to the things that surround us is one of these aspects. We are never as attentive to comfort as when we are sitting in a train or airplane seat. This is not only due to the fact that we know, we have to spend so and so many hours in the seat, but also that we know, we are not doing anything *else*. We never get as much joy out of our tablets and smart phones as when we are sitting there – which is why there is such a great range of gadgets and gadget accessories in airports and big railway stations. One can view the increased focus on things and the simultaneous decreased attention to existentials, which conditions it, as a tragic human condition of supermodernity. But as representatives of the so-called "material turn" within the humanities note, this levelling also possesses positive, ethical values. They argue that the division between nature and culture is a cultural construction that has made it able for us for instance to exploit natural resources. They therefore advocate a subversion of the division.[7]

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7   See for instance the American sociologist Jane Bennett's book *Vibrant Matter. A Political Ecology of Things* from 2010.

One could object that Thykjær's memory of the angry-faced truck is a fracture in the levelled textual universe of "Success". In her excellent article on Bodelsen's short stories "The hidden grey substance" ("Det skjulte grå stof") from 2009, Eva Gro Andersen characterises his narrative style as "allegorical by glimpses": "Under the realism symbols are hiding, and regularly, they force their way to the surface and conquers the otherwise realistic subject-matter completely" (Andersen 2009, 50).[8] Thykjær's memory is an obvious example of such a symbol. As mentioned, it is related to death as an uncontrollable, existential condition, and it can obviously be read as an expression of the "return of the repressed".[9]

Understood in this way, Thykjær's memory expresses some of the features that are negated by the non-place, such as self-identity and historical consciousness. However, such a reading negates the specificity of Bodelsen's use of pictorial language; namely the paradoxically 'flat' character of the symbols. This flatness has to do with the consistent realism of the short story, against which the symbols occur as totally isolated. This isolation gives them a strange 'superimposed' quality, as if they could be removed from the context, within which they occur, and be placed into another, without any more ado. The memory of the angry truck face is an example on this:

> Now he drove between crash barriers that reflected the headlights of the car. In the summer, he thought, there were roses in the central reserve between the two barriers. Late in the summer, the roses could become so high, that it was only possible to see the rooftops of the oncoming cars. One day in August, a track had been ploughed through both of the crash barriers and the roses […]. He

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8   In the article, Andersen also shortly discusses the concept of non-place in relation to the short stories.

9   According to Freud, the repressed precisely returns in a demonized form.

came to think about one of his childhood books, dealing
with traffic, where a truck with headlights as eyes and the
front drawn as an angry face appeared. This face, which
had always frightened him, he now saw emerge between
the roses. (Bodelsen 1967, 31)

The truck face emerges in the central reserve like a jack-in-a-box.
Because the symbol is, in this sense, unprepared, it is not able to
conquer the realistic subject-matter completely, as Eva Gro Anders-
en writes. What the symbol does, on the contrary, is to reveal the
levelled, set-piece-like character of the depicted world.

THE LONGING FOR A METAPHOR IN "THE POINT"

The other short story from *Rama Sama* that I want to discuss focus-
es on one of the ideal typical scenarios of the welfare state: a two
children-family's change of address from a council flat to a single-
family detached house. The golden age of the welfare state was one
of the most productive construction periods in Danish history ever,
where one and a half million new buildings were erected; buildings
that still dominate the Danish landscape today. Two new types of
dwelling gained a solid footing these years. Firstly, brick or concrete
precast buildings that were erected in planned built-up areas. Ad-
vancing 1970, entire residential towns counting thousands of resi-
dents without any manufacturing appeared in the country. Second-
ly, single family detached houses. Up to 1940, there had been no
economic incentive to possess one's own. It now became the most
advantageous investment one could make.

The move from the one type of dwelling to the other was one of
the most widespread status efforts and status markers of the time.
"The Point" thus stages a threshold situation with a high degree of
historical pertinence. The short story is told from the point of view
of the woman, and it deals with the need to take stock of her life,
awakened by the sight of the empty flat that the family is moving
from. The flat confronts the woman with a negative imprint of the

The first issue of the magazine Live Better (Bo Bedre) on interior decoration, furniture, garden and food was released in March 1961. The style, which was introduced by the magazine, became synonymous with good taste for many new owners of single family detached houses. Source: Bo Bedre.

family's life during the six years they have spent there, in the shape of the bright shadows on the walls and floors, left by pictures and furniture. The absence of things paradoxically creates friction. She is now able to move freely in the flat, but has nowhere to go, and therefore stands rooted to the spot. And because it is an exception, this friction reveals how the life of the family has been the previous six years; namely frictionless.

This lack of friction is expressed in the woman's reflections over the years in the flat; her thoughts flutter through them without finding firm ground in the shape of memories: "What has, after all, happened during these six years, she asked herself and was left with the curious, blind feeling of not being able to recall even the slightest detail" (Bodelsen 1967, 100). The 'shadows' on the walls and floors paradoxically make the woman feel, that her life has been a state of transit.

As it appears from the quoted passages, the woman can only put her feeling of being in transit into words in indefinite phrases; phrases that she repeats without being able to close in on the experience. The paralinguistic nature of the feeling is not only an expression of the fact that it transgresses the woman's individual rhetorical borders, but also the common rhetorical territory demarcated by the welfare state. When the woman attempts to tell her husband about the feeling, he answers her with a quantitative enumeration of their increase in welfare: "Well, I never! You have had two kids, and we have doubled our taxable income. Is that now supposed to be nothing?" (Bodelsen 1967, 102)

It is on the scale of the welfare state that the woman's husband attempts to measure her being in transit, but he is not able to do so, because it does not concern events and actions, but emotions and realisations: "– But nothing has *happened* here, she repeated. And therefore, she continued, without really understanding herself what she said, therefore nothing will *ever* happen" (Bodelsen 1967, 102). The woman finds herself in an existential vacuum, which is reflected by the flat. She shares this feeling with a number of the characters in *Rama Sama*; it is thus depicted as a consequence of the welfare state. She is, by no means, reassured by her husband's answer, and later in the day, she returns to the flat in order to look for signs that can constitute a point about the life that they have led there: "[W]hat it was all about, was merely to *gather* these six years that she felt so blind to presently, in some words, a thing, an event" (Bodelsen 1967, 105).

Bodelsen rewrites August Strindberg's short story "Half a Sheet of Foolscap" from 1903 in "The Point". The two texts share a situation: In "Half a Sheet of Foolscap" an anonymous young man with a mourning band tied around his hat makes a last round of inspection in the flat he is moving out of. By the telephone in the hallway, he finds half a sheet of paper, filled with names and phone numbers, written in different hands: "It was a record of everything that had happened to him in the short period of two years; all these things, which he had made up his mind to forget, were noted down.

It was a slice of a human life on half a sheet of foolscap" (Strindberg 1913, 73). In chronological form, the scribbling of the sheet enumerates the dramatic events of the preceding two years of the man's life: how he fell in love with a young woman; how the bank where he worked went bankrupt, and how he got a new position; how he got engaged with the woman and how they set up a home together; how his friend could not uphold his position in society and had to move away; how the woman got ill from tuberculosis, how she died and was buried. The sheet has an unexpected edifying effect on the young man: "In two minutes he had lived again through two years of his life. But he was not bowed down as he left the house. On the contrary, he carried his head high, like a happy and proud man, for he knew that the best things life has to bestow had been given to him" (Strindberg 1913, 76). The sheet's names and phone numbers are meaningful to the man, because it unites the events of two years and gives the man a possibility to relive them.

It is an object with a similar effect, the woman in "The Point" looks for in the deserted flat, when she returns to it; that is, a metaphor for the years the family has spent there. And she does, in fact, find a piece of paper that has been left behind. It appears that it is a half year old account of heating expenses. As Eva Gro Andersen points out, the anti-climax is a recurrent thematic and compositional feature of Bodelsen's work. The account does not stand in a metaphorical, but a metonymical relation to the family's life in the flat. More precisely, it is a synecdoche; that is, a part that represents the totality: "No point, not the very opposite either, just another ingredient – amongst so many others, which the change of address had brought to the surface – of these six years that were over" (Bodelsen 1967, 106). On the non-diegetic level of the short story the account of heating expenses is, however, a clear point: namely that it is impossible for the woman to create an overview of the existential vacuum, in which she finds herself; her life can only be represented by examples, in contrast to Strindberg's short story.

At the end of "The Point", the woman falls asleep in her new house: "It was all she could do to comprehend the little crisis she

had lived through during the course of the day. She already felt safe and at home in her new house. But she did not have time to think that this in itself could also be a kind of point, before she slept" (Bodelsen 1967, 107). The concluding sentence, where the perspective of the narrator is for the first time raised above the point of view of the woman, gives the reader one supplementary point – and thereby the short story meta-consciously lives up to the characteristic features of the genre: the social security of the welfare state is a pretext for inaction for the woman. She is – again – enveloped in frictionless life.

The crisis experienced by the woman on the threshold between her old and new home, which is released by the fracture of customary routines caused by the change of address, could, alternatively, be a possibility. The crisis could result in a freedom *from* her earlier life that could be transformed into a freedom *to* a new life. The woman does not take this opportunity. In the words of Villy Sørensen, she confuses welfare as a means with welfare as a goal and hence remains stagnated, which is typical for Bodelsen's characters. What unites Thykjær in "Success" and the woman in "The Point" is their inability to see through and master their behavioural patterns, with the result that they are caught up in them. The existential *vacua* of their lives are reflected in the short stories' recordings of the dissemination of non-places in the Danish welfare state.

One can argue that the motifs of the short stories are not exclusive to this state. Positioning oneself aggressively in one's job and in traffic and moving from a council flat to a private house might as well take place in for instance USA at this time. But the motifs are typical of the Danish welfare state in the sense that they reflect specific developments in the country, such as the construction of the Danish motorway network, and specific experiences of these developments, such as being stuck on "Lyngbyvej at half past five on an everyday afternoon", as Bodelsen puts it. Because the motifs are typical, the behavioural patterns that Thykjær and the woman in "The Point" are caught up in are not individual, but common or 'structural' – a very typical notion in 1960s culture (which the title

of Lars Frost's novel also hints to). One can speculate whether there is a relation between the texts' interest in these supraindividual patterns and their interest in non-places, as if there is a specifically structural aspect to these places?

THE CONSTRUCTION AND COLLAPSE OF THE WELFARE STATE IN LARS FROST'S *UNCONSCIOUS RED LIGHT CROSSING*

For reasons of space, I have limited this discussion of the welfare state as non-place in Danish literature to the work of Anders Bodelsen. One finds parallel examples in works by contemporary authors such as Peter Seeberg and Henrik Stangerup,[10] but they occur with particular emphasis in the work of Bodelsen. To find examples, where the recording of the dissemination of non-spaces in the welfare state seems to be the main concern of the text in the same way as it is in this work, one must turn to present day literature; more precisely to Lars Frost's "engineer novel" *Unconscious Red Light Crossing*, which I will discuss briefly as a conclusion to this article.

The original genre designation is Frost's own. *Unconscious Red Light Crossing*, which is police slang for crossing red lights just because the person in front of oneself does it; that is, to go with the flow mindlessly, is an engineer novel, because it deals with the construction of the welfare state in the beginning of the 1970's. This is – also – to be understood concretely: the dominating characters of the novel are engineers, and depictions of some of the many construction projects that were started as icons of the societal development, take up some space of the novel. In this case the new central group of buildings of Rigshospitalet that were put into service in 1970:

> Now, for the first time, Erik stepped in through one of the
> many entrances in the bottom of the sixteen-storey cen-

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10   In for instance Seeberg's *The Imposter* from 1957 and Stangerup's *The Man who wanted to be Guilty* from 1973.

tral complex in Kay Boeck-Hansen and Jørgen Stærmose's new Rigshospital. The light, healthy confusion caused by the new surroundings almost cheered him up, everything seemed a bit less serious, when he, tired and discouraged, stepped into this unknown building and allowed himself to be stimulated by the clear architectural lines, the well-composed ground plan, the simple, load-bearing idea behind it all. Here was no stench from many generation's death, here was clean. (Frost 2008, 11-12)[11]

The passage is a good example of Frost's characteristic voice in *Unconscious Red Light Crossing*,[12] which moves effortlessly between the factual, encyclopaedia-like representation of the building in the start of the passage, to the depiction of Erik's complex phenomenological experience of it in the middle, and to the description of his professional evaluation of the building in the end of the passage. It expresses an admiration for the building that is recurrent in the novel, and hence not just attributable to Erik, but also to the implicit author, who carries the novel's system of norms.

The passage's final sentence indicates that the new Rigshospital is a 'history-proof' construction, where it is impossible for the past to attach itself – in opposition to the original two-story pavilions from 1910. This is developed further in the continuation of the passage: "Nobody should feel at home at a hospital. The staff is at work and ought to behave as employees. The relatives and patients ought to feel like guests" (Frost 2008, 12). Rigshospitalet is a non-place that handles central functions in the welfare society, which were earlier taken care of in family settings. Frost's depiction can

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11   The quotes from Frost's novel are translated by me.

12   Voice is a diffuse literary notion. I use it here to mean the explicit and implicit address of the novel, at the level of the narrator. In an introduction to the notion the Danish literary scholar Lilian Munk Rösing writes: "One gets at the level of the voice and of the narrator by asking: How is the text to be read aloud?" (Rösing, 2012, 75. My translation).

be compared directly to Augé's characteristic of super-modernity as "[a] world where people are born in the clinic and die in the hospital" (Augé 1995, 78). But for Frost, the representation of non-places like Rigshospitalet is not just part and parcel of a critique of modernity. Non-places are also, simply, objects of fascination in *Unconscious Red Light Crossing*.

The novel establishes a direct relation between the welfare state and the dissemination of non-places. Apart from Rigshospitalet, "the new university project in Roskilde" (Frost 2008, 68) is mentioned, as well as terminal two in Copenhagen Airport; "an enormous space, and the ceiling with the round inflows of light, it is very beautiful, and one sits so well in Wegner's airport chair" (Frost 2008, 164).[13] This relation is accentuated by the composition of the novel, which is also referred to by the genre designation "engineer novel". *Unconscious Red Light Crossing* is composed in two parts that are, seemingly, contrasted with each other.

The first part takes place in and around Copenhagen in the summer of 1970. It primarily follows the middle-aged engineer Erik, who potters around, waiting to take up a new position, after his own company has gone bankrupt. Driving between Erik's suburban home in the Copenhagen area, the ancestral farm on Lolland, where he has grown up, and non-places such as the ones mentioned before, constitutes a considerable part of the story in this part. On the other hand, the second part of the novel takes place in Rome and Venice. It is told from the point of view of a first-person narrator; a female engineer, who participates in a conference on "security dimensioning of reinforced concrete" (Frost 2008, 173). She has been pregnant with Erik's now deceased son, and begins an affair with Erik, whom she meets in Rome. The two Italian cities are depicted as diametrical opposite to the Danish welfare state. They are characterised by anything but transit; by a self-identity and historical wealth, hardly matched by any other cities in the world.

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13   The buildings of Roskilde University, drawn by Preben Hansen inaugurated in 1972, while the airport terminal, which is drawn by Michael Lauritzen, is from 1960.

Especially Venice is, however, also a city threatened by increasing decay. The rock mass of the city is eroding. This decay is the primary theme in the second part of *Unconscious Red Light Crossing*, and it is not only contrasted to, but also mirrors the depiction of the welfare state in the first part. The theme of the building business and activity in the start of the 1970's is also used in the novel to point out that the welfare state is fragile. One chapter deals with the technique used to lay the foundations of Fiskebækbroen; a motorway bridge by Farum in North Zealand, which was built in 1972. Also this minute description of the so-called "Franki Piles" is marked by an engineering fascination, but in this case, the fascination is over-shadowed by the fact that Fiskebækbroen collapsed, exactly due to a foundation error.

Fiskebækbroen collapsed 8 February 1972 before it had been taken into use. Source: The Danish Road Directory.

As a negative icon of the welfare state, the collapse of Fiskebæk-broen suggests that also the foundation, on which society rests, can

erode. The social security nurtured by the welfare state can generate personal stagnation, as Villy Sørensen points out. It is this danger referred to by the title of Frost's novel.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

What unites Bodelsen's short stories and Frost's novel is that they establish a relationship between the growth of the welfare state and the dissemination of non-places, and that they place this relationship in the foreground of the text. Furthermore, this relationship is in all three cases involved in a more or less explicit discussion of the connection between social security, freedom and stagnation. In "Success", this complex is expressed by the short story's orchestration of the dominant motoring motif, whereas it is expressed in the transformation of the home into a non-place in "The Point". *Unconscious Red Light Crossing*, on the other hand, establishes a simple, but effective analogy between constructions of concrete non-places and the development of the welfare state.

There are, however, also notable differences between the texts: while Frost's novel is characterised by a general fascination of the iconic non-places of the welfare state, the non-place connotes a loss of values in Bodelsen's short stories. This is probably due to the fact that the citizens of the welfare state in its golden age between 1950 and 1980 were the first to experience the dissemination of non-places as a result of an actual strategy concerning the construction of society. In the literary works that take this strategy as its theme, the negative aspects of non-places are more urgent than the positive aspects, because these places are tied to notions of the flip sides to the welfare state, such as isolation and alienation; notions that are mental, as well as spatial.

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THE SNOWY DESERT IN KAFKA'S "A COUNTRY DOCTOR" AND OTHER NON-PLACES IN MODERNITY

Anker Gemzøe

NON-PLACE, HYPERMODERNITY AND MODERNITY

Marc Augé can rightfully be called one of the most influential culture sociologists of our times. His concept of *non-places* (*non-lieux*) has turned out to be uniquely suggestive and inspiring. As a part of Augé's whole approach, this concept has also stirred up many discussions and called for modifications. Several critical debates are reported in Wolfram Nitsch's contribution to the present volume. I agree with Nitsch on the claim for a historical and more nuanced understanding of the concept of non-places. For my part, I would like to raise a (literary) historical debate on Augé's positioning of non-places in hypermodernity as opposed to modernity.

Augé's presentation of the concept of *non-places* in the chapter "From Places to Non-Places" in his book *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (1995) hinges upon a strong, rather simplified opposition between *modernity* and *hypermodernity*. This opposition is typical of the 1980s and early 1990s and corresponds to the even more widespread dichotomy between *modernity* and *postmodernity*. On the basis of an article by Jean Starobinski about Baudelaire, especially his *Tableaux parisiens* from *Les fleurs du mal* (1857), Augé claims that the essence of modernity is a reconciliation of past and present, an integration of the traces of the past in the space of the presence. According to Starobinsky and Augé, modernity is thus characterized by a continual historical temporality:

"Modernity in art preserves all the temporalities of place, the ones that are located in space and in words" (Augé 1995, 77).

The non-places of hypermodernity are defined by contrast: "If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place" (Augé, 77f.). Hypermodernity produces non-places: A world surrendered to lonely individuality, to the provisional and fleeting, gives the anthropologist (and others) a new object – even if this never exists in a pure form (Augé, 78).

The simplified and traditionalized conception of modernity, here proposed by Starobinsky and Augé, corresponds well to that found in many theoreticians of postmodernism in both a French and an Anglo-American context. It is true, however, that Augé also advances a surprising and interesting modification of his opening and fundamental picture. In the process of identifying the particular form of loneliness and related existential implications of the phenomenon of non-places, he extensively recurs to examples from artistic representatives of *modernity*, to modern travelers like Chateaubriand, by whom "we are most likely to find prophetic evocations of spaces in which neither identity, nor relations, nor history really make any sense" (Augé, 87). The experience of non-place is certainly not always absent in modernity, Augé confirms. Referring to Walter Benjamin's *Passagenwerk*, he goes so far as to claim that the modern architecture of the 19th century incarnates

> a wish to prefigure the architecture of the next century, as a dream or anticipation. By the same token, we may wonder whether yesterday's representatives of modernity, who found material for reflection in the world's concrete space, might not have illuminated in advance certain aspects of today's supermodernity; not through the accident of a few lucky intuitions, but because they already embodied in an exceptional way (because they were artists)

situations (postures, attitudes) which, in more prosaic form, have now become the common lot. (Augé, 94)

This is a true observation and a most important modification. But unfortunately, at the end of the central chapter, he returns to the rigid dichotomy from the start of the chapter – as if nothing had happened: "In the modernity of the Baudelairean landscape […] everything is combined, everything holds together: the spires and chimneys are the 'masts of the city'" (Augé, 110). Modernity interlaces the old and the new, while hypermodernity separates them, he affirms. In the same way he characterizes non-place as "the opposite of utopia" (Augé, 111), while forgetting the idea, suggested along the way, that the non-places of hypermodernity could be anticipated by the utopias of modernity, to a certain degree even seen as effects of utopian anticipations. In fact, *railroad stations*, *airports* and *motorways*, Augé's main examples of non-places in hypermodernity, were originally conceived as elements of the utopian plans for the modern city by futurist/modernist architects.

In spite of his tentative approaches to an alternative conception, the main tendency in Augé is and remains, I contend, a striking underestimation of the importance of non-places in modernity and modernism. This distorted picture of modernity is promoted by a simplified dichotomy between hypermodernity and modernity. In the following, I shall give a number of counter-images, examples of non-places in modernity and modernism. My article focuses on the *desert* as an important metaphorical non-place in modernity, with special attention being paid to this (un)topos in the late Kafka and most particularly "A Country Doctor" ("Ein Landarzt").

The lack of the concept of *dystopia* is symptomatic of Marc Augé's inadequate treatment of the complementary concept of *utopia* – and thus contributes to revealing his insufficient comprehension of the widespread radical critique of modernity *in* modernity. Firstly, Augé does not seriously reflect upon the relation between utopia and non-place. The two words mean the same thing, namely a negation of place: *unplace*. They both have their origin in long traditions

of *games of negation*[1] back to the Middle Ages and of thinking by negations from Hegel to Sartre. *Non-places* is not the first expression of critical thought about unplaces, negations of utopia; that role can rather be ascribed to the concept of *dystopia*. A rich tradition of dystopias was developed during the 19th and the 20th centuries. (Un)places conceived of as utopias by some appeared to other authors and philosophers as dystopias.

One example could be the controversies around the image of the *Crystal Palace*. The critical Russian intellectual Nikolai G. Chernyshevsky (1828-89) had been arrested after a series of (perhaps politically motivated) large fires in Saint Petersburg. As a prisoner in the infamous Fortress of St. Peter and Paul, he wrote the utopian novel *What Is to Be Done? Tales about New People* (Chernyshevsky 1961), and, strangely enough, this was permitted to be published in 1863. The novel describes and discusses new, unconventional ways of living together, without the right of ownership and jealousy, and gives a vivid utopian depiction of a better future, with a large collective building, a crystal palace, as its central symbol. In actual real life, a more limited Crystal Palace had been erected in London for the World Exhibition of 1851.

The rational tendency and utopian picture of a modernity to come, found in the novel, highly provoked the great contemporary authors Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. In Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground* from 1864, the breathless first-person narrator is several times strongly critical of the utopian hopes to the future nourished by the progressives, illusory hopes that he symbolizes with a magnificent *Crystal Palace,* which, however, he also compares to an *anthill.* Obviously agreeing on this point with his problematic hero, Dostoevsky alludes polemically to the central image in

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[1]   E.g. described in M. M. Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* (Bakhtin 1968, 412ff.), see also my treatment of this phenomenon in "Modernism, Narrativity and Bakhtinian Theory" (Gemzøe 2007A, 138).

Chernyshevsky's novel, transforming it from utopia to dystopia.[2] Also Tolstoy referred critically to Chernyshevsky's utopian image of the crystal palace.

After all, the relation between utopia and non-place in Augé implies a similar critical movement. But this relationship is only partly conscious, and the kinship with the concept of *dystopia*, in many ways anticipating the notion of *non-place*, is completely absent. This oblivion is symptomatic of a general under- and misestimation of the strong currents in contemporary images of modernity that are dystopian, sceptical or downright hostile toward the progress of civilization. In these self-reflexive tendencies of modern writers and philosophers there is an emphasis on the growing lack of social cohesion; modernity is characterized by a permanent state of rupture, of discontinuity, of contingency. A contingent image of modernity can oscillate between the euphoric and the dystopian in the same author.

The Danish author and Nobel Prize winner Johannes Vilhelm Jensen's travel book *Intermezzo* (1899) contains an ambitious attempt to characterize modernity, which is defined as interference and ambivalence; as an addition of disharmonious voices; as something in a perpetual movement; as a provisional state of things, presupposing a cynical acceptance of a life of fragments and contradictions. Though far from uncritical toward the brutality, rapacity and incoherence of modernity, the traveling author finally soars into a euphoria over the dynamic freedom represented by modern placelessness: "Keep the places, you wistful, and give me the space between them. My heart is light, because I have no place. Adieu!" (Jensen 1899, 138).[3] But in the poem "At Memphis Station", written a few years later, he unfolds a sober and critical picture of a railroad station as a dreary non-place:

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2   The relation between Chernyshevsky and Dostoevsky is thoroughly clarified in Carl Stief: *Den russiske nihilisme* (Stief 1969). The same relation I have examined in "Dostojevskijs dialoger. Fra appelord til polyfoni" (Gemzøe 2012).

3   Cf. my treatment of *Intermezzo* in "Der Ton der Stadt und der Duft des Waldes" (Gemzøe 2007B).

The day ruthlessly exposes
the cold rails and the masses of black mud,
the waiting room with its candy machines,
the orange peels, the stumps of cigars and matches.[4]

This is a sense of non-place similar to an experience that Augé reserves for hypermodernity.

It is particularly revealing to compare Augé's image of modernity ("everything is combined, everything holds together" (Augé 1995, 110)) with the criticism of modernity, formulated as a criticism of *civilization*, in Oswald Spengler's influential work *The Decline of the West* (*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, 1918-1922). In the chapter "Cities and Peoples", Part A "The Soul of the City", he writes about the stone Colossus "Cosmopolis":

> This stony mass is the *absolute city.* Its image […] contains the whole noble death-symbolism of the definitive thing-become. The spirit-pervaded stone of gothic buildings, after a millennium of style-evolution, has become the soulless material for this daemonic stone desert. (Spengler 1928, 99)

Later, in the same chapter, he characterizes *Civilization* as

> the victory of city over country, whereby it frees itself from the grip of the ground, but to its own ultimate ruin. Rootless, dead to the cosmic, irrevocably committed to stone and intellectualism […] It follows from this that whereas every form-language of a culture, together with the history of its evolution, adheres to the original spot, civilized forms are at home anywhere and capable, therefore, of unlimited extension as soon as they appear. (Spengler 1928, 107)

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4   Translated by Alexander Taylor. Cf. my characteristic of this poem in Gemzøe 2010, 859f.

The topos of civilization as a desert and its development as a self-destructive road to the end of culture and humanity were confirmed and reinforced by the First World War: the enormous areas of destroyed landscapes, the ultimate desert of No Man's Land, where millions of young men were killed, became a concrete embodiment of a dystopian non-place. If the urbanized landscape of the metropolis appeared as man-made desert, so did a fortiori the moon-like surfaces and ruins of No Man's Land – as an ultimate result of industrialization and technology. In his "Preface to the First Edition", Spengler explains that the manuscript was completed just before The Great War, but was worked over again, supplemented and cleared up until the spring of 1917. He adds:

> Events have justified much and refuted nothing. It became clear that these ideas must necessarily be brought forward at just this moment and in Germany, and, more, that the war itself was an element in the premises from which the new world-picture could be made precise. (Spengler 1928, XV)

Spengler's characteristic of civilization in general and of the *modern metropolis* in particular as a "daemonic stone desert", a rootless *non-place*, is most gloomy, but still, in rather many ways, bears resemblance to features that Augé reserves for hypermodernity, and corresponds better to them than to his contradictory image of modernity.

KAFKA'S SNOWY DESERT AS A NON-PLACE
The short story "A Country Doctor" ("Ein Landarzt"), written at the beginning of 1917, was first published in the review *Die neue Dichtung* (1918) (*The New Literature*, actually appearing in 1917), and

republished as the title story in the collection *Ein Landarzt* (1920).[5] In his article "'unsere allgemeine und meine besondere Zeit'. Autobiographie und Zeitgenossenschaft in Kafkas Schreiben" ("'our general and my particular time'. Autobiography and Contemporary Consciousness in Kafka's Writings"), originally from 1983, the well-known Kafka-scholar Jost Schillemeit assumes a 'caesura' in his work in the last part of the year 1916. Before this threshold, the orientation of Kafka's writings is mainly autobiographical, he claims, and does not contain interpretations of his own time and age:

> 'Aussagen' über die eigene Zeit als solche, im Unterschied zu andere Zeiten, nicht 'Deutungen' der eigenen Zeit oder des eigenen 'Zeitalters', und zwar in den persönlichen Zeugnissen, den Briefen und Tagebüchern, ebenso wenig wie in den literarischen Texten. [They are dominated by] ein deutlich erkennbarer, wenn auch schwer genau definierbarer autobiographischer Grundzug. (Schillemeit 2004, 227)

In a later article, "Franz Kafka: Werk – Nachlass – Edition. Versuch eines Überblicks" ("Works – Posthumous Works – Edition. Attempt of a Survey", 1991/93), Schillemeit in fact revises his position and admits that this change is already visible in the works of Kafka's very productive writing period in the autumn of 1914, just after the outbreak of the Great War – mainly "In the Penal Colony" and some later parts of *The Process*.

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5   I have written briefly about "A Country Doctor" in my article "Processen i Kafkas anti-digtning" ("The Process in Kafka's Anti-Literature", Gemzøe 1972/74/82, 35-37 (25-57)). Below I draw on parts of this analysis. I also refer to points of view in my article "Apparatets sammenbrud. 'I straffekolonien' med Franz Kafka" ("The Breakdown of the Apparatus: 'In the Penal Colony' with Franz Kafka", Gemzøe 2011). Augé also mentions Kafka, but in a generalized perspective of power without relevance for the present complex of problems.

In Gemzøe 2011, I have further developed and substantiated this point of view and demonstrated how, in its Kafkaesque form of an alienated parable, this story can be read as a shrewd analysis of the political dilemmas of intellectuals as Kafka saw them at the beginning of the First World War, foreseeing the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

During the winter of 1916/17, Kafka had installed himself in a small apartment, rented by his sister Ottla, in Alchimistengasse 22 on Hradshin. In this second productive period, he wrote the stories that were to be published in the collection *A Country Doctor.* Just like the autumn of 1914, this was a most tumultuous period. In November 1916, an epoch came to an end with the death of the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary Franz Josef. Franz Kafka had been named after him, and he was, I have argued, the main 'model' of the Old Commandant of "In the Penal Colony". The Western Front had seen the terrible, senseless 'battles' of the Somme (150,000 casualties on the British side alone) and Verdun (no less than 800,000 soldiers killed). At the Eastern Front, the situation was similar:

> In 1916 the German equivalent of the Pyrrhic victory, 'sich zu Tode siegen' ('to commit suicide by winning'), entered the language. The Russians' Brusilov offensive was finally halted in October, but it shattered the Austrian armies on the Eastern Front. More than 350,000 soldiers had been captured, and total casualties have been estimated as high as a million men. (Self 2012)[6]

In recent years, a growing awareness has emerged within Kafka-scholarship that he was not as exclusively absorbed in his own pri-

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[6]   Self's essay has some very good observations and ideas, connecting the story with the Great War at a number of levels. I also fully agree with the view that 'the Kafka industry' tends to neglect or at least sideline "the social, cultural, political and historical dimensions of the writer's life". Grateful for this, your threshold is raised towards the propensity of the essay to be jumpy, sometimes loose in its intertextual "associations" and unnecessarily arrogant.

vate problems as generally assumed previously. On the contrary, many entries in his diary in the months after August 2, 1914, when Germany declared war against Russia, show that he follows the course of the war attentively and with a profound emotional involvement. Unlike many contemporary intellectuals, however, he is not seized with enthusiasm for the war, but deeply resents the chauvinist patriotism stirred up in the mobilization. In November he depicts the appalling war experiences of his cousin Josef Pollak, his narrow escape from death, the cruel murder of his captain, and a barbaric form of punishment of soldiers: Tied to a tree they stand until they turn blue. In December he notes his dismay over the Austrian defeats in Serbia as a result of the senseless leadership of the Austrian army.

To my knowledge, much less attention has been paid to Kafka's subsequent obsession with Russia. From the end of 1914 and well into 1915, he reads the memoirs of the famous Russian author and critic Alexander Herzen, followed by works of Gogol. In February 1915 he enters a remark on Russia's infinite force of attraction – containing nothing, extinguishing everything. In the autumn of 1915, he embarks on a veritable research journey into Napoleon's campaign into Russia and his disastrous defeat in 1812. He reads a bulk of books: Förster Fleck's *Erzählung von seinen Schicksalen auf dem Zug Napoleons nach Russland und von seiner Gefangenschaft 1812-1814*; Paul Holzhausen's *Die Deutschen in Russland 1812. Leben und Leiden auf der Moskauer Heerfahrt*; and *Memoiren des französischen Generals Marcellin de Marbot*. Over almost ten pages, he takes excerpts from the two last-named books. He notes carefully no less than 18 errors that Napoleon made, among them the very decision to wage war against Russia and the underestimation of the hardness of the Russian winter. From Holzhausen's description of the retreat, he refers in detail the many problems with the horses – hundreds could be seen lying dead with burst bellies. Napoleon's 1812 campaign is, of course, also the central motif of the last and by far longest part of Leo Tolstoy's voluminous novel *War and Peace.*

From December 1915 to April 1916, there is a break in the diary,

followed by a number of literary sketches – and notes from Kafka's one happy encounter with Felice Bauer. Between October 10, 1916 and April 1917 – roughly the period when he writes the stories of *A Country Doctor,* there are once again no entries in the diary.

A snowy desert, created by an endless, ice-cold winter, fills the universe of the story and causes the country doctor's initial difficulty as well as his final misery. The title and first sentence form a compact anticipation: "I was in great difficulty. An urgent journey was facing me. A seriously ill man was waiting for me in a village ten miles distant. A severe snowstorm filled the space between him and me" (Kafka 2007-2013)[7]. The opening scene is permeated with panic: the night bell has sounded and alarmed him. We know openings like this, in which someone is alarmed, disturbed in his sleep – both from the tale "The Metamorphosis" and the novel *The Process.* In cases like this, you can be doubtful whether you are dreaming or awake, utterly exposed and uncertain which kind of reality you are confronted with.

A good carriage he has, "but the horse was missing – the horse" (ibid). The allusion to Shakespeare's *Richard III*[8] underlines the decisive aspect of the situation. "My own horse had died the previous night, as a result of over-exertion in this icy winter." Unexpected help he gets from a stranger, a groom ("Pferdeknecht"), creeping out of the doctor's own, long unused pigsty, accompanied by two powerful horses with strong flanks. "One doesn't know the sorts of things one has stored in one's own house," the servant girl Rosa remarks, laughing. While the groom stays behind and rapes Rosa, he sends the doctor on his way with miraculous speed:

'Giddy up,' he says and claps his hands. The carriage is torn away, like a piece of wood in a current. I still hear how the door of

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7   This translation has many advantages. It is in many ways simpler and closer to the German text than e.g. that of Michael Hofmann, which for instance bungles some of the important allusions; but, unfortunately, it alters the punctuation and mostly replaces semicolons with full stops.

8   This Shakespeare play is mentioned in Kafka's diary.

my house is breaking down and splitting apart under the groom's onslaught, and then my eyes and ears are filled with a roaring sound which overwhelms all my senses at once. But only for a moment. Then I am already there, as if the farm yard of my invalid opens up immediately in front of my courtyard gate. The horses stand quietly. The snowfall has stopped, moonlight all around. (Kafka 2007-2013, 2)

Kafka had read Freud – as noted by himself in his diary after writing his decisive story "The Judgment" (1912). After the death of the doctor's *own* horse, "as a result of over-exertion in this icy winter", alien forces in the doctor's unconscious self overwhelm him. The horse is a traditional symbol of sex and desire, pigs are known as the mounts of the devil.

But the implications are in no way limited to a subconscious level. A seriously disturbing experience of any traditional conception of time and space was an undeniable occurrence of the war. Men in large numbers were moved from one place to another at a hitherto unknown speed. At the first Somme Battle, the Paris Taxis were used extensively for the transportation of troops to the front. The airplane, whose flight was indeed 'filling eyes and ears with a roaring sound', was rapidly developed in the course of the war and became an important part of the weaponry. With the experience of drumfire at the front, any sense of time and space were radically suspended.

The middle part of the story, the healing scene, starts with the doctor's reassuring ascertainment that it was a false alarm, as the patient, a village boy, appears to be healthy. Aided by the whinnying of his horses, however, the old doctor soon discovers his mistake:

> On his right side, in the region of the hip, a wound the size of the palm of one's hand has opened up. Rose coloured [Rosa], in many different shadings, dark in the depths, brighter on the edges, delicately grained, with uneven patches of blood, open to the light like a mine. […] Worms, as thick and long as my little finger, them-

selves rose coloured and also spattered with blood, are wriggling their white bodies with many limbs from their stronghold in the inner of the wound towards the light. (Kafka 2007-2013, 3f.)

An allusion to the servant girl Rosa, a hermaphroditic sex symbolism and an emblematic representation of death and mortality (the worm in the rose) are condensed in the decadent image of the wound. In addition, from his daily work in the insurance company *Arbeiter-Unfall-Versicherungsanstalt für das Königreich Böhmen in Prag*, Kafka knew very well about terrible open wounds, the results of industrial accidents. The wound is also associated with industrial work: "open to the light like a mine". And the doctor, trying to calm the patient, assumes a professional, technical assessment of it:

> "I've already been in all the sick rooms, far and wide, and I tell you your wound is not so bad. Made in a tight corner with two blows from an axe. ['Im spitzen Winkel mit zwei Hieben der Hacke geschaffen.'] Many people offer their side and hardly hear the axe in the forest, to say nothing of the fact that it's coming closer to them." (Kafka, 2007-2013, 4-5)

Finally, the sight of young men, at first glance looking rather normal, but on closer inspection bleeding to death from terrible wounds, became a mass experience during the First World War.[9]

While the villagers no longer believe that the priest can help against such a blatant and mysterious wound, they strip the doctor of his clothes and lay him naked in bed with the sick boy. In the role of a saint or a witch doctor, he is expected to give to the sick the healing 'kiss of leprosy', known from the legends of saints. The idea of a possible re-barbarization of the lower classes is imminent in Kafka's

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9   A main point in Will Self's before-mentioned essay "Kafka's Wound".

works from the autumn of 1914. The prisoners and harbor workers of "In the Penal Colony" speak a language incomprehensible to the main character, an intellectual traveler; they behave in a spontaneous, naïve manner and seem to be partisans of the Old Commandant, in search of authority, potentially regressive and dangerously reactionary. The court in *The Process* is located in working class districts and appears as a socialist party, but imbued with many feudal, medieval features. Moreover, Kafka's diary shows that in June 1916, he had carefully read a book by the Swedish bishop Nathan Söderblom: *The Origin of the Belief in Gods*, a completely scientific study (Kafka confirms) of the history of religions, especially primitive religions.

The modern, rational doctor, stripped naked, bereft of his clothes and authority cannot perform as expected in the primitive ritual. The dying boy receives him with hostility and claims that the doctor only precipitates his death.

In panic, the doctor takes flight so quickly that he spends no time on putting on his clothes again; but now the magic horses are suddenly very slow:

> "Giddy up," I said, but there was no giddying up about it. We dragged through the snowy desert like old men; […] Naked, abandoned to the frost of this unhappy age, with an earthly carriage and unearthly horses, I drive around by myself, an old man. My fur coat hangs behind the wagon, but I cannot reach it, and no one from the nimble rabble of patients lifts a finger. Betrayed! Betrayed! Once one responds to a false alarm on the night bell, there's no making it good again — not ever. (Kafka 2007-2013, 5)

In one of his most interesting 'associations', Will Self places this final situation in a historical context:

> I had been reading Paul Fussell's The Great War and Modern Memory. I found his thesis beguiling: in the contrast between the jinglingly innocent jingoism of the Great

Powers' armies as they trotted off to a short war, confident in August 1914 that it would all be over by Christmas, and the subsequent assembly lines of death that snaked their way across Europe lay the very crucible of modern irony. (Self 2012)

Paul Fussell's book opens like this:

By mid-December, 1914, British troops had been fighting on the Continent for over five months. Casualties had been shocking, position had settled into self-destructive stalemate, and sensitive people now perceived that the war, far from promising to be "over by Christmas," was going to extend itself to hitherto unimagined reaches of suffering and irony. (Fussell 1975/77, 3)

Later on, Fussell claims that the last remnants of innocence were lost during the terrible incidents of the year 1916, a moment that he claims to be "one of the most interesting in the whole history of human disillusion" (Fussell 1975/77, 29). About the sense of being lost he remarks: "To be in the trenches was to experience an unreal, unforgettable enclosure and constraint, as well as a sense of being unoriented and lost" (Fussell 1975/77, 51). Such a sense of being lost was no less insistent on the vast icy plains of the Eastern Front, where the Austrians and the Russians were fighting. Fussell further points to the end of 1916 as a time when many people began to wonder whether the war would be endless: "One did not have to be a lunatic or a particularly despondent visionary to conceive quite seriously that the war would literally never end and would be the permanent condition of mankind" (Fussell 1975/77, 71).

Though this is a convincing context (which I propose to substantiate further), matters remain more complex than that. "A Country Doctor" is one of Kafka's fantastic tales with traits from the fable and the parable – and fluid borders between exterior and interior space, between human and animal, earthly and supernatu-

ral, between seriousness and humorously grotesque, between period picture and abandoned parody. Blurred lines of demarcation between human beings and animals and between beastly men and humanized animals are common in Kafka: bugs ("The Metamorphosis"), horses (Karl Rossmann in *America*, "The New Advocate"), dogs, monkeys, mice, etc.

As a first-person narrative, "A Country Doctor" possesses an inimitably distinct and yet strongly varying tonality. Generally, we have a sequence of short sentences, quite a few of them elliptic, making plentiful use of semicolons or commas. This is a bombardment of fragmentary sensations in rapid movement, a formal equivalent of panic, of the workings of a disorderly mind, now focusing on a sensory detail, now digressing into reflections or past memories. In a certain sense the end situation is also the situation of narration. There is, however, an unclear demarcation in this vibrant voice between narration and inner monologue/dialogue, between cataloguing and narrating passages, close descriptions and scenic presentations (such as the healing scene), droll narrator reflections and gnomic words of wisdom.

Dorrit Cohn has demonstrated the importance of the changes in tense taking place in the story. It starts in the past tense, but the tense changes to the present in the middle of a sentence when the groom enters the stage: "But as soon as she was beside him, the groom puts his arms around her and pushes his face against hers." The past tense returns when the doctor has calmed the dying patient and is desperate to escape: "He took my word and grew still. But now it was time to think about my escape." But in the final situation, the present tense is used again: "I'll never come home at this rate." The long present tense passage in the middle, framed by two much briefer parts in the past tense, represents an *evocative present.* Thus Kafka, Cohn concludes, has integrated narration into a sort of quoted monologue: "He thereby arrives at exactly the language peculiar to an autonomous monologue, the genre in which all events are translated into the interior language of a perceiving consciousness" (Cohn 1978/83, 203).

The snowy desert forms the frame of the narrative, constituting its beginning, final state and background image. The initial plot determinants are the death of the horse, an impossible mission and an eruption of alien, uncontrollable forces. In the central scene follows the country doctor's confrontation with the villagers, revealing his impotence and resulting in his failure as a healer. In the disastrous final situation, the country doctor has failed, and has been let down by his ungrateful patients. He is stuck in a void; stripped naked of all dignity he must endure the frost of a most unhappy age.

The snowy desert in the fantastic tale "A Country Doctor" is a non-place, an incalculable distance, an absence, an unfathomable space. By now, it is obvious that in Kafka's fluid hybrid of genre and style, this negative entity is paradoxically charged with signification. An additional dimension is implied in the title. A *doctor* is the typical modern hero in 19th century realism everywhere in Europe. In French, Russian and Scandinavian Literature, he represents rationality, science and progress. Henrik Ibsen's doctors in plays such as *An Enemy of the People* (1882) and *The Wild Duck* (1884) or the doctor in Hamsun's *Pan* (1894) might be mentioned. The doctor is a representative of the process of secularization, which, in its turn, strengthens the social importance of his role. Kafka's tale alludes to this role expectation: "That's how people are in my region. Always demanding the impossible from the doctor. They have lost the old faith. The priest sits at home and tears his religious robes to pieces, one after the other. But the doctor is supposed to achieve everything with his delicate surgeon's hand" (Kafka, 4). Let us not forget that Franz Kafka was himself a doctor (juris) – and moreover employed in a branch related to the health sector.

Equal importance must, furthermore, be attributed to the first word of the title: Kafka's (anti)hero is a *country* doctor. At the level of the parable, it is the doctor's mission and obligation to *heal the country.* In my works about Kafka (cf. the bibliography), I have demonstrated that a significant group of his stories and novels, starting from "In the Penal Colony" and other writings in the autumn of 1914 (including no less than *The Trial*), contains a comprehensive

and intensive discussion of the almost impossible situation of the (Austro-Hungarian) intellectual, stuck in a deadlock between irreconcilable social and ethnic groups and a colossal power apparatus in decay, caught between the 'people' and the power. This constellation emerges painfully clearly after the outbreak of the war.

The most obvious analogy of the function and situation of the country doctor is that of K. in Kafka's later novel *The Castle* (written about 1922). K. is a *land* surveyor, sent for by "the Castle", which, however, does not really want to have anything to do with him. As remarked by the Danish Kafka scholar and translator Villy Sørensen, this castle stands in a desert country, where it is "winter almost all the year round and darkness almost round the clock" (Sørensen 1968, 172, my trans.). The tropical island of "In the Penal Colony" is another alienated topographical frame for a parable about an intellectual lost the wilderness of uncontrollable social forces. In the short story collection *A Country Doctor* itself, we find a number of similar non-places that each in their own way represent insurmountable social distances – as they presented themselves in the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the unending series of catastrophes in the First World War. In "An Old Manuscript", the settled artisans can do nothing to prevent the intrusion of nomads from the north – and the emperor remains completely passive. "Jackals and Arabs", set in a Middle East desert, explores a similar distance. "The Next Village" goes in its entirety like this:

> My grandfather used to say: "Life is astoundingly short. To me, looking back over it, life seems so foreshortened that I scarcely understand, for instance, how a young man can decide to ride over to the next village without being afraid that – not to mention accidents – even the span of a normal happy life may fall far short of the time needed for such a journey." (Kafka 1971/1983)

Once again, even the distance between two neighbouring villages is immense, immeasurable and insurmountable. "An Imperial

Message" (a fragment of the unpublished story "The Great Wall of China", containing a more comprehensive, satirical parable) reports how an imperial message would never be able to penetrate the labyrinth of topographical and bureaucratic blockings constituting and surrounding the imperial palace.

In posthumous works from the same period we have "The Bridge", for instance. This is a first-person narration of a man, lying stiff and cold as a bridge over an abyss, not yet noted on any map – turning around and tumbling down as soon as a wayward wanderer tries to make use of it. And there is the tragicomic story of "The Hunter Gracchus", who by an unfortunate fate was condemned to driving around eternally between life and death:

> "My death ship lost its way – a wrong turn of the helm, a moment when the helmsman was not paying attention, a distraction from my wonderful homeland – I don't know what it was. I only know that I remain on the earth and that since that time my ship has journeyed over earthly waters. So I – who only wanted to live in my own mountains – travel on after my death through all the countries of the earth."
>
> "And have you no share in the world beyond?" asked the burgomaster wrinkling his brow.
>
> The hunter answered, "I am always on the immense staircase leading up to it. I roam around on this infinitely wide flight of steps, sometimes up, sometimes down, sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, always in motion […]" (Kafka 2007-2013, 4)

The classically trained Kafka must have known that both Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus as representatives, tribunes, of the Roman people in the late 2nd century BC were killed in the attempt to pass a *land reform.*

FLAUBERT AND TOLSTOY

The specific significance of the snowy desert in "A Country Doctor" only becomes accessible, however, if the intertextuality of the 'leprosy kiss', which the doctor is forced by his superstitious village patients to try, is explored. The motif is well-known from legends of saints, and one of the famous examples is the legend of Saint Julian from the medieval collection *The Golden Legend* (*Legenda Aurea*). In one of his *Three Tales* (*Trois contes*, 1877), "The Legend of Saint Julian the Hospitaller", Gustave Flaubert reduces the pious legend to absurdity through parody and obscene blasphemy. Flaubert was, as can also be seen in the great novel *Sentimental Education* (*L'Education sentimentale*, 1869), sceptical towards the capacity of the intellectual to fill out the role as savior. Saint Julian ascends into heaven after having warmed up, stark naked, an ice-cold leper that turns out to be Jesus himself. This incident is, however, depicted in a decadent manner, and the supposed miracle most of all resembles a homosexual intercourse. Flaubert's importance for Kafka is well-known and abundantly documented in Kafka's diaries.

Leo Tolstoy read Flaubert's tale in Turgenev's translation into Russian in the same year it was published and commented on it in a highly indignant letter: "what an abomination Flaubert has written, and Turgenev translated. It is an outrageous obscenity." (Cited in Agger 1971)[10] Moreover, in a preface to S. T. Semenov's *Peasant Stories* (1894), Tolstoy explicitly denounces Flaubert's story. In 1895 he published his serious 'reply' "Master and Man", a parody of a parody.

In "Master and Man", the rich merchant Vasili Andreevich Brekhunov (who trades in horses and property, among other things) and his servant Nikita lose their way in the Russian snowy desert. This incident is, of course, of a symbolic nature; they are in a sur-

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10   Letter to Strachov, April 1877. Translated from the Russian by Gunhild Agger. Here and in the following passages I refer to the meticulous analysis of "Master and Man" in the Russian original, including its relationship to Flaubert's parodic legend of Saint Julian.

real, impassable waste land with threatening shadows and the occasional appearance of drunken peasants, corresponding to Nikita's problems with drunkenness and with the general state of society. When they have lost their way hopelessly, the master tries to escape alone with the horse, but it leads him in narrower and narrower circles back to their point of departure, after which it dies of cold and over-exertion. The servant Nikita is likewise nearly dying from cold; but Vasili suddenly changes his mind, opens his fur coat, "and having pushed Nikita down, lay down on top of him, covering him not only with his fur coat but with the whole of his body, which glowed with warmth."[11] The man survives, but the master dies, while experiencing an intense thrill of expanded consciousness and happiness which he had never sensed before. Tolstoy had re-accentuated Flaubert's parody and written a modern legend, a parable of the possible abandonment and sacrifice of the ruling class in favour of the people.

Kafka's diaries show his interest in Tolstoy. Stories like "The Kreutzer Sonata" (1889) and "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" (1886) are noted in particular. The latter story is often linked to "Master and Man"; both are seen as examples of Tolstoy's striking depiction of the common sense and humanity of the Russian peasant in contrast to the hypocrisy and decadence of his own class. Moreover, as demonstrated before, Kafka shares an obsession with Napoleon, his campaign into Russia and his disastrous retreat in 1812 with Tolstoy, who devoted the last part of his historical novel *War and Peace* (1869) to precisely that subject. As to the specific relation between "A Country Doctor" and "Master and Man", the amount of concordance is ample and striking: the shared relation to Flaubert's legend parody; the topos of the snow desert, which, as demonstrated, haunted Kafka during the war years and in a Russian context; the sense of getting lost in an unplace where time and space are

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11   1. *Master and Man and Other Parables and Tales by Count Leo Tolstoi.* Dent & Sons, London 1910. Trans. Constance Garnett. 2. Full Text Online Library. *Master and Man by Leo Tolstoy.* Trans. Louise and Aylmer Maude.

suspended; the horse dying from over-exertion in the icy winter; the ritual intercourse between representatives of the higher and lower classes; participation in a common ethical-political debate of the guilt or responsibility of the higher classes towards the people – in times of change, war and revolution. In addition to all these instances of motivic and thematic concordance, there are several formal examples of concordance. Tolstoy's suggestive descriptions of getting lost in a blizzard and of states of mind on the borderline between dreaming and being awake and between life and death anticipate many aspects of Kafka's "A Country Doctor". The most impressive common formal feature is, however, that the advanced use of evocative present tense in interior monologue, manifested in sudden shifts from the past to the present tense found in Kafka, is also important in "Master and Man". At the end of the story, there are several examples. Some of the most impressive occur in the rendering of Besuchov's stream of consciousness on the brink of death.[12]

Thus, there is every reason to see "A Country Doctor" as Kafka's ironic, disillusioned reply to Tolstoy's legend, affirming Flaubert's position in a new, wider context. Drawing on his experience of the situation during the First World War, Kafka has worked out a desperate (self)ironic retraction of the dream of sacrificing oneself for the people. In this most unhappy age ("dem Froste dieses unglückseligsten Zeitalters ausgesetzt" ["abandoned to the frost of this unhappy age"] (Kafka 2007-2013, 5)) the cold has aggravated, the vigor diminished, the wilds expanded, the exposure grown worse and the people become much more hostile. The country doctor is stuck in a non-place without loopholes.

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12   In the translations into English that have been available to me, this important feature has been omitted, and Tolstoy has thus been traditionalized. Only the fairy-tale-like present tense in the epilogue is rendered correctly.

THE DESERT AS A TOPOS

The desert as a desolate, dark and most often cold non-place is a central feature of modern literature's relation to place. Kafka has been able to draw upon a topos of non-place, and has made his own contribution to a further modernist development of this imagery. I have already indicated a broader context, but let me eventually go into some other examples of the desert-motif. Some of them have a direct or indirect relation to Kafka; others are relevant as manifestations of a type of cultural and epochal intertextuality constituted by the figure of the literary topos.

An early and fascinating example is J. W. Goethe's quite 'modernistic' free-verse poem "Harzreise im Winther" (1777). A winter-wilderness ("Dickicht-Schauer", "Wüste") acts as a metaphor for the hopeless situation of the outsider who has lost his way, has ended up "abseits", the desperate man with no way out:

> Ach, wer heilet die Schmerzen
> Des, dem Balsam zu Gift ward?
> Der sich Menschenhass
> Aus der Fülle der Liebe trank! (Goethe 1902-12, 49)
> [O who shall heal his agony then
> In whom each balm turned poison,
> Who drank hatred of man
> From the very fullness of love? (Translated by Christopher Middleton)]

Can some merciful god grant an opening of sources that are capable of refreshing "he who suffers from thirst in the desert"? As far as I can read and count, Goethe (his life, works by Goethe, works about Goethe) is the author most frequently referred to in Kafka's diaries – probably with Dostoevsky and Strindberg ranging second and third. One of the poems mentioned is the equally famous free-verse poem "Prometheus" – in which the desert, linked to hatred of mankind, is likewise a motif:

Wähntest du etwa,
Ich sollte das Leben hassen,
In Wüsten fliehen,
Weil nicht alle
Blütenträume reiften? (Goethe 1902-12, 60)
[Didst thou e'er fancy
That life I should learn to hate,
And fly to deserts,
Because not all
My blossoming dreams grew ripe? (Translated by Edgar
Alfred Bowring)]

A later instance is Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883). The desert is the central image in the poem, which is part of the chapter "Among Daughters of the Desert". This poem also hinges on existential confusion (especially disorganization of gender roles) and disorientation. Here the desert is warm, and the tonality is rather cheerful and humorous for the most part, but the 'refrain' first and last in the poem appears threatening and uncanny: "Die Wüste wächst: weh Dem, der Wüsten birgt!" ["The deserts grow: woe him who does them hide!" (Nietzsche 2010, 241)].

The previously mentioned Danish Nobel Laureate, Johannes Vilhelm Jensen, lets his historical-visionary novel *The Fall of the King* (1901) end with a third part entitled "Winter". As a summary of all the coldness and death dominating this part stands the visionary prose-poem "Grotte", a mill-song by the female giants Fenja and Menja, ending with the extinction of all life in a new Ice Age:

We'll grind endless ice for you, and storms from the north and drifting snow all year long. We'll grind the hope out of you, and we'll sing out reckonings where the figures for cold are always growing. We'll grind eternal night for you, we'll sling the sun out in far-off orbits. We'll grind cracking icebergs, with broken rock coming down from the north and out over the earth's rich plains, and cities

will be crushed by our glaciers. We'll shatter everything that bears fruit. (Jensen 2012, 264 f.)

In T. S. Eliot's desperate-critical conception of modern metropolitan civilization, thoroughly colored by the experience of the First World War, two alienated non-places are equally important. One image of a non-place, partly borrowed from Baudelaire, sharing it with Ezra Pound and several others, is that of the metropolis as a submarine ghost world. (Gemzøe 2002). The other is the image of the cold wasteland that was to become an icon for him. This image is already anticipated in the cold, yellow October fog in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1917). It is further developed in "A Cooking Egg" (1920): "Where are the eagles and the trumpets? // Buried beneath some snow-deep Alps."

The full enfoldment of this imagery comes with *The Waste Land* (1922). The first part, "The Burial of the Dead", ends with the following transformation of Dante's *Inferno* to a winterly wasteland:

> Unreal City,
> Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
> A crowd flowed over London Bridge so many,
> I had not thought death had undone so many. (Eliot 1963, 65)

In part III, the Leitmotif returns: "Unreal City / Under the brown fog of a winter noon" (Eliot, 71). Part V. "What the Thunder said" depicts with many repetitions the dry, barren desert as an image of civilization:

> Here there is no water but only rock
> Rock and no water and the sandy road. (Eliot, 76)
> What is the city over the mountains
> Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
> Falling towers
> Jerusalem Athens Alexandria

Vienna London
Unreal. (Eliot, 77)

Notice the close resemblance with Spengler's characterization of the metropolis as a dry, soulless stone desert, a rootless *non-place*.

CONCLUSIONS

There are different types of non-places. Paradoxically, the concept of non-place refers to a special type of place. Such a (non)place can be conceived of as a concrete entity – but will always be defined by its (lack of) existential, human significance – or assume a more textual and literary form of existence. It can take on a more or less gloomy appearance according to the historical conjuncture (for instance in times of war or peace), and the critical implications of its use can be more or less outspoken. The common denominator of the different forms should retain the validity as expressed in Augé's basic definition which was my point of departure in the present article: "If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place" (Augé 1995,77f.).

The icy desert in Kafka's late work, as well as the many other modern deserts and other important images of non-places that I have previously looked into, rarely or never represent the harmonious fusion of the new and the old, designated by Augé as characteristic of modernity. On the contrary, these dystopical topoi, critical of civilization, correspond closely to Augé's definitions of non-places: "The non-place is the opposite of utopia: it exists, and it does not contain any organic society" (Augé 1995, 111f.). One conclusion of my examination must therefore be that his polarizing characterization of hypermodernity versus modernity does not hold.

Another conclusion could be that with his critical description of non-places in hypermodernity, Augé half-consciously, half-unconsciously carries on an important figure of thought, a widespread

critical conception of civilization in modernity. A number of favorable things can be said about this figure of thought. It focusses sharply upon some crucial changes from a rural to an urban environment, magnifying features of the global process of modernization such as the ever-growing mobility, the perpetual state of transition, accompanied by rootlessness and lonely individuality. This conception can thus be credited for throwing an eye-opening critical light on a number of problematic aspects of an accelerating modern and postmodern development. On the other hand, this critical figure of thought, along with all of its characteristic images and topoi, tends to fall into simplifying dichotomies. This is due to the basic, but often unconscious, nostalgia implied in the point of departure.

Augé's concept of *non-places* continues and renews a critical figure of thought that seems to be both indispensable and problematic. At least, a more self-reflective debate would be desirable, both about its complicated historical variations and its inherent dangers of bringing along nostalgia and simplifying dichotomies.

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WALKING BETWEEN WORLDS: YEATS AND THE GOLDEN DAWN

Camelia Elias

> *Before me floats an image, man or shade,*
> *Shade more than man; more image than a shade.*
> (W.B. Yeats, "Byzantium", 1928)

"Why is the man standing there?" Yeats asks the evoker of spirits. But before Mathers can answer, Yeats sees for himself two people, a man and a woman, rising as from a dream within a dream before the eyes of the man upon the cross. "I see a man and a woman," says Mathers. "One of them is holding out his arms. He has no hands." Yeats suddenly remembers the two markers he had passed in the great hall outside the chapel. "Is the knight undergoing a penance for violence?" he asks Mathers.

"It could be, but I don't know," confesses Mathers. "In any case, the vision is gone. I can see no more. It has completed its cycle."

Later, Yeats wondered who had made up the story – if it was a story. He knew he had not. "And the seeress had not, and the evoker of spirits had not, and could not. For it arose," he concluded, "in three minds… without confusion and without labor. It may be, as Blake said of one of his poems, that the author was in eternity" (Greer 1996, 78-79).

What we are dealing with here is practical magic by scrying. This is also a good example of what a non-place may be or even look like. According to the fragment above recounting one of Yeats's experiences with spiritualist séances, with Greer paraphrasing imaginatively and quoting Yeats's own recounting of this event in his essay on magic from 1901, a non-place can occur in three minds simultaneously, provided also that the author is "in eternity." Let us unpack what this means, by looking first at a snapshot of history surrounding Yeats's involvement with the hermetic order of the Golden Dawn.

More specifically let us look at what is happening in the quoted fragment above against the background of Marc Augé's idea of a 'functionalized transit place', the place where, for instance, one can shop for goods, identity, or in this case here, for transcendence, without giving away any desire for fixed belonging. My central argument is that, for Yeats, transcendence itself constitutes a physical non-place simply because it is analogous with a modern form of heterogeneity. For instance, his metaphorical use of the tower, and his evocative view of Dublin's "discordant architecture, all those electric signs, where modern heterogeneity has taken physical form"[1] emphasize the following idea: a non-place is both a tower of aspiration and one of alienation. Only by losing ourselves in the tower (here taken both metaphorically and literally) do we find that we gain not only a new vista as to what lies underneath, but also an expanded consciousness about the question of what we are doing in such a place, participating in the discordant. The 'functionalized transit place' mediated by the idea of elevation – here also cultural – is not so much about the 'function' in the 'transit', as in the functionality of passing through without having to commit to the place, but rather more so about the 'function' in the 'transit', as in 'falling through' it, realizing that one is now down the rabbit hole, a useful metaphor for 'place' and 'non-place' taken together.

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1   For instance, O'Connell Bridge (at the end of Yeats's "A General Introduction for my Work" (1937)).

Here I am interested in the esoteric idea of the transcendent space and its relation to how we mediate the non-place through making sense of the vertigo that modern culture throws us in. For Yeats, by accessing the higher powers of the mind, the ivory tower of consciousness, one can arrive at understanding the function of knowing one's place in the world. So the non-place here is mediated by the simple, physical and metaphysical question: 'How do I know my place in the world?' Posing this very question creates a transcendent space by virtue of its aiming for settlement and negotiation.

We find the concern with the consequences of not knowing one's place in most of Yeats works, both his early as well as late writings, and, as Margaret Mills Harper posits it in her *Wisdom of Two* (2006), it is clear that wisdom through the conscious alienation from the familiar through spiritualist work can be seen as the operative word for the link between the esoteric notion of the transcendent space and the idea of the 'functionalized transit place'. More pragmatically this can be summed up in this decision: 'I'm not going to contact the dead at the junction between the visible and the invisible, and hear what they have to say'. My claim is that Mills Harper's 'wisdom of two' – referring to the spiritual and literary collaboration of Yeats and his wife George – can be seen as analogous to the idea of placing oneself between two places, between two worlds, between two states of consciousness, and between husband and wife, so that one can get better at transcending ambivalence.

For me, the site beyond ambivalence is the site of the non-place *par excellence.* And I suspect that to an extent this is what Augé also aims at conceptualizing when he talks about the non-place as the place that can placate our 'supermodernity'. Indeed, as he puts it: "The community of human destinies is experienced in the anonymity of non-place and in solitude" (Augé 1995, 120), thus already suggesting that the invisible, the absented from society self, is what sanctifies, consecrates, and elevates the non-place to the only place where one can act as a free agent, that is, when one is free from cultural imposition and constraints, as one always is when passing

through. In this I find most of Augé's words here a treatise on death. We are always passing through. What we call place, or our place is never more than a meeting hotspot or center at the juncture between what we know and what we don't, what we see and what we don't.

THE RABBIT HOLE AND THE TOWER OF WISDOM

The founder of the hermetic order of the Golden Dawn, MacGregor Mathers, his wife Moina Mathers, née Mina Bergson, and a 25-year-old William Butler Yeats are gathered at the Hornimans' Forest Hills Lodge, the Mathers residence, to experiment with metaphysical and psychic abilities. The three minds are out travelling in the astral plane and creating connections across creative work, guidance work, and intervential magical work. But in the 'astral', rather than the physical plane of reality, such distinctions are not as clear-cut. If the author of the vision is in eternity, as Yeats would have it, and as this points here to the space of the non-place, then the acts of creating, guiding, and intervening are experienced as one. They are all focused into the one magical act of sitting on the hedge, transiting between worlds. Or at least that is what we are led to think when we read about Yeats's involvement with the Golden Dawn Order into which he was initiated on March 7, 1890. The passage at the beginning of this essay comes from Mary K. Greer's book, *The Women of the Golden Dawn* (1995), in which he creates an imagined situation of a moment of scrying in the lives of the three mentioned. Her account and direct quoting of Yeats are based on his recollections about frequenting psychic salons, consulting crystal balls, and reading tarot cards, later gathered in his book *Ideas of Good and Evil* (1903).

Much has been written about Yeats and the Golden Dawn[2], but as with any secret order, what keeps the secret a secret is the tell-

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2   See for instance, Kathleen Raine's *Yeats, the Tarot and the Golden Dawn* (1976), and George Mills Harper *Yeats's Golden Dawn: The influence of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn on the life and art of W.B. Yeats* (1989). These works insist on seeing Yeats's genius as completely indissociable from his involvement with occult matters.

ing about it. The Golden Dawn order that was established in 1888 was a highly hierarchical order based on initiations and grading through initiation, a model adopted from Freemasonry and Rosicrucian ideals. Although the adepts sought some form of wisdom, they were also known to have increasingly become more and more zealous about advancing in their grades towards attaining the highest enlightenment. This enlightenment was supposedly kept secret by Secret Chiefs, or their theosophical counterparts, the Masters. The struggle for 'who is to be master' led to a schism in 1900, as too many cats were left out of the bag. Infamous occultist Aleister Crowley was pivotal in the order's downfall, as he published documents that were not supposed to be revealed. This resulted in the end of fabrications, deceptions, and delusions that the order had been accused of fostering (Regardie, 2002).

One of the first accounts of the life of MacGregor Mathers and his leadership of the Golden Dawn comes from surrealist painter Ithell Colquhoun, who, in her biography from 1975, *Sword of Wisdom,* reports on the consequences of denying women entrance to the Order. Her own application to become a member failed, but she later became a member of the Typhonian O.T.O. There is a slight irony here. As her book depicts the members of the Golden Dawn as monsters, and the order itself as a boys' club, her later involvement with Typhon worshipers suggests that she needed to pull to herself bigger and badder magicians. Typhon, as we know from Greek mythology, is the monster of monsters *par excellence.* The leadership of this order was taken up by Aleister Crowley himself in 1925, after the death of Theodor Reuss who had been the Outer Head of the Order.

Colquhoun was an artist, and according to her own reports, she became interested in the occult because of Yeats. She came across what she calls, Yeats's "intriguing phrases such as, 'When I was with some Hermeticists' or 'with some Martinists'" (Colquhoun 1975, 16). In addition to Yeats's cryptic statements, what Colquhoun found most interesting was that although the Order of the Golden Dawn relied on the secret teachings of the Secret Chiefs, who were

believed to be human beings assuming mostly male bodies, yet capable of supernatural deeds, the order needed women for their alchemical work to function.

In this context, looking at the historical accounts of the Victorian Age granting women virtually nothing either in terms of rights or recognition, it is commendable that women were actually allowed to not only become members – even if with some difficulty – but also to act as High Priestesses. However, while the Golden Dawn women, such as Maud Gonne, Moina Bergson Mathers, Annie Hornimann, and Florence Farr enjoyed a certain status due to the acknowledgement within the order of their psychic powers, they never quite became High Ceremonial Magicians in the true sense of that title, but, at best, a bunch of hysterical witches. Not even Yeats escaped bewitching, as he was smitten with Maude Gonne, whom he proposed marriage to, supposedly, on three occasions. Yet in spite of three rejections, he ended crediting her for the best of his work. There is yet another slight irony here. Although there is a long tradition in magical discourses for crediting woman with fulfilling the other half needed in any alchemical operation – that is, without the woman's mental and physical force there is no magic – the members of the Golden Dawn were oriented more towards Romanticism, seeing the woman as a muse and inspiration and not as someone who has powerful agency. It took Aleister Crowley's 'madness' to stretch the order's territory and finally assign the woman not only agency but also see her as the only power capable of changing a whole age. The age of the Aeon belongs to the woman, Crowley mused, and he used the figure of Babalon to prophesy a shift in our collective consciousness (Crowley, 1972). In this sense it is noteworthy to consider the extent to which the woman represents exactly what some occultists, and by the same token, some poets, thought a non-place is.

Generally, for Yeats and the Hermeticists of his time, the woman as the non-place par excellence represents one way in which one can acquire knowledge yet without making any claims to knowledge. While women were important for the Golden Dawn order, insofar as they were used as anchors into the present, the present was

not what interested the leading men of the order. They were all past oriented and goaded by the attitude of 'let us wait and learn more from the manifestation of unknown entities, rather than appreciate the value of what women can give us.' We can use this example to think some more through Augé's concept of a 'functionalized transit place' where what is desired is a trance-inducing effect in response to the general monotony of Victorian domestic life.

Colquhoun writes about the fascination of the Golden Dawn male members with what they didn't actually see but only sensed, their fascination with acting as channels for higher powers than themselves without even realizing it, and their ultimate disregard for the simple truth that magical manifestations are not of the intellect (Calquhoun, 1975). Magical manifestations do not occur in accordance with one's will unless that which is willed for becomes part of the unconscious. As part of the unconscious magical desires cannot be conjured through ceremonial invocations or personal efforts. Attempts have been made, as Calquhoun notes, and there are reports of contact with the world of Spirit from both practitioners of high magic and low magic, but how much wisdom was derived from these encounters remains to be debated. For instance, Calquhoun muses over the value of Crowley's talking of Mathers and emphasizing the fact that Mathers liked to play chess with spiritual entities, sitting at a table, moving his knights against an empty chair, and registering a movement in the void from his invisible counterpart. In terms of communication, such encounters in the non-place makes one wonder about the interface between the physical and non-physical beings, and how they can be said to reach an agreement or simply just be on the same page. What kind of an authority does such playing with the invisible world bring about to the one exercising his powers to make the invisible other speak? We don't know much of Mathers, so there's little that can be substantiated beyond the anecdotal level. But it is clear that such events sparked the imagination of poets such as Yeats. And, according to Colquhoun, he came close to identifying what was at stake, even when he failed to give recognition where recognition was due (94).

Accounting for how the leaders of the Golden Dawn func-
tioned as the unconscious tools of a higher power, she attributes
insight to Yeats, who wrote the following in *The Double Vision of Mi-
chael Robartes*:

> Constrained, arraigned, baffled, bent and unbent
> By these wire-joined jaws and limbs of wood,
> Themselves obedient,
> Knowing not evil and good,
> Obedient to some hidden magical breath.
> They do not even feel, so abstract are they,
> So dread beyond our death,
> Triumph that we obey. (Yeats 1964, 232)

In this poem Yeats proposes that magic is linked to the breath and
good poetry to the pulse. A good poem must have a heartbeat, and
this heartbeat must be felt beyond good and evil. The suggestion is
furthermore that the poet's place in eternity can only be understood
as a non-place, the place where magic meets the mind and beats it.
As he puts it, preferably by moonlight and "in triumph of the intel-
lect."

Yeats's essay "Magic" (1901) from *Ideas of Good and Evil*, be-
gins with the following statement, "I believe in the practice and
philosophy of what we have agreed to call magic, and what I must
call the evocation of spirits, though I do not know what they are,
in the power of creating magic illusions, in the visions of truth in
the depths of the minds when the eyes are closed" (Yeats 1903, 29).
Here, it is interesting to look at claims to authority that allow one
to step into 'other' worlds. Authority informs all oracular sayings
and forms of divination. Authority is in fact their very premise and
condition for existence. But claiming authority for one's prophecies,
if one is a priest or a poet, is not the same as having power over
the way in which they come to pass. This has to be negotiated and
mediated by discernment or another form of wisdom. If discern-
ment fails, then authority fails. A pertinent question to pose is the

following: what is the premise for the relation between a well-for-mulated intent to tap into the universal wisdom of other worlds and the implementation into our physical reality of what is given in the non-place of the 'other' reality, or the world of higher authority that exceeds our cognitive grasp and cultural achievements? In the case of the Golden Dawn order, one can identify a paradox that contrib-uted to its dismantling, namely a forgetfulness about the fact that all magical acts must be anchored in a constraint before they set the magician free. Perhaps this is what Yeats comes close to identifying in the above quoted passage, a favorite of Colquhoun as well.

Yeats also believed that one's imagination has to have a will of its own. In his essay on magic he gives an account of witnessing a seeress' vision in the company of one of his acquaintances, who, al-though well versed in esoteric knowledge could not believe that the soul existed beyond the body (Yeats 1903, 29-33). Condescendingly Yeats decided that the man's problem was with having an opaque mind. Here we have one of the clearest distinctions between a magi-cian and an occultist. While a magician operates with intent, divina-tion and intervention, the occultist studies method. In Yeats's case, it looks like he was very much into both. Judging by the notebooks he made for the Golden Dawn, filled with symbolic content and a systematic search for how to let the unconscious perform magical work, there can be little doubt as to what he was thinking.[3] He was thinking about how to make the three magical doctrines that begin his essay on Magic 'work.' These are the following:

> (1) That the borders of our minds are ever shifting, and that many minds can flow into one another, as it were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy.

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[3] The National Library of Ireland in Dublin has an online exhibition of Yeats, where one can see all his notebooks that contain not only esoteric writing but also occult sigils and drawings of tarot cards and other such material. [http://www.nli.ie/yeats/main.html]

(2) That the borders of our memories are as shifting, and that our memories are a part of one great memory, the memory of Nature herself.

(3) That this great mind and great memory can be evoked by symbols. (29)

For Yeats, these doctrines not only form a personal manifesto but also inform his beliefs about creative writing to the point where he was making no distinction between words and worlds, place and non-place. 'Just say the word and enunciate it properly,' most magicians state declamatorily 'and you will have the world.' A case in point is the way in which Yeats came to write his work, *A Vision,* under the direct influence of his wife, Georgie's, 'automatic writing.'

One may speculate here what the premise was for having one's membership accepted with the Golden Dawn, and perhaps postulate that it may have had something to do with a requirement for complete no-preconception. To stand naked before the Secret Chiefs must have been a daunting task, considering the general British and Irish attitude towards nakedness in the Victorian age. Here I find it quite moving to look at how Yeats evokes the Angel of Temperance from the Tarot cards, to embody almost alchemically the three virtues: Prudence, Justice, and Strength. The curators of the valuable exhibition on Yeats's work in Dublin at the National Library, running for 4 years between 2006 and 2010, had this to say about it:

This notebook was kept by WBY from 1893, when he entered the Inner Order of the Golden Dawn, to 1912, when the Order had ceased to call itself the Golden Dawn following various public scandals. The section of the notebook shown in the case is copied from a document by MacGregor Mathers, one of the founders of the Order, explaining how to build up the visible form of a name representing an elemental force. WBY has used his artistic training to give a convincing representation of the in-

structions. The green-robed angel is a 'telesmatic image', the visible human form of a name. Mathers' example is Agiel, the intelligence of Saturn, which WBY has miscopied as 'Hagiel'. The name is taken letter by letter, building on the Hebrew alphabet's correspondences. Agiel, reads from right to left: the head corresponds to the first letter, aleph, associated with Air, which gives wings and golden colour; gimel, linked to the Moon gives a lunar diadem, blues and a beautiful woman's face; yod, linked to Virgo gives the 'body of a maiden clothed in grass green robe'; aleph, Air again, gives golden wings again 'partly covering the lower part of the figure'; and lamed, Libra, gives balance to the form and the sword and scales of Justice.[4]

In this explanation we almost find an analogy to how Yeats thought of writing, namely that it is circular and aiming for symmetry. But, as with all circles, they have a center. For Yeats the center is the point, the non-place where his occultism took place. Moreover, this concern with circularity and symmetry can be seen against the background of the clash between the natural and industrial world. The rise of occultism coincided with the rise of industrial materialism. What we can observe in occultism and the way it runs counter to the industrial materialism is a preference for the circle over the square, the network over the grid, and dissemination over hierarchy. And yet, here it is interesting to consider how most occultists with the Golden Dawn order, Yeats included, would derive wisdom from visions, open, flat spaces, non-places, and shifting borders of the mind, while exercising authority through a very rigid hierarchical system. Critics now claim that what brought the order to its demise was an obsessive insistence on how to advance the quickest way to the top (Bodgan, 2012).

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4   See again the online exhibit at http://www.nli.ie/yeats/main.html

A look at the tree of life imported by Mathers into the order's system of correspondences from kabalistic mysticism shows that, indeed, climbing the ladder is the meaning of life. But Yeats suspected that there must be more to it than climbing, and he tried to integrate the kabalistic thought with alchemy in a more obvious fashion. In other words, he tried to insist on making authority a distinctive element in the law of the vision. His story, *Rosa Alchemica* (1897) features his alter-ego, the alchemist Michel Robartes, who comes to Dublin to visit his old friend, the narrator of the story, in order to conduct some experiments. The narrator is persuaded to join the Order of the Alchemical Rose. At the time of the initiation the narrator describes the setting for the magical work:

> I stopped before a door, on whose bronze panels were wrought great waves in whose shadow were faint suggestions of terrible faces. Those beyond it seemed to have heard our steps, for a voice cried, "Is the work of the Incorruptible Fire at an end?" and immediately Michael Robartes answered, "The perfect gold has come from the athanor." The door swung open, and we were in a great circular room, and among men and women who were dancing slowly in crimson robes. Upon the ceiling was an immense rose wrought in mosaic; and about the walls, also in mosaic, was a battle of gods and angels, the gods glimmering like rubies and sapphires. (Yeats 1897, 287)

Here it is my contention that what made Yeats create a link between kabbalah and alchemy – that differs somewhat from the way in which these teachings were done according to the strict rules of the order – is the use of the idea of learning how to read. Whereas the other Golden Dawn members were interested in seeing, Yeats was interested in reading, especially in how to read himself in context.

I'll end here with a reference to a well-known poem, "The Statesman's Holiday" (*Collected Poems* 1964, 321). This poem contains image-elements from what appears to be a variety of Fool Tarot

cards, such as the Visconti and the IJJ Swiss. The monkey reference is also reminiscent of the animal morality paintings by Antwerp artist Jan van Kessel, who often includes a monkey dressed in motley in his pictures. This poem evokes the definition of magick that the Abbey of Thelema, Aleister Clowley's infamous (non)place in Sicily, featured on its walls: "Magick is a science in which we never know what we're talking about, nor if what we're saying is true." But such lines on any walls are bound to make them invisible to the eye, but not invisible to the naked eye, the eye trained to see itself at work, perhaps in that mythical place of Avalon, the non-place of reading vision.

I LIVED among
great houses,
Riches drove out rank,
Base drove out the better blood,
And mind and body shrank.
No Oscar ruled the table,
But I'd a troop of friends
That knowing better talk had gone
Talked of odds and ends.
Some knew what ailed the world
But never said a thing,
So I have picked a better trade
And night and morning sing:
Tall dames go walking in grass-green Avalon.

Am I a great Lord Chancellor
That slept upon the Sack?
Commanding officer that tore
The khaki from his back?
Or am I de Valera,
Or the King of Greece,
Or the man that made the motors?
Ach, call me what you please!

Here's a Montenegrin lute,
And its old sole string
Makes me sweet music
And I delight to sing:
Tall dames go walking in grass-green Avalon.

With boys and girls about him.
With any sort of clothes,
With a hat out of fashion,
With Old patched shoes,
With a ragged bandit cloak,
With an eye like a hawk,
With a stiff straight back,
With a strutting turkey walk.
With a bag full of pennies,
With a monkey on a chain,
With a great cock's feather,
With an old foul tune.
Tall dames go walking in grass-green Avalon.

I see this poem exemplifying the idea of a non-place, yet not as the 'non-place' being conceptually in opposition to 'place', but rather more so as being a manifestation of 'not-knowing'. About this poem Yeats said the following: "In my savage youth I was accustomed to say that no man should be permitted to open his mouth in Parliament until he had sung or written his *Utopia,* for lacking that we could not know where he was taking us…" (Jefarres 1968, 504). If there is a specific function of the non-place for a writer of Yeats's caliber, then it is found in the esoteric notion of the transcendent, in the strutting of one's feathers, and in the conscious alienation from culture, where one can embody a supermodernity that both predicates the self and also predicts its destiny. The occult mediates the functionality of such a passing through and of the transit place itself. As the occultist sits on the hedge, between the worlds, and say-

ing hello to his visions and his ghosts, he establishes a more direct and authentic rapport to what he really is.

Diving into writers, artists, and poets' interests in occult matters allows us to see how the non-place can be inhabited and worked through. Mere definitions of it that attempt to concretize it will not give us sufficient information on whether it even exists, but singing, on the other hand, seems to give us an idea. A non-place is equal to vision. It's an image. Perhaps indeed an image of a woman, tall, a(non) in Avalon.

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We spend more and more of our everyday lives in what Marc Augé calls non-places – homogenous, but bland places of transit. This anthology addresses the representations of non-places in literature, culture and media, and critiques and re-actualizes Augé's work twenty years after its initial formulation.

The anthology contains 17 articles engaged directly in the application, retrofitting and broadening of the concept of the non-place to a range of literary and media texts, as well as the merging of this concept to other theoretical concepts by e.g. Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Alain Badiou and Zygmunt Bauman.

Authors, film-makers and topics discussed include Franz Kafka, Jacques Tati, Anders Bodelsen, Lars von Trier, Douglas Coupland, Rodrigo Plá, Ida Hattemer-Higgins, Steven Spielberg, Moritz von Uslar, Nicolas Winding Refn, concentration camp witness literature, film locations in Northern Jutland, and many others.

This anthology is the seventh publication in the IRGiC series and it springs from a research seminar held at Aalborg University in May 2013: "Non-Place in Literature, Media and Culture".