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Presense, Place, Performance

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Enactment and Enchantment in Experience Economies:
Presence, Place, Performance

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Introduction

In many places, the experience economy of tourist performance present-in-place is seen as an attractive way to pursue. But the theoretical understanding of what it takes to perform tourist sites is still only emerging. This paper is in search of deeper and more critical understandings of first what it takes to make experiences, and second what are the triggering features of fascinating and fantastic experiences. These questions are posed in the context of seeing experience economies as part of the development of contemporary capitalism.

There has been a recent row of innovative and interesting PhD studies taking Actor-Network Theory (ANT) approaches into tourism, festival and museum research to understand what it takes to make experiences. Gunnar Thór Jóhannesson (2005, 2007, and 2008 with Bærenholdt), Carina Ren (2009) and Kristine Munkgård Pedersen (2010) has shown how networking and translations among many very different kinds of human and non-human actors make tourism take place. And Connie Svabo (2008, 2010) has focused on how portable objects - exercise pamphlets, mobile phone cameras and animal costumes - are deeply intertwined in museum visits, producing multiple exhibition realities. ANT approaches thus enable us to analyse the complexity of engagements involved in *enacting experiences*.

From this understanding, it is obvious that the making of experiences can be understood as relational entanglements crosscutting the material, the social and the cultural. Research from tourist attractions on Lolland (Bærenholdt and Jensen, 2009) and from the Roskilde Festival (Pedersen, 2010) also point out that it is crucial that workers with the task of making experiences for others also take part in the pleasures and excitements of experiences themselves. Workers in tourist attractions and cultural events need to be engaged themselves in experiencing, and it is a central reward for those performing experiences to gain recognition from guests.

The research referred to here deals with experiences taking place in places, where experiences thus also depend on how present tourists themselves take part in performing places (see also for example Edensor, 2001; Bærenholdt et al., 2004; Haldrup and Larsen, 2010). Thus this paper only seeks to understand one of two main versions of the so-called experience economy (Pine and Gillmore, 1999, 2007): The one principal version based on the meeting-up of people, present-in-place, in experiencing, as compared to more 'industrial' form of manufacturing mobile experience products (Sundbo and Bærenholdt, 2007). As indicated with

the sub-title 'Presence, Place, Performance' the paper deals with tourism, museums, festivals and other forms of experiences based on people coming to the place of experience. From discussions later in the paper, it seems that experiences performed present in place are those considered the more 'authentic' in the literature. There may even be the irony that contemporary, mobile, capitalism depends much on the enchantment of performing places.

Classic inspiration to understand experiences in capitalism in dynamic and ironic ways comes from Walter Benjamin, not the least the unfinished fragments called *The Arcades Project (Das Passagen-Werk* in German, Benjamin, 2007), which Benjamin left behind before his tragic death in 1940. This work deals with experiences in 19th century development of shopping arcades in Paris but has a much broader relevance. It is congruent to Benjamin's ideas, to approach fascinating and fantastic experiences, taking place in socio-material relations, as enchantment. Enchantment could be further discussed and used in relation to experience economies under capitalism, which is for example the case in George Ritzer (2005). Also the complex concept of experience itself, between (German) *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis*, may be thoroughly investigated with Kevin Hetherington (2007). Given the research basis already referred to above, psychological understandings at the level of personality or individual persons are not the primary concern. It is more an interest in understanding experiences as a phenomenon situated in the development of capitalism, from a social and cultural theory perspective. Both Ritzer and Hetherington, and their key reference Walter Benjamin are looking for the same perspective, and they will be discussed in more detail in a later section. Meanwhile other inspirations in the same direction come from recent studies in geography, ethnology, cultural studies and tourism research, producing the initial framing of the investigation (Thrift, 2005; Löfgren and Willim, 2006; Knudsen and Waade, 2010).

In short this paper is a conceptual discussion situated in contemporary discussions around the *experience economy*, acknowledges the initial contribution from ANT in understanding how experiences are *enacted*, travels into social and cultural theory to understand experiences themselves better as kinds of *enchantment*, to finally suggest and discuss how this fits together with post-ANT approaches to absence-presence and multiple realities.

Framing: Fantasy, Magic, Authenticity, Knowing Capitalism

Experience is associated with various qualities: Authentic, magic, fantastic, pleasurable and enchanting are among those. The great creator of fantastic worlds J.R.R. Tolkien in his essay *On fairy-stories* (1997) stressed how realism already has all the necessary ingredients of fantasy. He was thus in search of words for how people are really, bodily, inside the 'Secondary World' of fantasies, and thought of this a kind of 'elvish craft', for which he thought magic is the wrong word, which should be reserved for magicians (Tolkien, 1997: 142). In stead of magic, he proposed 'enchantment' for 'this elvish craft', to which also fantasy aspires. He explained 'Enchantment produces a Secondary World into which both designer and spectator can enter, to the satisfaction of their senses while they are inside; but in its purity it is artistic in desire and purpose. Magic produces, or pretends to produce, an alteration of the Primary World' (Tolkien, 1997: 143). Enchantment thus takes place since both the designer and the spectator take part; this is not the case for magic. For Tolkien the secondary world is crucial to fantasy, but this is so exactly because of its realism (see also Bærenholdt and Haldrup, 2004: 86 on *fantastic realism*). He thus suggested fantasy as fundamental and natural to human practice and it is worth stressing that he saw fantasy and reason as much familiar to each other. 'For creative Fantasy is founded upon the hard

recognition that things are so in the world as it appear under the sun…(…)… If men really could not distinguish between frogs and men, fairy-stories about frog-kings would not have arisen' (Tolkien, 1997: 144). The fantastic experience - the enchanted secondary world - of frog-kings thus depends on the reason in recognizing difference between frogs and men in the first world.

Magic and pretence versus enchantment and fantasy is a core double in discussing the role of experiences in capitalism. For sure, Tolkien in his discussions of fairy-stories did not directly address 'experience economy' issues, but the dichotomies he played with can inspire contemporary debates on for example authenticity and (in later section) readdress classical discussions on fetish and Phantasmagoria in Marx. Britta Tim Knudsen and Anne Marit Waade (2010) thus suggest understanding authenticity as something done. In reflection of Pine and Gillmore's book on *Authenticity* (2007), and inspired from Wang's (1999) classical article, Knudsen and Waade see authenticity as performative, associated with social construction processes of authentication. Performative authenticity - or connective authenticity (Bærenholdt et al. 2008) - is thus not about truth. Pine and Gillmore explain that authenticity is bound to the real and to real-fake tensions; and not to what is true, as opposed to false (Pine and Gillmore 2007). It is the same reference to reality that we saw in relation to Tolkien's frog-kings.

O'Dell offers a different perspective on truth, since he sees experiences as the 'last control station' of authenticity; a kind of authenticity which is about being *true* [my italics] to one self (O'Dell, 2002a: 19), and he explains how literature on experiences has to transcend binaries such as that of the ordinary versus the extraordinary, everyday versus tourism, the private versus the public (O'Dell, 2002b: 156-7), and let me more generally add enlightenment versus romanticism. Authenticity and secondary worlds are thus not of a transcending world, but are practices in the now and here. Along the same lines, the magic of experiences and the 'new economy' of the 1990s have been discussed by Löfgren and Willim (2006), understanding magic more double than in Tolkien. They suggest that magic was both the illusions and mass suggestion of capitalism's 'new economy' on one side and the 'true magic' making things really happen in the believable, not only pretended, on the other side (Löfgren and Willim, 2006: 5). O'Dell (2006) elaborates this double notion of magic from Marcel Mauss, between the will to believe and actual belief, where the (*true*) magician is more than the illusionist. 'Magic, by contrast, is subsumed in a cultural context in which people want to believe and end up doing so' (O'Dell, 2006: 21). The tension between the two sides, pretence and enchantment, is kept in O'Dell's study of spas, and not the least in relation to the ideologies and more or less hidden class aspects in advertising efforts. As he concludes, we need to understand the process linking what the right and left hand of the magician do. Both the art of enchantment and the false magic or illusions (of capitalism), I would say to rephrase Tolkien.

This is exactly the kind of discussions Nigel Thrift engage in his *Knowing Capitalism* (2005) and also express in his reflections on the opposing forces of capitalism, in his afterword to Löfgren and Willim's book on magic (Thrift, 2006). The magic of capitalism is exactly its ability to integrate and transfer into its domain also oppositional forces. Hopes, fantasies and true enchantment are resources mobilised also in the pretence of capitalism's 'new economy'. Experiences thus truly and genuinely took part in the transformation of the new economy of the last decade of the 20th century into the experience economy of the first decade of the 21st century, but this still does not make true fantastic experiences identical with the magic illusions also a part of capitalism.

Thrift's (2005) double bound analysis of knowing capitalism, the new economy and innovation as forms of practice, governmentality and performativity is significant in its ability to understand capitalism 'from within'. Contra many contemporary approaches focusing on discourse, symbols, signification or representations as the keys to understand how practices are configured and transformed, Thrift's 'non-representational theory' approach focus on the spaces, in which practices are embedded (Thrift, 2005: 134). This way, his approach helps to understand, what could be called the material cultures of capitalism. Interestingly, it also addresses how creativity emerges via sensitivity to anomaly (ibid: 145). But it does so to a wide extent with a kind of managerial optic on how to 'cultivate' and make use of sensitivities etc. Thrift's world is thus not exactly the same as Tolkien's. Thrift's world is *Knowing Capitalism* (2005) and thus in line with Löfgren and Willim's book on the new economy also mobilising the metaphor of alchemy 'to stress the importance of processes of mixing and combining skills, tools and actors' (2006: 7, see also Löfgren, 2005). Tolkien's worlds seem to be of another kind than the capitalist economy, engaged as he was with the medieval and with languages, very far from a social science perspective. But both ways of thinking contribute significantly - and compliment each other - in getting at deeper and more critical reflections on the experience economy. And as we will return to later on, both seems to suggest to understanding realities as multiple.

There is already much trans-disciplinary effort to integrate humanities and social science perspectives in the research and the empirical investigations referred to above. However a major challenge remains to pass problematic sides of concepts such as authenticity and magic to cultivate theoretical perspectives more firmly addressing both the human and non-human sides of experiences, from 'inside' and in its societal context. To try to contribute to this, the following sections take off from more detailed discussions of some main theoretical contributions in order to suggest a path maybe leading to new perspectives on experiences and the experience economy. Two doubles from discussions above are carried on, still building on the inspiration from Tolkien: First of all, the one between enchantment and pretence. Second, the other more fundamental, and it seems less antagonistic, double is between fantasy and realism.

Enchantment and Experience in Capitalism

Conceptualising enchantment and experience in social theory leads to some of the great classics of Max Weber and Karl Marx. Together with a resurging interest in Walter Benjamin, this section address two recent and substantial discussions in this field, namely George Ritzer's *Enchanting a Disenchanting World* (second edition, 2005) and Kevin Hetherington's *Capitalism's Eye* (2007). Across apparent differences in styles etc., these two share an explicit basic argument for more attention to consumption. It is also interesting that much of their work goes on around some kind of places, but this is more implicit and without use of the concept of place.

Ritzer's main interest is into what he calls 'means of consumption' (2005: 50). His inspiration comes from Marx' attention to the mediating role of 'means of production' between worker and product, and Ritzer argues that Marx did not succeed in understanding the mediation between the consumer and what is consumed in the same way. Here 'means of consumption' are the tools and environments that facilitate consumption which he also calls 'cathedrals of consumption'. His work thus concentrates on shopping malls, mega-malls, superstores,

McDonalds, Disney World and other theme parks, cruise ships, casinos and so on, with Las Vegas as an example he comes back to again and again.

Reenchantment and disenchantment 'are not easily distinguished from one another; one does not necessarily preclude the other' (Ritzer, 2005: 66). These concepts of course refer to Max Weber's interests in disenchantment through capitalism and rationalization – but also in the protestant ethic as a form of enchantment in the making of capitalism. Reenchantment describes in one word a number of trends, described as part of the postmodern society, oriented to spectacle, imitation and simulation. In this rather easy read book, among many other references Ritzer also discuss social geography approaches to landscapes of consumption. The book ends up also with more critical considerations on how consumers using the 'cathedrals of consumption are more likely to interact with the cathedrals themselves and with the goods and services offered by them' instead of interaction with other people (Ritzer, 2005: 185). He sees such kinds of non-human interaction leading to a situation, where 'consumption pervades our consciousness' (ibid.: 188). Finally, Ritzer also address the distinction between present consumption in place and distanciated consumption of mobile goods, where his idea is that the newest means of consumption are more dematerialized; 'they can come to us rather than requiring that we go to them' (2005: 208). However the distinction is not more thoroughly discussed, and like the rest of the book, this may be so because the target group is broad and the style rather easy-going, leaving little space for deeper and critical engagements with theoretical inspirations (for example to the two doubles enchantment-pretence and fantasy-realism, that emerged from the earlier section).

Here, Kevin Hetherington's book (2007) is a more sophisticated engagement with understanding how consuming subjects 'take possession' of commodities. Across his three chapters discussing Debord, Marx and the main inspiration from Benjamin in detail, followed by three 'case' chapters on the strolling fláneuse, on the home and on the museum, there is a red tread discussing the two meanings of the English word 'experience': *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis*. He explains this kind of dialectics, where *Erfahrung* is about contemplation of the producing subject, only gazing the world. Benjamin's contribution is then to shift attention to *Erlebnis* for the modernist forms of reception, glancing rather than gazing the world – a certain form of 'distraction'. The crucial point is that Hetherington with Benjamin suggests that distraction and fragmentation is not reactionary – but even necessary for revolutionary action (Hetherington, 2007: 26, 84, 97-100). It is exactly on this point that Benjamin - together with Brecht and Bloch, by the way - is an inspiration breaking with and challenging traditional Marxist and critical theory thinking, but also much 'political correct' common sense. It is an inspiration that the present author shares with Kevin Hetherington, including his critique of the more totalising and deterministic approaches in the Marxist tradition. Therefore, I will now further unfold a number of central themes in Hetherington's critical discussions, also including Ritzer's contribution where relevant, on the Spectacle, fetish and Phantasmagoria.

Hetherington's critique is not only on authors themselves, but through more thorough reading much more a critique of the most common, superficial readings of, for example, Debord. In the case of Debord's Situationist project most 'users' have forgotten to account for the revolutionary political project, his concept of the Spectacle was part of. In this context, Debord's work, like Adorno and Horkheimer, is a critique of cultural industry, whereas his central engagement among the Situationists and in the student revolt was a desire for action, struggle and in fact kinesthetics against the ways commodities isolate, immobilise and make people passive. Hetherington finds the wide spread use of Debord problematic, since his

analysis is 'an example of the worst form of mass cultural analysis that threats distracted audiences as cultural dopes' why 'Situationist politics is a fetishistic politics that cannot escape form the logic of its own critique' (Hetheringston, 2007: 46-47). Ritzer also critically address the ways in which Debord sees how people are alienated from spectacles, '…the spectacles are put on *for* them; people are not an integral part *of* them' (2005: 95).

Hetherington suggests that the problematic sides in Debord are traces from Karl Marx' work on the fetish and Phantasmagoria. Both are concepts associated with illusion and pretence, discussed earlier. In Marx's *Capital*, the illusion of the commodity lies in seeing objects with no recognition of working processes having produced them. The commodity thus cheats the consumer, since relations are hidden. The 19th century type of magic lantern show, Phantasmagoria, where people only saw the shadows of things gets to be Marx' metaphor for basically the same critique. While he basically recognises the effects of objects, his problem is that he can no longer trust object effects. Since Marx only sees true subjects as those of producers, he had a romantic approach to the worker. He had no understanding of the experiencing consumer. Hetherington puts it like this: '…he does not allow that the viewing subjects he construct with this theory of fetishism might also recognise that too, that they are, in fact, *interpellated to do so by this viewing arrangement*' (2007: 69, *original italics*). Marx' analysis of fetishism is thus frozen in a single moment; it does not allow for action in reflection (ibid.: 70).

Ritzer does not discuss Phantasmagoria in Marx. But Ritzer shares Hetherington's more double bound understanding of Phantasmagoria, referring to Benjamin's *Passagenwerk*, where there is an intricate tension between the fantastic dream side and the darker nightmares of Phantasmagoria (Ritzer, 2005: 64). Ritzer also refers to Anthony Giddens's idea that time-space distanciation has made place 'phantasmagoric' (Ritzer, 2005: 127), but he does not develop meanings of place or the ironic tensions of distant-proximate.

Since Hetherington and Ritzer focus on consumption, contra Marx' orientation to production, their interest is more in what is real than in what is true (to paraphrase Pine and Gillmore, 2007). Hetherington follows the lines from Marx to Benjamin via Lúkacs and Adorno; where Lúkacs (1971) develops the idea of fetich into his totalizing theory of reification, where thing-like images obscure social reality, then Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) succeeds in actually addressing consumption, but with the well-known cultural pessimistic penchants. Compared to these approaches, Benjamin was more a modernist, also in the humanist sense, using montage techniques to open for otherwise hidden traces. Benjamin's approach to Fetishism is thus more mythic, also looking for wish-images and new potentials, buried in the already existing. In his *Expóse 1939* in the *Passagenwerk* Benjamin explains his interest not only in theories and ideologies of new ways of life of the 19th century, but how these changes produced new Phantasmagoria that can be sensed in presence (Benjamin, 2007: 24). His interests are thereby also in illuminating the desire of people in modernity; not from a psychological point of view but as part of historical transformations of society and culture. Central to people's new 'experiences' is the ways they are distracted through consumption. Distracted is here associated with modernist *Erlebnis* through consumption, from which people cannot escape. Any possible progress has to take place *through* the realities of *Erlebnis*; not beyond or outside of it (Hetherington, 2007: 100). To Benjamin thus, experiences in the modern, capitalist, economy are not about truth but about the real.

Hetherington (2007: 106-29) traces the genealogy of the modern consuming subject; though inspired from Benjamin he add new perspectives. He use the metaphor of the 'flâneuse',

strolling and browsing the city, beyond the gazing flaneur, glancing over goods at display in a kind of un-decidable, paradoxical, space. Consumers act in a constant combination of proximity and distance to goods, but this is not an illusion; thing are really accessible and it is possible for the consumer to take possession of goods. Throughout his book, Hetherington often seems inspired from ANT's (especially John Law's) idea of absence-presence. This goes not only for the flâneuse, but also for kitsch objects such as souvenirs of other places at home and the 'presence of what is not' in the museum (Hetherington, 2007: 174).

While this hint to ANT inspiration leads to the next section below, this section has addressed the concepts of enchantment and experience in the development of capitalism. A central reference has been Benjamin's Arcades work. As observed by Mike Savage (2000: 47), Benjamin's particular take on the city, as compared to his take on mass production of mechanical reproduction objects (Benjamin, 1998), points to cities' distinct characteristics, where Paris, Moscow and Berlin can never be the same. Thus in paradoxical ways, cities are full of aura – while they are also experienced in a state of distraction. They are full of potential for memory and redemption, but this is not because of any traditional, essentialist, aura, but rather because of the distraction people perform in experiencing build environments. It is precisely because the combination of the aura of the particular and the distracted experience, or of (re)enchantment and disenchantment (in Ritzer), that makes the potentials of the urban experience. Or to address the concluding doubles of the section above; the productive dialectics of fantasy-realism (or *fantastic realism*). Though not a central concept in Benjamin and Hetherington's work with him, enchantment - contra pretence - is exactly about these doubles. The second hint then (for a later synthetic section) is that almost all examples of 'means of consumption' or 'cathedrals of consumption' in Ritzer, 'taking possession' of environments and objects in Hetherington and *Erlebnis*, Phantasmogoria and the city from Benjamin are in fact about places. These sites and means of experiences are exactly *not* of an abstract space; they are particular places, where people can be present and take part in performing experiences.

Enactment in Performing Realities

A recent row of interesting PhD works on tourism, festivals and museums with ANT approaches was mentioned in the introduction. Mostly the inspiration from ANT has been on the 'producer' side of experience economies, responding to questions on how experiences are actually enacted among professionals and volunteers at tourist sites (Jóhannesson, 2007; Ren, 2009; Pedersen, 2010). ANT approaches have helped better understand the complex spatial orderings of tourism, and here especially inspiration from Mol and Law's (1994, 2002; Mol, 1999; Law and Mol 2001) thinking on topologies has been crucial (Jóhannesson and Bærenholdt 2009, and see Bingham and Thrift, 2000 on Latour). Their way of thinking on ontological politics, and the metaphors of region, network, fluid and fire have inspired works on the enactment of Viking tourism in Iceland (Jóhannesson, 2005, 2007, Jóhannesson and Bærenholdt, 2008), where especially the notions of fluidity and fire were helpful in understanding the enactment of tourist place. In the tourist project of re-enacting *Gísli's Saga* around the village of Thingeyri in Iceland, Jóhannesson traced intricate absence-presences, associated with the metaphor of fire in respect to the participation of *Gísli*, though dead for more than one thousand years.

Also ANT has inspired studies of the materiality involved in performing tourism (Bærenholdt et al. 2008, Haldrup and Larsen 2010), but the contribution from ANT to deeper

understandings of experience and enchantment is sparse. Here, Svabo's investigation (2010) on how portable objects (or media) are used in visiting a natural history museum, contributes to open this agenda, though experience as such is not the central concept in her work, since focusing on mediation itself. She found that the various portable objects enacted multiple realities in visiting the museum. Furthermore, there are intersections or interferences between the various realities; or we could say between various experiences. 'The museum visit consists of chains of shifting, patterns of interference, fluid turbulences and flickers between presence and absence' (Svabo, 2010: 272). Here ANTs contribution, and most significantly in its 'second generation' or 'post'' version as formulated by Mol and Law, is its consequent focus on the making of the world, as a kind of ontological politics. Realities are thus basically *enacted* (Mol, 1999) and further more in complex ways realities are *multiple* (Mol and Law, 2002). The multiplicity of realities, and therefore also of experiences, comes from the multiplicity of practices, enacting the world. Since experiences are thus made in practice, enactment explains their *performative* character. For Law, enactment and performance are more or less comparable categories, only enactment more precisely explains the contingency of actions, also involving non-humans. This understand thus works well together with Latour's notion of the actant as a source of action; something that acts or to which action is ascribed (as explained in a clear cut manner in Fuglsang, 2004: 426-7). To use the word enactment is thus to stress how productive practices on one hand are more action-like and active than just emergence – but on the other hand less goal-oriented than (re)invention (Jóhannesson and Bærenholdt, 2008).

This post-ANT ontology of multiple realities enacted emerged out of various studies, for example on the making of spaces and objects (Law 2002). The multiplicity in experiencing a museum (Svabo, 2010) is thus not about false or true worlds, but of multiple realities coexisting, which people therefore can take *possession of*, to use Hetherington's (2007) central notion. Furthermore, and maybe more importantly, the shifts and tensions crucial in experiences also involves relations between presences and absences. Law explained this in more basic terms on multiple spaces this way: 'in order to make an object in one space, it may be necessary to work in another' (2002: 97). Taking this idea into experience economies, this means that the enactment of experiences, not only depends on multiplicities per se, but also on the intersection between multiple layers combining presences and absences. In other words, phantasmagoric experiences also play on objects, spaces and realities made absent (for example made distant). This is a kind of play similar to Tolkien's frog-king, working through the multiplicity of worlds referred to, each of which can be considered reasonable, real and reliable. Following Benjamin (1998), this also means that the *Erlebnis* from art, also under capitalism, creates new worlds, new demands and desires, which cannot be satisfied in the present society. New realities of a virtual kind emerge.

Multiple realities connected; isn't it exactly what authenticity but also fantasy is about? Thus, the authentic is not about just one world, but about connections between multiple times and spaces, producing 'connective authenticity' (Bærenholdt et al., 2008). In other words, 'real' in Pine and Gillmore's (2007) sense describes a relation between realities, which are firmly connected to be trustworthy and promising. Trust is relational, connecting worlds. For example authenticity can mean to trust the reality of an absent, past and far away, world, connecting in time and space. And as hinted to by Law, the reality of some present object may very well depend on the performance or enactment of another reality in time and space. In his famous essay on the mass production of mechanical reproduction objects, Benjamin (1998) defined the aura of art objects in relations of the distant and the proximate, aura standing for the distant, however proximate it may be (see also Markus, 2001, Bærenholdt and Haldrup,

2004), and it seems that this way of thinking is near to Law's thinking on absence-presence and multiple realities.

An important implication of this is that the enactment of multiple realities seems to depend on the engagement of multiple human and non-human actors, which is also observed in research on the experience economy's journey into Scandinavia (O'Dell, 2002a, Löfgren, 2005). Here enactments of experiences are observed to be much grounded in many kinds of mix, fusion and cloning of activities and not the least of types of actors, performing in new ensembles and assemblies. These are observations similar to post-ANT inspired PhD works into tourist and museum studies, stressing multiple enactments and dynamic absence-presences (Jóhannesson, 2007, Svabo, 2010). This is even more so, since when experience is understood in the sense of (phantasmagoric) *Erlebnis* - or *upplevelse* in Swedish or *oplevelse* in Danish. It is full of joy and pleasures, since it means 'enlivening' or 'uplifting' (see for example Löfgren, 2005: 20). Experiences enacted are thus full of life, rising higher expectations, fantastic and joyful.

To cast light of this, one only need to think of ones own memorable experiences. Not only tourist practices such as in museum sites, but also concerts, where multiple realities and absence-presences are enacted: They are namely enacted in an emergent mode, where there is of course the artist performing the piece, but also the absent presence of the composer - whose absence is exactly stressed by way of the interpretation, the mistakes and the special turns taking by the performer. His/her body, the hectic fingers of the pianist, his/her dress, the image of his/her face, also seen as a mirror in a window. But also the instrument involved, the piano, its ability, its intonation or lack of the same at a certain frequency. Then the audience, peculiar people like oneself, their sounds and bodily moves; not to mention the framing of the event in the form of announcements, signs, welcomes, programme, the room, the composition of chairs and tables, the environments, the open window and the bird singing - maybe in dialogue - with the performed Robert or Clara Schumann piece. Furthermore the heat in the air, the beer and food in ones stomach brought along, and people one met somehow in eye contact, but who for some reason could not remember you in this new, other, context. Absent-presences in multiple layers; spaces and times folded in unpredictable but nevertheless irreversible ways. Of course, such experiences may happen at home with the CD player, a nice arm chair, a book or a paper in process, but it is no coincidence I suggest that the best, most complex and revealing, examples of 'enlivening' experiences are 'life' events, performed in places of presence, making multiple absence-presences taking place.

What ANTish approaches most apparently teach is what is takes to *enact* experiences: not only the composer, the piece, the pianist, the piano – but also the room, the programme, audiences routed into the same place; places always performed both in time and space (Bærenholdt et al. 2004, chapter 3 on the case of Allinge port). Complex coexisting realities, folded into one another, dimensions of place connected. Together with the notion of performance, such ways of comprehending experiences, cross-cut distinctions between producer and consumer. Events are 'prosumed' (Toffler in Pine and Gillmore, 2007), meaning more precisely enacted, performed, present-in-place. Though the *enchantment* involved in this making is maybe not the most apparent in the writings by for example post-ANTish Law and Mol, there are good reasons to suggest (also done by Jóhannesson, 2007, Svabo, 2010 among others) that the fascination and fantasies involved in experiences in intricate ways are bound to the multiple, shifting and intersecting realities of absence-presences. Furthermore, this is not only about the enactment of enchanting experience *per se*, but also about their connections with making phantasmagoric experience economies of contemporary capitalism.

Synthesis: The Experience of Multiple Realities in Place

Much literature on experiences have been firmly nourished and inspired from cultural studies and social theories of consumption (such as in Ritzer and in Hetherington). Though not so explicit in their writings, much of their arguments tend to refer to 'cathedrals of consumption', shopping malls, museums etc. which are in fact places, experienced through people's performance in - and importantly thereby also *of* – places. Passing questions of authenticity, fantasy - and various ways of thinking about the magic and truth – in this paper Tolkien, not the least, helped stressing the role of multiple realities of first, second and even more worlds. Worlds that are connected in performed experiences, thereby enchanted and enacted. But also worlds, that are made into actually working economies of 'experience economy' (unfolded in the economics of Pine and Gillmore, 1999, 2007) and 'knowing capitalism' (Thrift, 2005), travelling, translated and enacted across various parts of the world (Löfgren, 2005). In this endeavour *Consuming Places* (Urry, 1995), or *Places as Products* (Ek and Hultman, 2007) and *Reinventing Places* (Nyseth and Viken, 2009), are absolutely central and more work is needed, to unfold these ideas.

Tolkien - and to some extend contra other ways of thinking about this – helped us to see the importance of presence rather than pretence. Then Benjamins' fragmentary works inspired much in understanding in practice what enchantment is about; not pretence and simple magic illusions and promises about the first world, but real fantasies through distractions, distances and absences, opening for people the possibility to take possession of objects, spaces and worlds, present, enlivening. As stressed by Benjamin (2007: 246) 'the true method to make things present to us, is to imagine them in our space, not us in their space…(…)…It is not us giving in to them (*hensætter*), they step into our lives' (my translation from the Danish). Thus they, things, experiences, become traces, proximate to us, however distant they might be to us (Benjamin in Markus 2001). Trace, contra the aura of the distant, however proximate it may pretend. 'Bringing things nearer' has become a passion of the masses, taking possession of them (Benjamin, 1998: 136).

Kevin Hetherington (2007) not only explains in depth the contribution from Benjamin, but he was also among the first to think through the implications of ANT thinking for our understanding of *place*. He explained that '…*place* is a contingent effect of the processes of placing, ordering and naming that emerge from the actions of heterogenous materials within a given network and the system of differences that are generated to give stability to such a mobile process' (Hetherington, 1997: 192). Furthermore 'places circulate through material placings, through the folding together of spaces and things and the relations of difference established by those folds' (Hetherington, 1997: 187).

While this first ANTish reading of place can be said to be in the Foucauldian mode, obsessed with ordering, the heterogenous character and the foldings of spaces and things involved pointed wider into the next generation, postANTish, understandings of multiple absence-presences. Like Hetherington (2007: 175-7) in fact also seems to suggest, I have tried to argue for the compatibility of such ways of understanding with - I think absolutely crucial - inspirations from Benjamin's fragments. Not sedentary thinking, but thinking through metaphors of experiences emerging in the folds - eruptions and ruptures - of sediments, traces and the fires of magna. Mobilising traces of the absent, the stories of the hidden. Unfolded; performed present in place.

A Brief Conclusion

This paper started with two questions: one on *how experiences are enacted* and another on the very nature of *enchanting experiences*. While discussed in sections addressing each of these themes, it emerged out of these discussions, and not the least in cross-cutting inspirations, starting from Tolkien, through Benjamin and then back to ANTish enactment, that these two questions is one and the same. Not only because consumption and production cannot be separated, since both spectator and designer have to take part in real Secondary Worlds, to follow Tolkien. But also due to the fact that it is exactly the multiplicities and mixes involved in enacting experiences that also explain the connections across worlds of absence and presence making experiences enchanting.

Of course there can be a more simple version of magic involved in making a 'primitive' form of 'clean' experience economy from capitalism, pretending something non-real in a first world; but following Benjamin, also consumption, experiences (*Erlebnis*) under capitalism produces new worlds of fantasy and reality, beyond that of capitalism itself, but in need also for capitalist economies to be enacted. In sum: Enactment and enchantment of experiences depend of each other, if not in fact the same phenomenon. The implications for experience economies is that 'real' experiences are always multiple, connecting multiple layers.
First, this means that capitalism's own logic can never provide the full content of experiences, more layers are needed and they need to be performed and enacted to enchant. Furthermore, this understanding helps both consumers and producers in enacting enchanting experiences, not only to the needs of capitalism but also to their own, emerging and new.

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