Travels in Lounge Space

Placing the Contemporary British Motorway Service Area

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SUMMARY

This thesis reads contemporary British motorway service areas as questions of place, and as instances of what I call 'lounge space', a space of transient consumption that conceals the power of the host. Motorways and service areas are sites where clear boundaries have been asserted, materially as well as theoretically, between local and national, traditional and modern, country and city, place and 'non-place'. Through close readings of service area forms, details and materials in context, this thesis shows how such absolute distinctions cannot be maintained. Rather than instances of 'non-place' – Marc Augé's term for spaces lacking social relations, history or identity – service areas show place as process: as never absolutely fixed and always dependent on interrelated material, socio-cultural and historical contexts. This is not to dissolve the differences between places, but to show how they are contested and the power relations involved. The thesis thus explores a notion of place informed by what Jacques Derrida calls 'iterability', a logic of irreducible contamination, of repetition with difference.

Chapter 1 considers two typical recent service areas, Hopwood Park and Donington Park. It shows how boundaries of place are dissimulated and yet tightly policed, how allusions to 'public' space also recall the 'private' space of the home, and how an illusion of unlimited hospitality conceals the power of the host. By comparison, 'independent' operator Westmorland, the focus of Chapter 2, appears to be an exception. On one level, the company's Tebay Services reclaim the roadside for the locality; on another, however, the sites, and the region they represent, become caught up in the cultures, forces and economies they claim to resist. Westmorland the company is conflated with Westmorland the place. As this 'natural' host offers an idyllic Lakeland refigured for the outsider's consumption, it contests how and by whom that place is to be consumed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS
(IN FOOTNOTES)

CPRE Council for the Protection of Rural England

DfT Department for Transport

HA Highways Agency

ICE Institute of Civil Engineers

MoT Ministry of Transport

MSA Motorway Service Area

RER Réseau Express Régional (a rapid transit network serving Paris and its suburbs)

SRN Strategic Road Network

SuDS Sustainable Drainage System

TRL Transport Research Laboratory

INTRODUCTION

This thesis reads contemporary British motorway service areas as questions of boundaries of place: in space, in time, institutionally, materially. It is not a history of the service area, architectural, cultural or otherwise, but a close reading of three sites in their diverse material, socio-cultural, political, historical and commercial contexts. This reading is informed by cultural theory, especially texts associated with post-structuralism, including those by Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Jean-François Lyotard.

I describe service areas as instances of what I call 'lounge space', spaces of contemporary consumption in which boundaries are dissimulated and the host concealed. In this sense, I see service areas as symptomatic, not only of contemporary travel spaces, but of wider trends in architecture and material culture, whereby unpalatable interrelations and arrangements of power are disguised by allusions to unlimited hospitality, freedom, choice and familiarity. Contrary to descriptions of transport and commercial spaces as 'non-place', 'simulacra' or 'junkspace', which emphasize their apparent superficiality, this thesis focuses on where significance, as material as it is cultural, lies within the apparently meaningless.

The thesis is original in three ways. It reads the siting, forms, materials and spaces of specific motorway service areas – buildings overlooked in architectural history, and, until recently in cultural history – in greater detail than previous studies, and with more attention to the complexities of their particular contexts. Second, this way of looking at, but also beyond, the surface signs and simulations that dominate contemporary accounts of commercial spaces advances a different approach to the interpretation of such buildings, one in which architecture continues to play a significant role. Unlike those studies, this thesis questions the notion that architecture has been lost or eclipsed. Third, drawing on Jacques Derrida's discussion of 'iterability', 'hospitality', *pharmakon* and 'differance', this thesis contributes to a rethinking of place as de-centred, interrelated and in motion, which has begun in other disciplines, but is yet to be given sufficient attention in architectural discourse.

The thesis focuses on two very different service area conditions. Chapter 1 explores Hopwood Park and Donington Park. Operated by the two biggest nationwide service area providers, they typify the dominant contemporary roadside culture. Within

the apparent neutrality of sites and buildings, I read processes of placing that, in their multiple allusions and in the power relations that they conceal, defy simple categorization as 'non-place'. In Chapter 2, I focus on two exceptional sites: Tebay East and West, operated by Westmorland, an 'independent', 'local' company. I trace how the promise of a much closer relation to 'local' place turns out to be inseparable from the culture of the roadside that the company claims to resist. I explore how the implications of this contesting of place reach well beyond the boundaries of service area sites.

To give context to these readings, this introduction explores how, in cultural histories of, and commentaries on, the roadside, service areas are bound up with questions of 'non-place'. I then trace how different notions of place and 'non-place' figure, first, in socio-cultural readings of historical change, and, second, in philosophical and architectural discourses on spaces of resistance. Finally, a review of the historical and discursive contexts of motoring and motorways introduces the case studies. In the process, I trace how service areas are implicated in attempts to police boundaries between place and non-place, tradition and modernity, architecture and building, country and city – and how this thesis sets out to move beyond such binary oppositions.

Placing the service area

> Non-places are the real measure of our time; one that could be quantified […] by totalling all the air, rail and motorway routes, the mobile cabins called 'means of transport' (aircraft, trains and road vehicles), the airports and railway stations, hotel chains, leisure parks, large retail outlets, and finally the complex skein of cable and wireless networks that mobilize extraterrestrial space for the purposes of […] communication […].
>
> The traveller's space may […] be the archetype of *non-place*[1]

Marc Augé's 1992 book *Non-places* casts individual mobility as loss of place, and the contemporary era as one of displacement. The increased speed, frequency and distance of travel – by bodies human and non-human, physical and virtual – is seen as

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[1] Marc Augé, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (*Non-lieux: Introduction à une anthropologie de la supermodernité* (Paris: Seuil, 1992)), trans. by John Howe (London; New York: Verso, 1995), pp. 79, 86.

inseparable from a specific condition of alienation, 'solitary contractuality', characteristic of what he terms 'supermodernity'.[2] The symptom that recurs through the text is a 'paradoxical' yearning for the local, which, if not entirely novel, is more marked now, Augé claims, than ever before:

> At the very same moment when it becomes possible to think […] the unity of terrestrial space, and the big multinational networks grow strong, the clamour of particularisms rises; clamour from those who want to stay at home in peace, clamour from those who want to find a mother country. As if the conservatism of the former and the messianism of the latter were condemned to speak the same language: that of the land and roots.[3]

Befitting the author's disciplinary background, the place lost is 'anthropological'; a place defined by inhabitation, marked by those who live there and embedded in their systems of meaning: a common ground of stable relations, history and identity, 'a culture localized in time and space'.[4] Significantly, the accelerated mobility that Augé describes not only disrupts such established places, it replaces them with spaces intended purely for movement: non-places. Transiently populated by anonymous strangers, they are said to 'contain no organic society'.[5] Unremarkable and resistant to being marked, they disrupt the very processes of identification that are, for the anthropologist, integral to any tracing of place.

The motorway service area is cited as one of Augé's non-places[6] – and British service sites would seem to be no exception. By government decree, they are spaces of travel for travellers only. Accessible solely by motor vehicle and secured within the road's curtilage, they lie within a discrete space of high-speed (inter)national transit, isolated from the intricate structures and practices of 'anthropological' place deemed incompatible with their concentrated flows.[7] Writing in 1984, long before Augé, Rob Powell used the same term to characterize the 'inbuilt restlessness, constant motion' that extends to roadside stops:

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[2] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 94, 109.
[3] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 34-5. See also, for example, pp. 73-4.
[4] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 34, 42-3, 52-4.
[5] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 77-8, 111-12.
[6] Augé, *Non-places*, p. 106.
[7] DfT, *DfT Circular 01/2008: Policy on Service Areas and Other Roadside Facilities on Motorways and All-Purpose Trunk Roads in England* (London: TSO, 2008), pp. 7-8, and *DfT Circular 02/2007: Planning and the Strategic Road Network* (London: TSO, 2007), p. 8. In practice, the measures to avoid such contamination are easily circumnavigated. See, for example, David Lawrence and Richard Wentworth, 'Nameless Places & Pointless Machines: A Devil's Dictionary', in Lawrence, *Food*, pp. 150-179 ('Escape', p. 179).

> Disorientation is endemic to service areas. They are non-places, spaced out mathematically along motorways, unrelated to existing towns and communities.[8]

Strategic counterparts to an uninterrupted high speed network, service areas regularize stopping and programme rest to ensure the smooth motion of the whole. Defined by what motor travel requires, restricts and consumes, they are there to refresh, repair and refuel, to keep people and vehicles safely on the move whatever the time of day.[9] Michael Bracewell notes this synergy:

> On […] the motorway, we enter a territory which is stripped of everything save function […] – the human element exists only as a variable in the formula. You are the inhabitant of a non-place, serviced every twelve miles or so by little homeopathic doses of the real world, called service stations. But even they seem to exist outside real time.[10]

Here stasis is in service of movement, momentary stillness an accessory of speed, relief conditional on swift return to the road.

Statistics bear this out: most visits are unplanned, unrelated and undesired, no more than convenient pitstops to alleviate the privations of long-distance journeys. Diverse travellers from Hells Angels to royalty, united only by common need and itineraries that happen to intersect, come together briefly, in most cases reluctantly, before returning to the privacy of their individualized automotive enclosures and

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[8] Rob Powell, 'The Gap in the Journey', *New Society*, 67.1104 (January 1984), pp. 81-2 (p. 82). Powell is perhaps drawing on Melvin Webber's more utopian notion of the 'nonplace urban realm', set out in 1964, which I discuss in the next subsection. See 'The Urban Realm and the Nonplace Urban Realm', in *Explorations into Urban Structure*, ed. by Melvin Webber and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 79-153.

[9] *DfT Circular 01/2008*, p. 3; HA, 'Spatial Planning Framework Review of Strategic Road Network Service Areas: National Report' (HA, 2010), p. 5. 'The Highway Code' emphasises the 'monotony' of motorway driving (clause 262) and stresses guidance to take 'a minimum break of at least 15 minutes after every two hours', in a 'safe place', strictly not the hard shoulder. The recommended rest is minimal: 'drink, for example, two cups of caffeinated coffee and […] take a short nap' (clause 91). See DfT, 'The Highway Code' (online version, 2010) <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/index.htm> [Accessed, 30 July 2011]. 'Tiredness can kill / Take a break' signs installed in the 1990s close to MSA slip roads similarly encourage regular breaks (and perhaps indicate the reluctance of motorists to stop). Admedia, a company with advertising rights at 130 MSAs, cites a 'big increase in visitors' due to the government's related 'THINK' campaign. See 'Motorway Service Areas', <http://www.admedia.co.uk/venue_motorway.html>; 'Fatigue: Don't Drive Tired', <http://think.direct.gov.uk/fatigue.html> [accessed 2 August 2011]. On historic context of service areas as instrument of driver control, see: Merriman, '"Mirror, Signal, Manoeuvre": Assembling and Governing the Motorway Driver in Late 1950s Britain', *Sociological Review*, 54, supplement S1, Sociological Review Monograph Series: Against Automobility, ed. by Steffen Böhm and others (2006), 75-92.

[10] Michael Bracewell, 'Road to Nowhere: Motorways, Service Areas and Boredom', *Frieze*, 54 (2000) <http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/road_to_nowhere/> [accessed 3 August 2011].

continuing to their differing destinations.[11] For Andrew Clifford, they are 'not so much classless as classful':

> You could be absolutely anyone, anywhere and at any time of the day and always fit in to the general fraught atmosphere. [...] wherever and whoever you are, you're in the middle of nowhere [...] The fact that someone chooses to stop off there says *absolutely nothing about them*.[12]

Footfall is high: an average of over fifteen thousand visitors per site per day, and up to forty thousand at the busiest locations. Parking is limited, long stops discouraged, the mean 'dwell time' just twenty-eight minutes: everyone has somewhere more important to go.[13] A 'non-place' between phases of movement, service areas are prohibited from becoming 'destinations in their own right', meaningful places for anyone not on the road.[14] As Alain de Botton observes, they seem 'not to belong to the city, nor to the

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[11] See S. M. Gray, M. Al-Katib and G. S. Buckle, *Turning Flows at Motorway Service Areas*, report by TRL for HA (Crowthorne, Berkshire: TRL, 2000), pp. 11-13. On royalty at MSAs, see, for example: 'Business Diary', ed. by Sophie Brodie, *Daily Telegraph*, 1 November 2005. To establish a parallel with *Non-places,* I here echo Augé's description of an 'average' traveller (pp. 48-9, 100-1). Like other critics, I find this approach to an 'anthropology of the near' (pp. 7-41) problematic in its failure to consider other users of the space, such as workers. See, for example Peter Merriman, 'Driving Places: Marc Augé, Non-places, and the Geographies of England's M1 Motorway', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 21 (2004), 145-67. I explore this point further below.

[12] Andrew Clifford, 'The Middle of Nowhere', *New Statesman and Society*, 3.82 (5 January 1990), p. 48; 'classful' carries political significance in its rejection of 'classless' as appropriated by Margaret Thatcher to emphasize individual over social difference. 'Class', she would later claim 'is a communist concept. It groups people as bundles and sets them against one another'. The choice of term contrasts with Powell's suggestion in the same journal, six years earlier, that 'in the democratic world of the services restaurant, where the classless society seems a virtual reality, coach drivers are just about the only aristocracy left' (p. 82). Whether with the implicit tension and inequality of 'classful', or the harmony of 'classless', the emphasis is on a gathering of all of society. See David Cannadine, *The Rise and Fall of Class in Britain* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 1-2, 175-92.

[13] Figures cited by Admedia: 'News: Admedia Motorway Service Area Advertising Effectively Targets Consumers during the Summer 2012 Olympics' (May 2011), <http://www.admedia.co.uk/news/2011-01-05.html> [accessed 2 August 2011]; and 'Billboards and Beyond: Destination media – Motorway services', *Campaign* (June 2006), <http://www.campaignlive.co.uk/news/563775/> [accessed 11 October 2011]. For the latter, David Lawrence, offers a similar figure of 25 minutes in *Food on the Move: The Extraordinary World of the Motorway Service Area* (London: Between Books with Donlon Books, 2010), p. 182, little changed from Powell's claim in 1984 that 'most visitors [...] stay less than half an hour' (p. 82). See also Clifford: 'Each stage in the restaurantee's meal has its allotted time span [...]. Tray and utensil selection and menu perusal are supposed to take a crisp 60 seconds. Menu decision, and salad and desert selection as long as 70 seconds, and entree and side order selection can creep up to 80 without throwing the system. That's so long as drink selection occupies only 70 seconds and travel and payment to cashier don't overstep 60 – all together, the amount of time a customer spends getting his or her meal is set at a sound, economically-viable five minutes and 40 seconds. The restaurant then moves into its plan B [...] intended to get you to finish what you've bought as swiftly as possible.'

[14] *DfT Circular 01/2008*: 'Government policy is to discourage service areas [...] from becoming destinations in their own right. A destination in its own right would be created if drivers were attracted onto the SRN solely to visit the service area' (p. 4). 'The Highways Agency will not [...] permit the development of activities at service area sites which are unconnected with the immediate needs of the travelling public' (p. 7). See also, pp. 12-13, 16-19.

country either, but rather to some third, traveller's realm'.[15] For Bracewell, they are 'a mono-environment of interchangeable branding'.[16] Dating back at least to Reyner Banham's 'Ubiquopolis', writers have tended to see service areas as part of another kind of space, one distinctly modern, tending to homogeneity – and not necessarily good.[17] In the interest of accelerated mobility, place is avoided and its recurrence apparently suppressed: the non-place of the service area seems to mirror that of the road.

Such an interpretation has been challenged empirically and theoretically. Concluding his 2010 architectural and socio-cultural history of the motorway service area, *Food on the Move*, David Lawrence argues their significance:

> Motorways and their facilities are meaningful cultural artefacts, a condensed approximation of our present superficial desires as well as our eternal needs, and they have become locations in folk memory. Each service area is a one-off, and each has all it needs to function as a self-contained entity: a tiny world with its own community. Motorway service areas are definitely places.[18]

The service area is here staged in language that recalls 'anthropological' place: as a 'one-off' 'self-contained' 'world', with its 'own community' and 'folk memory', it comes close to the 'place of identity, of relations and of history' defined by Augé;[19] with 'all it needs' to satisfy 'our eternal needs' each service area seems autonomous, autochthonous, natural. It is particularly in the last chapter, 'Nameless Places & Pointless Machines: A Devil's Dictionary' co-authored with artist Richard Wentworth, that the book, with oblique reference to Augé's argument, sets out to gather 'evidence of life and action below […] the polished surface', evidence of a distinction between place and its other not so easily drawn.[20] As the book departs from a relatively orthodox design history to consider the life of the service area, its approach remains distinct from Augé's 'anthropology of the near'. Where *Non-places* focuses on the 'average' traveller – and, in the view of critics such as Emer O'Beirne, overwrites the complexities of diverse people and spaces with the untested assumptions of one

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[15] Alain de Botton, *The Art of Travel* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 48.

[16] Michael Bracewell, 'Motorway Ahead', in Lawrence, *Food*, p. 7.

[17] Reyner Banham, 'The Road to Ubiquopolis', *New Statesman*, 59 (1960), pp. 784, 786: 'The motorway is the road to Ubiquopolis, the universal distributed city.' Ambivalent about this vision of the future, Banham's critique is concerned about the manner of its realization, the way in which motorways and service areas 'have been designed in such a cheap-skate manner' (p. 786).

[18] Lawrence, *Food*, p. 182.

[19] Augé, *Non-places*, p. 52.

[20] Lawrence and Wentworth, pp. 150-1.

educated, white Western male passenger/outsider, 'evoking conventional types […] rather than real informants' – 'A Devil's Dictionary' assembles the singular, quirky, marginal and overlooked into narratives of distinctive and memorable places.[21]

Despite refits and cleaning routines, 'a sense of place' is said to appear through 'abrasions of use and modifications by […] staff and customers' that trace well-trodden paths, common practices and familiar events. Not quite the 'routes, crossroads and centres' of Augé's place, they nevertheless mark a space given meaning through inhabitation.[22] The authors record the public and private 'ceremony' of services: a spatialized social order of 'rituals', 'conventions, […] codes and customs' observed, but also transgressed and overlaid by alternative practices.[23] The text's vignettes attest to varied ways, everyday and exceptional, personal and shared, in which service areas become memorable and meaningful. Discreet appropriation by criminals, prostitutes, 'platers' and hawkers, is juxtaposed with one-off romance, riot or celebrity encounter, real, or fantasized, or become local myth; 'evocative' subjects for writers, filmmakers and artists, the authors' emphasise the significant place of British service areas in national cultural memory.[24] For those who dwell longer, the roadside can become a place of lasting social relations. Amongst staff, the authors find familial ties, 'firm friends' and a 'vivid sense of social life'; off-peak, it can be 'like walking into the home of a fond but wayward family', while networks of 'regular drivers get to know the [games] machines' and conspire to win the jackpot.[25] For Lawrence and Wentworth, sites have specific identities, too: in names that 'combine super-modernity […] with antique culture', bypassed places, such as 'Farthing Corner (originally the meeting of three footpaths in a wood), or Watford Gap (a geographical feature), or

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[21] Augé develops the case for an 'anthropology of the near' and 'of contemporaneity' in terms of a 'privileged informant' practising 'ethno-self-analysis', 'the most subtle and knowledgeable of the inhabitants' in the first chapter of *Non-places*, pp. 7-41 (p. 39, p. 43), but also in, for example, 'Paris and the Ethnography of the Contemporary World', in *Parisian Fields*, ed. by Michael Sheringham (London: Reaktion, 1996), pp.175-81 (175-6) and *The War of Dreams: Exercises in Ethno-Fiction* (London: Pluto Press, 1999). Tom Conley terms this 'critical autobiography', see 'Afterword: Riding the Subway with Marc Augé', in Marc Augé, *In the Metro* (*Un Ethnologue dans le métro* (Paris: Hachette, 1986)) trans. by Tom Conley (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2002), pp. 73-113 (p. 74). For a critique of Augé's notion of ethnography as self-reflection and of inconsistencies between his theory and practice – especially a stressed subjectivity of method contradicted by generalized conclusions, and a tendency to cliché and stereotype rather than thorough empirical study – see Emer O'Beirne, 'Mapping the *Non-lieu* in Marc Augé's Writings', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 42.1 (2006), 38-50 (p. 47); and Merriman, 'Driving Places', pp. 149-53.

[22] Lawrence and Wentworth, p. 157; Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 56-7.

[23] Lawrence and Wentworth, pp. 170-1.

[24] Lawrence and Wentworth, pp. 170-9.

[25] Lawrence and Wentworth, pp. 151-2, 161.

Membury (a prehistoric fort)', are refigured within mental maps of the nation's roads.[26] Thus countering 'popular anecdote' that would render them 'empty vessels of […] misanthropic society', the service areas of *Food on the Move* become synecdoche for a society in which the local coexists with the global, and mobility and place do not necessarily conflict.[27]

Archetypal non-place, or proof there is no such thing, the service area is thus implicated in debates about mobility. As harbinger of an atomized society or evidence of organic social continuity, it is caught up in very different visions of the future. Despite their different projects and positions, however, there are significant similarities in the accounts of anthropologist and architectural historian. Lawrence, like Augé, seems to suggest that experiences of contemporary travel spaces – in this case, motorway service areas – are different from those of traditional places, a difference that coincides with a restructuring of relations to the past, to place and (perhaps) to other people – a loosening of bonds. Yet the two books offer alternative readings of the implications and this seems, I suggest, bound up with differing notions of the subject and of the role of context in its constitution: the degree to which each are open to change and capable of changing each other. Concentrating first on the service area and, in a subsequent sub-section, on wider discussions of mobility, I trace these differences and the limits of each position to propose a reading of the service area neither contained in the past nor foreclosed by the future.

Walking the roadside, staying at services

Like the travellers of Augé's non-place, those who appear in 'Nameless Places' are, for the most part, solitary. But here, solitude is not threatening, not a sign of radical changes in society or self – in fact the reverse: 'Motorway services' Lawrence advises, 'are […] places not just to drive through, but somewhere to stop and be revived, to think or to just watch awhile […]', where 'people […] have gazed into the interstices of travel and discovered deeper meanings, where most of us rush by.'[28] Distanced from social relations, less encumbered by identity and less burdened by history, Lawrence's traveller is liberated to think or act differently; non-place thus becomes a space of

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[26] Lawrence and Wentworth, p. 151
[27] Lawrence, *Food*, p. 182.
[28] Lawrence, *Food*, p. 182.

possibilities, of unexpected interactions, 'for stepping out and away into some other life altogether'.[29] Yet the encounter on offer here is not with radical alterity, something that might change the self; rather, it is a 'projection of escape', a fantasy of otherness, most likely following one of the historical or socio-cultural narratives that *Food on the Move* encyclopaedically plots. As the text develops, the 'unexpected' becomes increasingly predictable, mythologized, contained – first in history, then in cultural practice: the other turns into the same.[30]

The reading of the roadside advanced in Lawrence's text depends on being able to slow down in spaces of speed, to settle into place, to get to know its specific codes and so become a knowledgable insider for whom every journey ends in a familiar place. *Food on the Move* reconnects a car-focussed environment into a pedestrianized and humanized world, from which the high speed and machinic is, through many sections, conspicuously absent. The author's drive 'into the eternal now of the highway', as the introduction title heralds, might then be read as a mission to reclaim the places within it, a search for 'particularisms' of the kind Augé describes, albeit on a grand, infrastructural scale: 'In every stain', he suggests, 'there is a story.'[31] Product of over ten years research,[32] Lawrence's ambitious project would then be one to place non-place, to recapture its lost archive with the precision of a historian well-practised in critical distance and in deciphering order and chronology from temporal and spatial fragments.[33] More intriguing than disturbing, the service area of *Food on the Move* shows non-place to be a type of place not so different from others: less rigidly formed, but which in time may be re-formed around the observer-traveller at rest, or routine.

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[29] Lawrence and Wentworth, p. 151.

[30] Lawrence, *Food*, p. 9.

[31] Lawrence, *Food*, p. 9.

[32] See also *Always a Welcome: The Glove Compartment Guide to the Motorway Service Area* (London: Between Books, 1999); 'A Bit of Town Dumped down in the Country: Investigating the Circumstances of the Conception, Design and Operation of the British Motorway Service Area, 1948-2002' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Westminster, 2002); 'The Motorway Service Station', in *Studies in British Art 13: The Architecture of British Transport in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Julian Holder and Steven Parissien (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 219-44. Stirred, perhaps, by others' interest, Lawrence has become bolder in his claims. In *Always a Welcome*, service areas were only 'On the way to becoming a place', p. 103.

[33] Lawrence, *Food*, p. 9. As this loss is mourned, it is also key to the mystery and interest of the service area: it is the lack that the author desires to make whole: 'Through takeovers and mergers, most of the records have been discarded, so there is no real archive of this world, and what we will see in this book is mostly being presented for the first time.' Lawrence's account of the service area might be compared to Augé's reading of the Paris metro. *In the Metro*, unlike Augé's studies of more recent transport spaces, finds place resurgent in what is in some ways acknowledged to be a non-place.

Lawrence's text then suggests that service areas are much like other building types – albeit perhaps more interesting in their ambiguous cultural position.

Lawrence is not alone. In this arresting of mobility, this placing of non-place, *Food on the Move* and his 1999 forerunner, *Always a Welcome: The Glove Compartment History of the British Motorway Service Area*, are part of, and draw from, a strong undercurrent in recent British pop- and academic culture: artists, writers, journalists and documentarists have found significance in the seemingly utilitarian, mundane and unmemorable – especially the spaces and infrastructures of modern travel – and done so through an unorthodox mix of close observation, archival research, social anthropology, cultural reference, personal recollection – and even musical.[34] Within this trend, service areas feature most prominently in the peripheral perambulations of Iain Sinclair's *London Orbital* and Will Self's, *PsychoGeography*, and in the languorous voyages of de Botton's *The Art of Travel*.[35] Up close and slow moving, these texts trace how the human inhabits the seemingly inhuman, how history haunts the apparently timeless, and how the supposedly homogenous betrays its specificity. Of the M25, Sinclair declares: 'Driving around the road was useless […] The best way to come to terms with this beast was to walk it'; for Self, 'walking slows everything down, almost as if one's legs were braking the very revolution of the earth itself'.[36] These texts challenge traditional accounts of infrastructure, movement and

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[34] See, for example, Jon Nicholson, *A1: Portrait of a Road* (London: Harper Collins, 2000); Roy Phippen, *M25: Travelling Clockwise* (London: Pallas Athene Arts, 2004); Alain de Botton, *A Week at the Airport: A Heathrow Diary* (London: Profile Books, 2009); Joe Moran, *On Roads: A Hidden History* (London: Profile Books, 2009); John Harris and others, 'Britain's Motorways 50 Years on', *Guardian*, 22 January 2007, G2; Alex Horne, 'Service Stations: My Secret Love Affair', *Observer*, 2 May 2010, Observer Magazine, p. 50; *Secret Life of the Motorway*, Dir. Simon Winchcombe, Prod. Emma Hindley, BBC4, 2007, especially Episode 2, 'The Honeymoon Period'; *Watford Gap: The Musical*, Dir. Benjamin Till, Prod. Anna Bartlett, BBC Northampton, 2009; *Motorway Madness*, Prod. Colin Moxon and Rory Wheeler, Channel 5, 2010.

[35] Iain Sinclair, *London Orbital: A Walk around the M25* (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 141-5; 'Romantic Services', in Will Self and Ralph Steadman, *PsychoGeography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), pp. 249-52 (first publ. as 'Highway to Heaven', *Independent on Sunday*, 13 January 2007, p. 9); Botton, *Travel*, pp. 31-2, 48-9. In associating Self and Sinclair, I am nevertheless mindful of differences between their work, see n. 40.

[36] See 'Prejudices declared', in Sinclair, pp. 3-7 (pp. 6-7). Self continues: 'It is, quite frankly, the only possible response to a civilization crazed with its own sense of mobility; for, by walking to one's appointments, you introduce the relative timelessness of physical geography into the transitory deliberations of the human psyche.' Self, 'Motorway Madness', *Independent on Sunday*, 25 February 2006, see <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/columnists/will-self/will-self-psychogeography-526072.html> [accessed 31 October 2011]. Self's relation to contemporary travel spaces appears more ambiguous. In 'Mad About Motorways', Self confesses a 'motorway obsession': 'I became a connoisseur of motorway service stations'. 'Highly addictive', motorways are, in their high speed synchronization of separated individuals, 'a perfect figure of modern alienation', 'the enhancement of social control and an augmentation of the greatest monument our culture will leave to posterity'. This

place: they reclaim roadside spaces from the objective descriptions of transport historians and archivists, suspend travel narratives in seemingly dull transit spaces and deviate from the canonical centres of landscape, urban and design histories.[37] In various ways, these rewritings of the motorway and its environs resist the familiar tropes of pace, functionalism and ubiquity associated with contemporary mobility; yet there are the limits to their acts of re-appropriation, and these suggest differing positions in the debate surrounding *Non-places*.

Self and Sinclair tend to stick to the fringes of atypical sites where traces of the past are more evident and centralized control is at its weakest. Self contrasts independent Tebay (M6) with 'the bland featurelessness of most service centres'.[38] For Sinclair, the newly completed interior of South Mimms (M25) resists inhabitation: 'Clean, tactfully lit, unendurable. Everything is designed to get you out of there within minutes of finding a table. […] We get the message and take off.'[39] The virtues of the local and unusual are stressed, the ubiquitous and conventional swiftly passed over. Not so different from Augé's position, there is here a potent threat in contemporary interiors – non-places, perhaps – where not even the psychogeographer can restore 'the relation between psyche and place'.[40] The everyday life of South Mimms is, by contrast, the focus of Roger Green's *Destination Nowhere*: a sedentary travelogue

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placing of the motorway is less concerned with lost authenticity than those of service areas in his later texts. Nevertheless, as in the short story 'Scale', which mixes a motorway obsession with drug addiction, automobility is the measure of the modern age, unavoidably embedded in the structure of contemporary life – and sinisterly implicated in its ills. See 'Mad about Motorways' (1993), in *Junkmail* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), pp. 138-42; 'Scale', in *Grey Area and Other Short Stories* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), pp. 101-42. See also, 'Driving on the Divine Right', *New Statesman*, 140 (2011), p. 55: 'The divine right of drivers is responsible for the rise and fall of governments, the death of hundreds of thousands and the most comprehensive alterations to our physical environment since the woodland clearances of the Bronze Age. Truly, we revolve the roundabout of life according to its precepts.'

[37] See, for comparison, Colin Davies, 'Lessons at the Roadside', *Architectural Research Quarterly*, 8.1 (2004), 27-37; Francis Pryor, *The Making of the British Landscape: How We Have Transformed the Land, from Prehistory to Today* (London: Allen Lane, 2010); David Dimbleby, *How We Built Britain* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007); Reader's Digest, *The Most Amazing Places to Visit in Britain*, ed. by John Andrews (London: Reader's Digest, 2006).

[38] See 'Romantic Services'. Self goes on to describe Tibshelf (M1) as a 'dreadfully mundane' 'cold-comfort car-farm', musing 'We have been weighed in the balance and found wanting […] Does it have to end like this?'

[39] Sinclair, pp. 143-4. The account is primarily concerned with the small scale operations, such as 'THE HAIR BUS' and 'truckers' caff' that filled the gap at South Mimms when the facilities building burnt down in August 1998.

[40] Self, *PsychoGeography*, p. 11. This is Self's description of what his 'fraternity' of psychogeographers – in which he includes Peter Ackroyd and Nick Papadimitriou, as well as Sinclair – all take on from the work of Guy Debord and other Situationists. He then goes on to note differences in their approach: where Sinclair's walks are 'dogged, shamanic attempts to storm [the] concrete bastions [of roads …] laying siege with the trebuchet of his prose-poetry', Self's are more personally purposeful – where he has '*reasons* to go' and wants 'to explore' (p. 13).

records, with 'voyeuristic curiosity' and seemingly without moral judgement, the varied characters, conversations, routines and events over a year and a half as a service area 'regular'. Yet, as the book maps the minutiae of social relations – some more 'anthropological' than others – the building, caricatured as 'architecturally designed film set', does not receive the same close attention.[41] In a reading less absolute than that of Augé, place seems to recur socially – but only socially – within and in spite of a material non-place.

As these texts focus on the ad-hoc rather than the planned, the snapshots of human activity they present tend to reassert both an established, collective existence as implicit ideal of place, and, paradoxically, the personal agency of solitary, individual itineraries in their rediscovery and reconstitution. To regain sensitivity to place is, seemingly, to become an outsider. Like 'Nameless Places', *Destination Nowhere* emphasizes the coincidence of the seemingly banal and 'exotic', everyday and exceptional, 'a sense of community' which nevertheless 'allows people to be themselves […] free from the constraints of our normal surroundings'.[42] When *The Art of Travel* alights at Sandbach (M1), the 'architecturally miserable' surroundings seem only to encourage a romanticizing of the service area experience as one of 'reflection and sadness, too', but also of escape. De Botton's emphasis on the individual traveller resembles that of *Non-places*, but, like Lawrence, he reads the condition of anonymity more positively. Here, an 'atmosphere of solitude', where 'everyone was a stranger' 'no one was talking, no one admitting to fellow feeling', becomes cathartic and 'poetic' rather than alienating or threatening, a 'collective loneliness' 'brutally celebrated by the architecture and lighting' that de Botton associates with the freedoms of creative thinking: 'Journeys are the midwives of thought […] new thoughts [require] new places'. As in *Food on the Move*, however, the 'new thoughts' are already contained within a conventional take on the familiar, here a reverie on Charles Baudelaire and Edward Hopper.[43] De Botton's 'third, travellers' realm' thus appears a

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[41] Roger Green, *Destination Nowhere: A South Mimms Motorway Service Station Diary* (London: Athena Press, 2004), pp. 15-17.

[42] Green, pp. 15-17.

[43] Botton, *Travel*, pp. 32, 48-9, 57. See also: 'Take a Holiday on the M1', *Times*, 27 September 2008, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/travel/news/article4825866.ece> [accessed 30 August 2011]. De Botton's 'unusual kind of travel agency', The School of Life, organized a two day tour of the M1 on 25-26 October 2008, which invited travellers to 'recover the utopian thrill of its early days'. See <http://www.theschooloflife.com/Weekends/M1> [accessed 30 August 2011]. *The Times* article explains: 'To understand the M1 is nothing less than to start to understand the modern world […] Rather than always being a chance to escape reality, holidays should perhaps also offer us a chance to make

timeless, desirable, perhaps necessary complement to everyday place: the rest stop in the contemporary commute becomes no different from the port of the early twentieth century voyage, or, as *Food on the Move* similarly suggests, the service area from the coaching inn.[44] Where *Non-places* sees a marked difference in 'supermodernity', de Botton, like Lawrence, stresses a continuity of travel past and present.[45]

The significance of the service area

This trend to stress the local and specific, to reclaim the roadside from the discourse of the road is important in drawing attention to the heterogeneity of conditions, subjects, inhabitations and experiences at service areas: to geographical and historical setting, to staff and locals as well as distant visitors, to the ambivalence of isolation, to a multiplicity of different kinds of place. These authors indirectly confront and show up what critics have questioned in *Non-places*: what Michael Sheringham and Bruno Latour see as a lack of methodological rigour leading to superficial and partial description, to a reductive anthropology of contemporary spaces which is far less rigorous than that of so-called 'anthropological place'; and what Peter Merriman and Emer O'Beirne see as a theoretical tendency to conflate subjective account with generalized conclusions, and thus to overlook the complexity of interrelations between place and non-place.[46] Yet this rereading has limits. Whether as cultural vacuum beyond local re-inscription, as generic simulacrum to active social realm, or as poetic reincarnation of familiar otherness, contemporary service area *buildings* are still left out of place: out of context, out of society, out of time. Described or undescribed, they

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ourselves more at home in the world we live in, even down to its half-terrifying, half-sublime motorway systems.'

[44] This comparison frames Lawrence's account. See pp. 20-1, 151. A similar link to earlier forms of road travel is made in 'The Motorway Service Station' (p. 243), with reference to Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.

[45] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 75-7, 87-94.

[46] See Michael Sheringham, 'Marc Augé and the Ethno-analysis of Contemporary Life', *Paragraph*, 18.2 (1995), 210-22: 'Augé's concern for anthropological method often seems to curtail his own zeal to carry [his recommendations] out' (p. 215); Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Harlow: Prentice Hall, 1993), pp. 100-1: 'He has limited himself to studying the most superficial aspects of the metro […] a symmetrical Marc Augé would have studied the socio-technological network of the metro itself: its engineers as well as its drivers, its directors and its clients, the employer-state […] – simply doing at home what he had always done elsewhere'; Merriman, 'Driving Places', pp. 149-53; O'Beirne, pp. 38-50: 'Generally in his work, [Augé] takes pains to foreground his own subjective position in relation to what he is observing through frequent autobiographical reference. Yet when it comes to differentiating *lieux* from *non-lieux*, […] the undeniably subjective dimension is only gradually, reluctantly, and partially acknowledged' (p. 41).

remain an undifferentiated other. Too mundane, too unreal, or paradox of both at once, they are seemingly not part of everyday life.

Lawrence's book is, to some extent, different. More comprehensively than any of these accounts, *Food on the Move* places service area *buildings* both materially *and* socially: it grounds them in the cultural and topographical palimpsests of context; and it dwells in them as contemporary nexus of diverse relations, itineraries and imaginaries. Nevertheless, the wealth of information belies a limiting structural and methodical distinction. With 'A Devil's Dictionary' strategically segregated in its own chapter, architectural and cultural contexts tend to be national and historically ordered, social constellations and collective meanings localized and timeless – with few connections drawn between the two: the relations of contemporary buildings to the activities and experiences they intersect and to the wider socio-cultural movements of which both are part go largely unexplored.

This thesis confronts these omissions and divisions. Through close readings of contemporary buildings in local, national and global contexts, it addresses how the architecture of service areas relates to a particularly transient, but varied and far from meaningless, condition of inhabitation, which defies simple categorization as place or non-place. In doing so, I draw on the above accounts, but also on other studies of commercial and travel spaces, especially shopping centres and airports that in various ways challenge and qualify the thesis of *Non-places*.[47] I trace how service areas take place within webs of material-historical-cultural-social relations – relations that do not simply shape buildings. I work on the premise that service areas, like all other built spaces, are organizations of place that are always as cultural as they are material, and thus actively involved in shaping relations. As I discuss in more detail in the following sections, this means not only that service areas contribute to complex, mobile and contextually contingent infrastructures of meaning and matter, they affect and position visiting subjects. Like these studies, I see the service area as significant in today's culture, in debates surrounding mobility and society, identity and place – and,

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[47] See David Chaney, 'Subtopia in Gateshead: The Metro Centre as a Cultural Form', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 7 (1990), 49-68; Michael Sorkin, 'Introduction: Variations on a Theme Park', in *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, ed. by Michael Sorkin (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), pp. xi-xv; Margaret Crawford, 'The World in a Shopping Mall', in *Variations*, pp. 3-30; Daniel Normark, 'Tending to Mobility: Intensities of Staying at the Petrol Station', *Environment and Planning A*, 38 (2006), 241-52; Justine Lloyd, 'Dwelltime: Airport Technology, Travel and Consumption', *Space and Culture*, 6.93 (2003), 93-109; Sarah Sharma, 'Baring Life and Lifestyle in the Non-Place', *Cultural Studies*, 23.1 (2009), 129-48.

inevitably, changes in time as well as space. In tackling these questions, and in challenging the polemical answers of *Non-places*, I link close readings more directly to wider theoretical concerns. This then leads back to the question with which this section began – and which remains unanswered: how are these contexts, and the subject's relation to them, to be understood?

Moving with the times?: non-place and nostalgia

> There are thus two interpretations of interpretation […]. The one seeks to decipher, dreams of deciphering a truth or an origin which escapes play […]. The other, which is no longer turned towards the origin, affirms play and tries to pass beyond man and humanism.[48]

So concludes Jacques Derrida in a text that traces tensions within Claude Lévi-Strauss's anthropological writings. One approach to interpretation, that which has tended to dominate 'the human sciences', pursues fixity in its explorations of 'man', and humanity, be it in the form of an unchanging structure, or a historical narrative from certain origin to determined end; where there is 'play', movement, change, it occurs within known boundaries. The alternative approach, by contrast, traces an unfolding always incomplete, which exceeds existing categories and cannot be closed within a particular structure. In this section, I explore how existing accounts of service areas in different ways seek to 'escape play', and I introduce an alternative, more open, notion of history, structure – and place – that guides this thesis.

Human stability, inhuman speed

Although not as explicitly as *Non-places*, each of the service area narratives discussed above assumes a position on the stability of humanity and society. And most of these differ significantly from Augé's favoured trajectory of irreversible transformation. As acts of reclamation, they depend, to some degree, on the principle that there is a proper human relation to place not yet lost and there to be re-found – in most cases by slowing down. Self at once indulges and satirizes this position as he pushes it to absurdity:

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[48] Jacques Derrida, 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences', in *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 351-70 (pp. 369-70).

'long-distance walking [is] a means of dissolving the mechanized matrix which compresses the space-time continuum, and decouples human from physical geography'.[49] Though different in their readings of non-place – as the alien product of a humanity warped by technology, as virtual space made real by human appropriation or as timeless travellers' realm – there is, in each, allusion to some aspect of context that is relatively fixed. For Self and Sinclair, it is the 'natural' environment and history, for Green society, for de Botton the self. But what about *Food on the Move*, an archiving of the service area that, in its historical perspective and multiple voices, seems to subvert such an appeal to constants or norms?

Lawrence's approach, like most of those discussed above, does not claim to address subjectivity or issues of wider political or social change; nor does it speculate directly on how the multiplication of travel spaces and increased time spent rapidly moving through them might affect the structures of relations between people and places, and dominant conceptions of self.[50] Nonetheless, *Food on the Move* implies an underlying stability – and the text's separation of a progressive cultural *history* from a survey of the harmoniously varied *nature* of the service area is significant here. The collation of roadside subcultures, lacking the strong personal narrative of other writers discussed above, suggests that detachment may be maintained: not only from the various groups that inhabit the sites, but from the experience of travel in general. For, against all odds, the emergent society of the service area seems only to reproduce place-based formations of the kind Augé terms 'organic'. *Food on the Move*'s survey of 'life in Britain at the end of the twentieth century', of the 'crossroads of the nation, where society converges briefly in shared human imperatives', might thus be compared to 'The Great Family of Man' exhibition that Roland Barthes discusses in

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[49] Self, 'South Downs Way', in *PsychoGeography*, pp. 69-71 (p. 69). This account, like others, projects a clear ethical position, coupled with heavy self-irony: the attempted subversion of the 'Machine Matrix' turns out to be unsuccessful.

[50] Self is an exception: 'The solitary walker is himself an insurgent against the contemporary world, an ambulatory time traveller. […] If I was assaulting a tyranny, it was one of distance, and of a form of transportation that decentres and destabilizes us, making all of us that can afford it subjects of a ribbon empire that encircles the globe.' In a position that has parallels with *Non-places*, greater mobility is bound up with a changed human condition specific to modernity. Not only that: this mobility is explicitly political and unequal, inseparable from capitalism and Western hegemony: 'When we marvel at the hermetic culture of foreign bases, from which, sated by roast meals and entertained by imported TV shows, our fucked-up troops emerge to fuck up those who can't afford airline seats, we should rightly understand that we too belong to this army of disorientation, sallying forth from Holiday Inns and Hiltons, on missions of search and destroy.' With a focus on how this is experienced by the human psyche, however, Self does not consider in detail how these interrelated mobilities intersect architecture. See *PsychoGeographies*, especially pp. 15-16.

Mythologies:[51] the repetition of seemingly universal human events – here work, play, eating, excreting, love, sex, death, (birth is curiously absent) – emphasize a resilient essence of humanity, constant irrespective of context. When Lawrence and Wentworth scratch the 'polished surface' of the service area, they seem, like the curators critiqued by Barthes, to discover 'the solid rock of a universal human nature', albeit one slightly rougher around the edges. In *Food on the Move*'s gathering of eccentricities, service area history tends towards what Barthes terms 'an eternal aesthetics', in which 'diversity is only formal and does not belie the existence of a common mould'.[52] Like the cropped snapshots of the exhibition, the text's 'life' stories are partial and do not reach beyond the service sites; the contexts in which protagonists spend the rest of their lives, and how those contexts relate and differ, are seemingly irrelevant. Conversely, as these roadside 'worlds' seem to *reflect* wider socio-cultural conditions, to be microcosms of the norms, extremes and ever-changing fashions of wider society, they appear, in their marginality, to have no effect on the already placed.[53] Subjectivity is unchanged by travel, experiences of place by those of non-places. A change in the mode of mobility might produce such spaces, but neither fundamentally change the functioning or ordering of a place-based society.

As detached motorway-archivist-cum-anthropologist, Lawrence describes roadside places of contained exceptions and underlying constants, umbilically linked to a stable reality. Augé, by contrast, takes the position of disorientated non-stop global traveller and extrapolates it to general, all-pervasive and distinctly contemporary

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[51] Lawrence, *Food*, pp. 9, 182.

[52] See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. by Annette Lavers (New York: Noonday Press, 1972), pp. 100-2: 'This myth functions in two stages: first the difference between human morphologies is asserted, exoticism is insistently stressed, the infinite variations of the species, the diversity in skins, skulls and customs are made manifest, the image of Babel is complacently projected over that of the world. Then, from this pluralism, a type of unity is magically produced: man is born, works, laughs and dies everywhere in the same way; and if there still remains in these actions some ethnic peculiarity, at least one hints that there is underlying each one an identical "nature", that their diversity is only formal and does not belie the existence of a common mould' (p. 100). Barthes' critique of an ahistorical humanism is highly political: 'Everything here, the content and appeal of the pictures, the discourse which justifies them, aims to suppress the determining weight of History: we are held back at the surface of an identity, prevented precisely by sentimentality from penetrating into this ulterior zone of human behaviour where historical alienation introduces some "differences" which we shall here quite simply call "injustices"' (p. 101). In drawing this connection, I am not suggesting that Lawrence similarly 'aims to suppress', but that his writing nevertheless lies within a discourse that, by separating the study of people, things and the systems of which they are part, risks overlooking how their interrelations are historically constituted.

[53] This leaves Lawrence with a paradox of the ordinary yet extraordinary, intensively frequented yet unmemorable, the implications of which go largely unexplored: 'Apparently adrift and out of time, and apparently ordinary, motorway services are extraordinary in the round of daily life and therefore special. Occupied more frequently and intensively than many more memorable places, each one is a cross-roads of the nation, where society converges briefly in shared human imperatives.' Lawrence, *Food*, p. 9.

condition – as the semi-autobiographical travelogue that opens *Non-places* makes clear.[54] Instead of a mobility that remains within and subordinate to a regime of place, Augé sees that hierarchy reversed and radically redefined in the proliferation of codes and practices alien to anthropological place: 'It is in the manner of immense parentheses that non-places daily receive increasing numbers of individuals.'[55] Augé sees structures of space and society as inherently interrelated, and 'parentheses' multiplying in both:

> The word 'non-place' designates two complementary but distinct realities: spaces formed in relation to certain ends (transport, transit, commerce, leisure), and the relations that individuals have with these spaces.[56]

But this does not mean that the two 'realities' precisely overlap: spatial boundaries are porous and 'parentheses' leave lasting marks: as bodies move, spaces restructure relations and relations restructure spaces. Non-places are thus not limited to the spaces that Augé lists; nor are they concerned only with human movement: 'non-places mediate a whole mass of relations, with the self and with others, which are only indirectly connected with their purposes.'[57] They are bound up with the accelerated circulation of goods, images, information and language, with the rise of 'non-human mediation' – a technological other driving global networks of interrelated human and non-human flows. Augé describes a 'three-fold acceleration': an 'overabundance of events' supplied by global live media simulates 'an unending history in the present'; 'spatial overabundance' brought by high speed transport and instant communications leads to a 'shrinking of the planet'; an 'individualization of references' in the languages of choice and freedom in multinational politics and multimedia advertising addresses each individual as a 'world in himself'.[58] That this non-place is inseparable from globalized capitalism, what Augé terms 'the world-wide consumption space', is made explicit in the discounting of an imperialism locatable to any single centre: 'it is less a question of the triumph of one language over the others than of the invasion of

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[54] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 1-6
[55] Augé, *Non-places*, p. 111.
[56] Augé, *Non-places*, p. 94.
[57] Augé, *Non-places*, p. 94. The lasting effects of non-place are stressed more explicitly in 'Paris', p. 179: 'The non-place is not only a space, it is virtually present in the gaze, which, too accustomed as it is to images, cannot see reality anymore'.
[58] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 29-41, 104-7, 113, 118.

all languages by a universal vocabulary.' Non-places are, in effect, 'outside territory', subject to laws that exceed the state.[59]

Crucially for Augé, now is the moment at which this global acceleration disrupts even the 'minimal stability' necessary for anthropological place and thus heralds a radically other form of space and society – a society that is, however, far from the ideal of the 'nonplace urban realm' championed in the 1960s by modernist urban planner Melvin Webber. In the first recorded English language use of the term, Webber advocated a shift in emphasis from 'locational-physical place', to 'interest communities' within webs of decentred communications networks and informational flows. Correlating increased access to all forms of material and social exchange with greater economic and cultural wealth, Webber saw the interconnectivity of dispersed 'non-places', of 'community without propinquity' as productive of freedom, as uncomplicated social good.[60] For Augé, by comparison, relations over distance cannot be compared to those at proximity – and the consequences of subjects' exposure to and inclusion within such unrestricted flows of people, goods and information are significant for the structuring of society. 'The passive joys of identity-loss, and the more active pleasure of role-playing' disguise as freedom a position that is highly conditioned and conditional, and politically problematic.[61] An apparent loosening of traditional bonds, a liberation, belies their reconstitution by other asocial, ahistorical and atopical means. This placing without place – non-placing, perhaps – marks a significant shift in what Augé terms 'institutional arrangements', the spatio-social structuring of relations that define not only economic, political and religious life, but also subjectivity.[62] It corresponds to a loss of agency, as relations of power that were 'self-evident' become abstract and concealed. Where '"Anthropological place" is formed by individual identities, through complicities of language, local references, the un-formulated rules of living know-how', in other words 'organically', Augé's

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[59] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 109-10, 112. See also Augé, 'Paris', p. 178: '[Non-places are] spaces of circulation, communication and consumption'.

[60] Melvin Webber, 'The Urban Realm', pp. 79-120, 146. *OED* dates Webber's first usage of the term to 1961. See 'non-, *prefix*', in *Oxford English Dictionary,* 3rd edn (2003), online version (September 2011), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/127776> [accessed 19 September 2011]

[61] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 54, 103.

[62] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 57-64, 112-5; Augé describes the interrelation of space, society and self empirically through anthropological place. As his text moves on to contemporary conditions of non-place, where 'notions of itinerary, intersection, centre and monument' cease to offer adequate explanation, his reading of spatial and social structures seems to draw closer to Michel Foucault's discussion of embodied and materialized 'power-knowledge relations'. See *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), pp. 23-31.

supermodernity of abstract mediation 'fabricate[s] the "average man"', defined as
nothing more than 'user of the road, retail or banking system', through 'contractual
relations' that are no longer with other people, but directly with '[non-place] (or with
the powers that govern it)' – with an un-locatable, yet all-seeing authority. Subjected to
regular identity checks, 'he obeys the same code as others, receives the same messages,
responds to the same entreaties.' As social relations become ever more abstract,
'commerce' is increasingly 'unmediated'.[63] It is this description of citizen as not only
anonymous, but standardized commodity defined only by economic potential,
automaton within a global machine, self-absorbed object willingly 'possessed', that
gives the text its apocalyptic tone: 'The space of non-place creates neither singular
identity nor relations; only solitude, and similitude'.[64] The regime of non-place thus
appears as an unnatural nature, or inhuman humanity, what he elsewhere calls a
'fictionalising [and] spectacularising of the world':[65] all-pervasive but unmemorable,
artificial yet inescapable.

In this vision, a uniformity of travelling subject mirrors a ubiquity of travelling
spaces; both proliferating as they produce each other. Service areas, as Augé describes
in *City A-Z*, are thus an anonymous agent of a 'non-place', everywhere the same and
implicated in a sameness of everywhere. At this critical speed of development, the
subject seems to lose any perception of movement; mobility becomes meaningless,
society as we know it stalls:

> We move along roads as planned, but we do not travel, at least as long as we
> only stick to the motorway or the service stations. It remains to ask ourselves
> whether, once we leave the network that guides us through the scenery of
> illusion all the way to our final destination, we shall find a different world,
> more genuine, more real; or whether by the infinity of cables and screens it is
> already infiltrated and penetrated by the seducing and empty message which
> does not cease to invite us to fill ourselves up with information, images, noise
> and illusions.[66]

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[63] Augé, *Non-places*, p. 78.
[64] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 100-3. See also, 'About Non-places', *Architectural Design*, Architecture and Anthropology, 66.11-12 (1996), 82-3 (p. 82).
[65] Augé draws connections between non-places and a globalized 'Disney effect' in *The War of Dreams: Exercises in Ethno-fiction* (first publ. as *La Guerre des rêves: exercises de ethno-fiction* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1997)) (London: Pluto Press, 1999), pp. 111-5. He sees people enveloped in an 'all-fictional' world: 'Fiction (primarily that of the European fairy tales) was brought to the screen, then back down on the earth for the sake of receiving visits – an image of an image of an image.' 'One is never very far from Disneyland […] Mickey's ears are listening all over the world.'
[66] Marc Augé, 'Petrol Stations: The World Without Language', in *City A-Z: Urban Fragments*, ed. by Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift (london: Routledge, 2000), pp. 177-9 (p. 179).

For Augé, excessive mobility and mechanization result in a loss of the other, 'an alterity crisis' – part illusory, part 'real' – and (by a logic of individuality mixing Lacanian mirroring with Durkheimian social production) a loss of self.[67] Thus radical spatial transformation coincides with that of the subject and their way of construing 'reality', leaving no reserve from which an authentic – 'more real' – anthropological place might be regained. From this non-place – absolutely other because it no longer has a sense of the other – driven by an irresistible force of mediation, there is, for Augé, no possibility of return – of comprehension, even – because all external datums are lost: a wholly different era is beginning.

Too fast: speed and the apocalypse

How then might the contemporary service area be placed – in what kind of context, in what kind of movement? Is mobility contained within a stable, ordered system – physically by the confines of the motorway, socio-culturally by a world of fixed places, naturally by essential laws – or is mobility out of control, producing effects beyond description and differences beyond recognition? Is the service area agent of limitation or escalation? In 'No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead […])', Jacques Derrida considers how to approach the imminence of a radically different epoch, a critical acceleration towards nuclear war, what he calls a 'speed race' in which the 'stakes […] are apparently limitless for what is still now and then called humanity':

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[67] See Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function', in *Écrits: A selection*, trans. by Bruce Fink (London; New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), pp. 3-9; Émile Durkheim, *Sociology and Philosophy*, trans. by D. F. Pocock (Abingdon, Oxford: Taylor & Francis, 2009). On the significance of the 'other' to Augé's notion of anthropology and the self, see *Non-places*, pp. 17-18: 'Anthropological research deals in the present with the question of the other […] It deals with all forms of other: the exotic other defined in relation to a supposedly identical "we" […]; the other of others, the ethnic or cultural other, defined in relation to a supposedly identical "they" […]; the social other, the internal other used as the reference for a system of differences, starting with the division of the sexes but also defining everyone's situation in political, economic and family terms, so that it is not possible to mention a position in the system […] without referring to one or more others; and finally the private other – not to be confused with the last – which is present at the heart of all systems of thought and whose (universal) representation is a response to the fact that absolute individuality is unthinkable: heredity, heritage, lineage, resemblance, influence, are all categories through which we may discern an otherness that contributes to, and complements, all individuality.' See also 'Home Made Strange: Jean-Pierre Criqui Talks with Marc Augé', *Art Forum*, 32.10 (1992), 84-8, 114, 117 (p. 117); *A Sense for the Other: The Timeliness and Relevance of Anthropology*, trans by Amy Jacobs (first publ. as *Les Sens des autres: Actualité de l'anthropologie* (Paris: Fayard, 1994)) (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 1999)

> I wanted to begin as quickly as possible with a warning in the form of a
> dissuasion: watch out, don't go too fast. There is perhaps no invention, no
> radically new predicate in the situation known as 'the nuclear age'. Of all the
> dimensions of such an 'age' we may always say one thing: it is neither the first
> time nor the last. The historian's critical vigilance can always help us verify
> that repetitiveness; and that historian's patience, that lucidity of memory must
> always shed their light on "nuclear criticism", must oblige it to decelerate,
> dissuade it from rushing to a conclusion on the subject of speed itself.[68]

Like the 'historian' for whom Derrida calls, Lawrence (and, to varying degrees, other
writers of the service area discussed above) resist an absolute othering of the
contemporary travel space, its determination as atomized and homogenized, part of a
fundamental transformation of subjectivity and space. Indeed, as cultural geographers
Peter Merriman, Tim Cresswell and others have pointed out, Augé's 'rushing to a
conclusion' on the threat posed by the speed and spacing of 'supermodern'
communication seems not dissimilar from anxieties surrounding new technologies
such as train travel and telegraph, and nostalgias for a slower life, dating back at least
to the nineteenth century. Traversing the writings of Karl Marx – who wrote in 1857-8
of 'the annihilation of space by time' – John Ruskin, Georg Simmel, Virginia Woolf,
Raymond Williams and others, such concerns were frequently couched in terms of
social and material alienation: solitude and disorientation.[69] As Derrida puts it

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[68] 'No Apocalypse, Not Now: (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missiles, Seven Missives)', trans. by Catherine Porter and Philip Lewis, *Diacritics*, 14.2 (Summer 1994), 20-31 (p. 21). The question posed by Derrida that precedes this response is similar to that formulated here in terms of contemporary mobility: 'Is the war of (over, for) speed (with all that it entails) an irreducibly new phenomenon, an invention linked to a set of inventions of the so-called nuclear age, or is it rather the brutal acceleration of a movement that has always already been at work?' (pp. 20-21).

[69] See Merriman, 'Driving Places', p. 150; Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 5-6; John Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), pp. 106-8; Nigel Thrift, 'A Hyperactive World', in *Geographies of Global Change: Remapping the World*, ed. by R. J. Johnston, Peter J. Taylor and Michael J. Watts, 2nd edn. (Malden, MA.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 29-42 (pp. 31-3); David Newsome, *The Victorian World Picture: Perceptions and Introspections in an Age of Change* (London: John Murray, 1997), pp. 31-7; Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 33-45; Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (rough draft)* (1857-8, first publ. Berlin (E.): Dietz, 1953), trans. by Martin Nicolaus (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 254. If mobility is the defining characteristic of contemporary life, it has been seen as such for some time. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Delinquent Travellers* of 1824 includes the lines: 'For move you must! 'Tis now the rage / The law and fashion of the Age'. *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), I, pp. 443-7. Urry offers a summary of the nuances within even narrowly statistical considerations of contemporary mobility: 'It is predicted that by 2010 there will be at least one billion legal international arrivals each year (compared with 25 million in 1950); [...] there were 552m cars in 1998 with a projected 730m in 2020, equivalent to one for every 8.6 people. In 1800, people in the United States travelled on average 50 metres a day – they now travel 50 kilometres a day. [...] However, people do not spend more time travelling, since this appears to have remained more or less constant at around one hour or so per day, albeit with substantial variation within any society. People also do not seem to make more journeys. [...]

elsewhere: 'No matter how novel or unprecedented a modern meaning may appear, it is never exclusively *modernist* but is also and at the same time a phenomenon of *repetition*.'[70] Although, in other texts, Augé speculates on earlier historical occurrences of non-place, suggesting that it is not an entirely contemporary condition, these are seen as proto-modern and there remains a clear narrative of accelerated proliferation.[71]

     Non-places, especially in its three characteristics of 'supermodernity', parallels other polemical critiques of 'postmodernity', 'late capitalism', 'network society', *The Society of the Spectacle* and 'simulacra' in the works of David Harvey, Frederic Jameson, Manuel Castells, Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard, amongst others, all of which announce a significant new development in space and society, concordant with changes in capitalism.[72] Since the early 1990s, such generalized accounts of a defining shift in the mobilities of people, objects and images have faced sustained and detailed criticism from geographers and social scientists. Writing in 1995 on the work of Harvey, Jameson and Castells, Nigel Thrift noted the recent resurgence of 'three themes' with a long history: 'legibility, the space of flows, and time-space compression'. He sees the same 'big ideas about what makes our modern world "modern"' mobilized to announce another radical transformation in the same terms as the previous:

But what is crucial is that people are travelling further and faster, if not often spending more time actually "on the road"' (pp. 3-4).

[70] Derrida, 'Deconstruction and the Other', in *States of Mind, Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers on the European Mind* ed. by Richard Kearney (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 157-76 (p. 163): 'I believe that what "happens" in our contemporary world and strikes us as particularly new has in fact an essential connection with something extremely old which has been covered over. […] The new is not so much that which occurs for the first time but that "very ancient" dimension which recurs in the "very modern".'

[71] O'Beirne traces this ambivalence in *War of Dreams* and *A Sense for the Other*. See, especially, pp. 41-2.

[72] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford; Cambridge, MA.: Blackwell, 1990); Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 1991); Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, I: *The Information Age, Economy, Society, Culture*, 2nd edn (Malden, MA.; Oxford: Blackwell-Wiley, 2010); Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1994); Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. by Sheila F. Glazia (Michigan: University of Michigan, 1994). Though Harvey clarifies that he is describing 'shifts in surface appearance rather than […] the emergence of some entirely new postcapitalist or even postindustrial society', I still include the text here as its singularity of narrative and apocalyptic conclusions have tended to be read in ways not dissimilar from those of others above, which the author criticizes for 'frenetic writing' and 'flamboyant rhetoric' (pp. vii, 350-9).

> Modern life is drawn in terms of speed and flow – everything moves too fast. In the twentieth century the innovations may change but the phenomenology of speed and flow remains the same.[73]

Thrift's point is not only to show up lack of originality or 'exaggeration', it is to argue that 'big answers sometimes become part of the problem […]' when they 'force order on the [messy, contingent] world'. Contrasting the three texts with studies of specific geographies of international transaction, Thrift concludes that the former are 'partial accounts made into a whole'. What he finds is not entirely new, and far from homogenous: 'networks that are always both "global" and "local"'.[74] As Merriman points out, Augé's assertions of a uniform subjectivity bound up with non-place are similarly suspect, indeed, undermined by his own ambiguous status as embedded anthropologist, both at one with his object and other to it: 'The ethnologist is not all *he* appears, and his difference becomes apparent, yet goes unremarked.' In an argument that risks self-contradiction, Augé describes an inescapable homogeneity from a position of (at least partial) differentiation.[75] Like Thrift's 'topologies' of communication and Merriman's comparable approach to a cultural history of the M1, this thesis resists the imposition of a singular, closed model of the contemporary condition, especially one that would render it fundamentally different from those past.[76]

Too slow: nostalgia and 'an ethic of speech'

For Derrida, however, there is danger in this position, too, in assumptions of repetition that tend to annul the difference between distinct contexts and changed relations – a danger not limited to the latent essentialism and humanism that I traced, via Barthes, in *Food on the Move*. 'No Apocalypse' continues:

> This dissuasion and deceleration I am urging carry their own risks: the critical zeal that leads us to recognize precedents, continuities, and repetitions at every

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[73] Thrift, 'A Hyperactive World', pp. 29, 33.

[74] Thrift, 'A Hyperactive World', pp. 29, 39-42. As Thrift puts it elsewhere, 'I do not believe that experience has in some way been radically downgraded or made problematic in the contemporary world, in the style of Benjamin […]. There is, in my opinion, no general crisis of modernity: there are plenty of crises to be going on with.' See *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 255, n. 5

[75] Merriman, 'Driving Places', p. 150.

[76] See Merriman, 'Driving Places', but also: 'M1: A Cultural Geography of an English Motorway, 1946-1965' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Nottingham, 2001); *Driving Spaces: A Cultural-Historical Geography of England's M1 Motorway* (Malden, MA.; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).

turn can make us look like suicidal sleepwalkers, blind and deaf *alongside the unheard-of*; it could make us stand blind and deaf alongside that which cuts through the assimilating resemblance of discourses […], alongside what would be absolutely unique; and it, this critical zeal, would seek in the stockpile of history (in short, in history itself, which in this case would have this blinding search as its function) the wherewithal to neutralize invention, to translate the unknown into a known, to metaphorize, allegorize, domesticate the terror, to circumvent […] the inescapable catastrophe, the undeviating precipitation toward a remainderless cataclysm. The critical slowdown may thus be as critical as the critical acceleration.[77]

For Derrida, history, too, is part of the 'speed race', a 'stockpile' to 'neutralize invention', a 'critical slowdown' evermore 'blind and deaf' to the '*unheard-of*' with which it competes. A 'translation' into the 'known' past is thus not so different from a 'rush' to foreclose the future, the certainty of a constant 'first' time not so different from that of a prophesied 'last'.

Such a mirroring of positions is apparent in the accounts of contemporary travel spaces considered here. A similar thread of nostalgia runs through both Lawrence's urgent archiving and Augé's proclamation of archive loss – and in both cases, the focus is on an earlier era of modernity, albeit not the same one. Considering the surge of popular interest in automotive spaces around the publication of Lawrence's *Always a Welcome* and Martin Parr's 'astonishingly successful' *Boring Postcards* – with its many images of early motorways and service areas – Bracewell identified 'a repositioning of the nostalgic impulse':

> The phenomenon of the 'non-place' is beginning to carry a romance – as a portal to nostalgia, and as a quasi-ironic metaphor of some lost state of innocence – which in Britain has been formerly ascribed to the Victorian suburb and the Edwardian seaside town. The British fetish for identifying the ghosts of its past is in a state of reinvention: it has become a generational identification with a certain kind of blankness, and a search for otherworldliness within the history of the commonplace, the domestic, and the downright dull.

For Bracewell, these accounts not only redress an absence in cultural history, they are part of 'a generational recollection of childhood and adolescence', the idealizing of an optimistic, youthful modernity, a time of explicit functionalism and straightforward imagery, of restrained aesthetics or obvious fakery.[78] Reliving the past in the process

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[77] Derrida, 'No Apocalypse, p. 21.
[78] Bracewell, 'Road to Nowhere'; Martin Parr, *Boring Postcards* (London: Phaidon, 1999). As evidence of this trend, Bracewell includes Pieter Boogaart's pictorial history of the A272, *A272: An Ode to a Road* (2000) and *Edward Platt's Leadville: A Biography of the A40* (2000) and quotes from Christopher

of archiving, such accounts are a form of escapism into a place now fixed in memory beyond the unfolding uncertainties of time:

> This is […] a history of the disappeared and changed. It is strange that service areas, whose business it is to make thousands of replicas of the same meal, menu and building, leave little trace of their existence: all is soon turned to trash as capitalism rolls on.[79]

While Lawrence's study is thorough in its historical account and also speculates on the future service area, the emphasis of the text, images and vignettes falls disproportionately on a golden era of the 1960s and 70s, a seemingly innocent age of emergent mass-production.

Similarly, O'Beirne detects in the semi-autobiographical sections of *Non-places* the persona of someone 'on the wrong side of middle age, for whom the world is changing too fast, who is nostalgic for the world of his childhood, and who, while not yet out of touch with current fashions, feels more allegiance to customs and values that have disappeared or are disappearing.'[80] In Augé's text, the disjunctive non-place is repeatedly set against 'Baudelairean modernity', an 'interweaving of old and new' where 'everything is combined, everything holds together'.[81] In *Non-places*, the unity lost is thus not so much that of anthropological place, but the modernity of pre-world-war-two Europe – Paris of the metro, before the RER, TGV or motorway, as Augé's more sympathetic study of the former makes clear.[82]

In this preference for a more cohesive age as yet untouched by an alienation to come, and in the critique of 'non-human mediation' – the role of texts, images and technologies in contemporary society[83] – Augé's text bears more than traces of what Derrida terms the 'metaphysics of presence' and 'logocentrism'. For Derrida, this is a

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Hawtree's review of the latter: 'No sooner has a book on the A272 appeared, than one about the A40 arrives; another, on the A1, is imminent. Where will it all stop? "Jeez, I know it's Martin [Amis], but half a million for the B4009? Come on …" "But look at his riff on the traffic-light phasing in Watlington …"'. See 'On the Road to Nowhere in London's Wild West', *The Independent*, 8 June 2000, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/on-the-road-to-nowhere-in-londons-wild-west-625628.html> [accessed 11 August 2011]. In contrast to the architectural press's criticism of roadside buildings (discussed in the next two sections), reviewing *Food on the Move* for *Building Design*, Owen Hatherley described Forton (now Lancaster) services on the M6, designed by T. P. Bennet, as 'criminally unlisted'. See 'Food on the Move by David Lawrence', *Building Design*, 1 April 2011, <http://m.bdonline.co.uk/culture/food-on-the-move-by-david-lawrence/5015466.article> [accessed 27 September 2011].

[79] Lawrence, *Food on the Move*, p. 9.
[80] O'Beirne, p. 39.
[81] Augé, *Non-places*, p. 110. See also, pp. 75-8, 87-93.
[82] See *In the Metro*; *Non-places*, pp. 98-99, 107.
[83] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 94-6, 118.

structuring of thought inseparable from Western culture, which tends to privilege proximity over distance, immediacy over deferral, centre over margin, nature over convention, speech over writing. It favours, Derrida argues, a reading of human history as process of decline from a state of natural unity and harmony towards one of dislocation and alienation.

In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida traces this tendency through the work of romantic philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau and anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss. Both associate the development of writing with social decline, an Adamic 'fall', 'a violence which would come to pounce upon [speech] as a fatal accident':

> On the one hand […] the theme of a necessary or rather fatal degradation, as the very form of progress; on the other hand, nostalgia for what preceded this degradation, an affective impulse toward the islets of resistance, the small communities that have provisionally protected themselves from corruption […], a corruption linked […] to writing and to the dislocation of a unanimous people assembled in the self-presence of its speech. […][84]

Derrida's reading finds, in each case, a thesis of critical acceleration countered by an ideal of critical slowdown. For Rousseau and Lévi-Strauss, the spread of writing – a code that does not depend on the presence of the 'author', a code that seems standardized, uniform, lifeless – is bound up with a loss of social authenticity, the rise of violence and exploitation, of unequal power relations, of a universal law that enslaves. Derrida summarizes the links Rousseau draws in *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (1781) between writing and a complete breakdown of social cohesion:

> Social *distance*, the dispersion of the neighborhood, is [seen as] the condition of oppression, arbitrariness, and vice. [… The *Essay*] is a praise of eloquence or rather of the elocution of the full speech, a condemnation of mute and impersonal signs: money, tracts ('placards'), weapons and soldiers in uniform.[85]

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[84] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Spivak, corrected edn (Baltimore; London: John Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp. 131, 134-6. Derrida makes clear that these 'traits' are part of a wider discourse: 'Not that, by this more or less overt reference to the idea of a fall into evil from the innocence of the word, Lévi-Strauss makes this classical and implicit theology his own. It is just that his anthropological discourse is produced through concepts, schemata, and values that are, systematically and genealogically, accomplices of this theology and this metaphysics' (p. 135). 'Rousseauistic but already the inheritor of Platonism, it relates, we recall, to the Anarchistic and Libertarian protestations against Law, the Powers, and the State in general, and also with the dream of the nineteenth-century Utopian Socialisms, most specifically with the dream of Fourierism' (p. 138). Though this logic is so embedded in Western thought that it cannot be escaped, it can, Derrida suggests, be challenged from within. See also, pp. 46-50 on the 'metaphysics of presence'.

[85] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, pp. 137-8.

Derrida goes on to deconstruct these associations, which place speech and presence in opposition to writing and distance. As I explore further in Chapter 2, Derrida challenges the logic by which writing is seen as secondary and as a vice; rather, he argues, 'writing has already begun in language' and the 'fatal accident' described by Lévi-Strauss 'is nothing but history itself'. Indeed, for Derrida, notions of 'full presence', of a 'speech originally good' and of an 'ideal […] community immediately present to itself, without difference' are always nothing more than 'delusion', 'dream' and 'myth', the insatiable 'desire' for an 'impossible thing'. [86]

Augé, by contrast, seems to uncritically affirm the 'Rousseauist' tradition of thought, to draw a sharp line between authentic and inauthentic social networks, those that produce place and those that erode it, according to such an 'ethic of speech', a privileging of unmediated proximity.[87] In *Non-places*, the critical loss of proximity is not caused by writing (in the literal sense) itself, but by various technologies of production and transportation, electronic communication, 'codified ideograms', a whole landscape of 'signboards, screens, posters', all of which depend on the increasing currency of various forms of impersonal code. All are said to be 'excessive' – both alien and unnecessary – to some presumably more essential condition of direct interpersonal communication that can, it seems, never be recovered.[88] Like Lévi-Strauss's association of writing with 'violence' – and, I would add, Baudrillard's theory of 'simulations of the third order'[89] – Augé's *Non-places* makes absolute judgements and pursues singular conclusions that take presence and proximity as proof of authenticity in spite of empirical evidence that is highly contradictory. More generally, such texts might be seen as part of what Foucault calls 'the theme of the return':

> There is a widespread and facile tendency, which one should combat, to designate that which has just occurred as the primary enemy […] an inclination to seek out some cheap form of archaism or some imaginary past forms of happiness that people did not, in fact, have at all. […] There is in this hatred of the present […] a dangerous tendency to invoke a completely mythical past.

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[86] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, pp. 139-40.
[87] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, pp. 244.
[88] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 94, 96.
[89] For a critique of 'theoretical reductivism' in Baudrillard's (and others') reading of architecture and urban landscapes as simulation, see Murray Fraser and Joe Kerr, 'Beyond the Empire of Signs', in *Intersections: Architectural Histories and Critical Theories*, ed. by Iain Borden and Jane Rendell (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 125-49 (pp. 125-30).

Foucault advocates history as a means to challenge contemporary conditions, but only on condition that it is not idealized, that it does not, however implicitly, become 'a historicism that calls on the past to resolve the questions of the present'.[90]

As reserve of formative memories or agent of their loss, evidence of continuity or proof of unfolding catastrophe, descriptions of commercial and transport spaces thus tend to fall either side of a double-edged nostalgia: romanticized or vilified, part of a stilled past or a closed future. Either way, by rushing to place the service area within a particular historical narrative, the writer risks, 'No Apocalypse' would seem to suggest, being 'blind and deaf' to the complexity of their contemporary position.

Speed and iterability: place in process

This thesis strives to avoid either closure by tracing how the service area is positioned in relation to heterogenous contexts in motion. The approach I take is not concerned with establishing a particular narrative, but in drawing out the interrelatedness of, as well as the differences between, different temporal as well as spatial contexts. Rather than stressing a general acceleration over stability, or vice versa, this thesis looks at the relations between different speeds and stabilities. For, it is in these differential relations that power is at play.

In this, I follow what Derrida introduces, by way of a response to the above dilemma, as his 'first nuclear aphorism':

> *In the beginning there will have been speed*, which is always *taking on speed*, in other words, overtaking or – as we say in French, *prendre de vitesse*, *doubler*, doubling, passing – both the act and the speech. At the beginning was the word; at the beginning was the act. No! At the beginning – faster than the word or the act – there will have been speed, and a speed race between them.

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[90] Michel Foucault, 'Space, Knowledge, Power', interview with Paul Rainbow, trans. by Christian Hubert, in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. by Neil Leach (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 367-79 (pp.373-5) (first publ. in *Skyline* (March, 1982), pp. 16-20). For Foucault, as for Derrida, this risk calls for the 'historian's critical vigilance': 'One should totally and absolutely suspect anything that claims to be a return. […] History, and the meticulous interest applied to history, is certainly one of the best defences against this theme of the return. For me, the history of madness or the studies of the prison … were done in that precise manner because I knew full well […] that I was carrying out a historical analysis in such a manner that people could criticize the present, but it was impossible for them to say, "Let's go back to the good old days when madmen in the eighteenth century …" […] A good study of peasant architecture in Europe, for example, would show the utter vanity of wanting to return to the little individual house with its thatched roof. History protects us from historicism – from a historicism that calls on the past to resolve the questions of the present.'

Derrida's formulation in the future anterior – 'there will have been speed', 'always already', as he adds elsewhere – suggests a process of change in space-time without beginning or end, movements that course through and modify all apparent stabilities, and intentionalities.[91] In the context of 'No Apocalypse', 'the act and the speech' here caught up and displaced in 'the economy of speed' might be read broadly to include all beings, cultures, technologies. Earlier in the text, Derrida poses a question not dissimilar from that raised here by accounts of service areas, which he soon dismisses as simplistic, 'naive':

> Are we having, today, *another*, a different experience of speed? Is our relation to time and to motion qualitatively different? Or must we speak prudently of an extraordinary – although qualitatively homogeneous – acceleration of the same experience? Can we take the question seriously […]? It opposed quantity and quality *as if* a quantitative transformation – the crossing of certain thresholds of acceleration within the general machinery of a culture, with all its techniques for handling, recording, and storing information – could not induce qualitative mutations, *as if every* invention were not the invention of a process of acceleration or, at the very least, a new experience of speed. Or *as if* the concept of speed, linked to some quantification of objective velocity, remained within a homogeneous relation to every experience of time.

Quantity and quality cannot be separated. A change in mobility must mean a different experience – but not one absolutely different. For Derrida, the 'nuclear age' shows up strikingly an interrelatedness that is – with differences – common to other 'ages', too: 'no single instant, no atom of our life (of our relation to the world and to being) is not marked today, directly or indirectly, by that speed race'.[92] If this movement is not isolated to a particular space or time, neither is it linear, its rate constant: speed 'is always taking on speed', accelerating, overtaking, competing. There is, according to 'No Apocalypse', no being outside of speed, of movements, of relations that are unfixed, inseparable and that cannot be pinned down.[93]

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[91] Derrida, 'No Apocalypse', pp. 21-2. See also *Of Grammatology*, p. 47: 'The trace must be thought before the entity.'

[92] Derrida, 'No Apocalypse', p. 20.

[93] Paul Virilio's consideration of speed as what he calls 'dromoscopy', is perhaps more well known. It places a similar emphasis on the politics of speed, traced through historical examples of trade, war, revolution, technology and information flow, whereby that which has the greatest speed tends to win, stabilities are eventually overrun by the movements they seek to restrain, and a culture of urbanization becomes one of speed. I favour Derrida's reading here, because 'No Apocalypse' is more equivocal on the question of the radicality of contemporary change. See: Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, trans. by Marc Polizzotti (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2006).

How to work within what Derrida calls the 'aporia of speed', 'the need to move both slowly and quickly'?[94] Are the terms place and non-place still useful? There is compelling evidence in the texts discussed so far that non-place, like place, is not a simple, 'objective' category that would, as Augé at times hopes, encircle a particular kind of space, the same in all its instances, experienced by all in the same way; nor could it be a subject position as uniform and constant as Augé's figure of the global traveller would suggest. Such judgements appear partial and highly subjective. To these empirical complications, Derrida's 'No Apocalypse' offers theoretical objections to the drawing of such distinctions and absolute narratives. Though *Non-places* loosely relates modes of production to conditions produced, bringing together the 'quantitative' and 'qualitative', it does so within binary pairs that tend to see entities, bodies, systems and structures as monolithic – the same or entirely other. At a couple of points in *Non-places*, and more explicitly in other books, Augé offers glimpses of a more nuanced interpretation:

> In the concrete reality of today's world, places and spaces, places and non-places intertwine and tangle together. The possibility of non-place is never absent from any place. Place becomes a refuge to the habitué of non-places […]. Places and non-places are opposed (or attracted) like the words and notions that enable us to describe them.[95]

Here, Augé's text puts the binary pair in play. In light of 'No Apocalypse', however, *Non-places*'s concentration on 'pure forms', acknowledged to 'never exist', overlooks the complex spectrum of interrelations between diverse places and subjectivities within overlapping and heterogeneous contexts. Moreover, later in the same passage of *Non-places*, it becomes clear that any play remains a largely irrelevant ebb and flow within a wider narrative of becoming non-place:

> The same things apply to the non-place as to the place. It 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.[96]

Augé's non-place is clearly related to movement, a movement that is human and technical, international and epochal – and perhaps not *directly* linear; yet the text's

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[94] Derrida, 'No Apocalypse', p. 21.
[95] Augé, *Non-places*, p. 107.
[96] Augé, *Non-places*, p. 107.

focus only on apparently static and homogenous conditions and experiences, the after-effects of movement, disregards the multiplicity of competing flows and forces that traverse, shape and are shaped by such spaces – on processes that are inherently unstable and unfinished – a 'speed race', always taking place, the beginning indiscernible, the ending always unknown.

This is not to suggest that the seemingly stable is unimportant – far from it; but that stability is not opposed to movement in the absolute sense so far explored. Derrida's play on the 'atomic' is useful for an alternative thinking of place, in the emphasis it brings to interrelatedness, to a complexity of forces operating within and through the apparently stable, to ambiguities of matter and energy, entity and force. Place, might be seen as a 'stockpile', but one which is, in all its material, socio-cultural, techno-economic dimensions, never quite at rest. This is to read place as iterative socio-cultural practice, but in a broader, global context, as a practice that is never complete and always contingent. Here I take up Derrida's discussion in *Limited Inc* of what he calls 'iterability', 'a logic that ties repetition to alterity', 'a law of undecidable contamination':[97]

> This iterability […] is indispensable to the functioning of all language, written or spoken (in the standard sense), and I would add, to that of every mark. Iterability supposes a minimal remainder (as well as a minimum of idealization) in order that the identity of the *selfsame* be repeatable and identifiable *in*, *through*, and even *in view* of its alteration. For the structure of iteration – and this is another of its decisive traits – implies *both* identity *and* difference. Iteration in its 'purest' form – and it is always impure – contains *in itself* the discrepancy of a difference that constitutes it as iteration.[98]

In Derrida's reading of language – but also, as he states earlier, 'the entire field of what philosophy would call experience, even the experience of being'[99] – what seems the same is never identical, every repetition also a difference. All concepts, classifications

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[97] Derrida, 'Signature, Event, Context' (1977), trans. by Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman in *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL.: Northwestern University Press, 1988), pp. 1-23 (p. 7); 'Limited Inc a b c …' (1977) trans. by Samuel Weber, in *Limited Inc*, pp. 29-110 (p. 59).

[98] Derrida, 'Limited', p. 53. This point is elaborated further in the 'Afterword': '"Iterability" does not signify simply […] repeatability of the same, but rather alterability of this same idealized in the singularity of the event, for instance, in this or that speech act. It entails the necessity of thinking *at once* both the rule and the event, concept and singularity. There is thus a reapplication (without transparent self-reflection and without pure self-identity) of the *principle* of iterability to a *concept* of iterability that is never pure. There is no idealization without (identificatory) iterability; but for the same reason, for reasons of (altering) iterability, there is no idealization that keeps itself pure, safe from all contamination.' 'Afterword: Toward an Ethic of Discussion', trans. by Samuel Weber, in *Limited Inc*, pp. 111-60 (p. 119).

[99] Derrida, 'Signature', p. 9

or ideals – places (or non-places), I would add – are irreducibly 'impure', verified by the same 'selfsame' repetitions – rituals, rites, reproductions – that show irreducible differences, the inconsistency of the law. Conversely, no event can be entirely other, unrelated to iterations before or to come, outside the possibility of repetition, reappropriation or representation: 'Iterability […] can be recognized even in a mark which *in fact* seems to have occurred only once. I say seems, because this one time is in itself divided or multiplied in advance by its structure of repeatability.'[100] Not only does this challenge the possibility of an end of history, or of an absolute difference between place and non-place, it suggests that those very notions and experiences are themselves subject to change – to iterability: even the most stable of places are in motion, those most different related:

> If I speak of great stability, it is in order to emphasize that this semantic level is neither originary, nor ahistorical, nor simple, nor self-identical in any of its elements, nor even entirely semantic or significant. Such stabilization is relative, even if it is sometimes so great as to seem immutable and permanent. It is the momentary result of a whole history of relations of force (intra- and extrasemantic, intra- and extradiscursive, intra- and extraliterary or - philosophical, intra- and extraacademic, etc.). In order for this history to have taken place, in its turbulence and in its stases, in order for relations of force, of tensions, or of wars to have taken place, in order for hegemonies to have imposed themselves during a determinate period, there must have been a certain play in all these structures, hence a certain instability or non-self-identity, nontransparency.[101]

Iterability is a way to think '*at once* […] the rule and the event, concept and singularity'. *Non-places* might then be read to posit a passage from one 'great stability' of place – a 'minimal remainder' that gives it a recognizable identity – to another – which is not in any sense 'remainderless'. The aim of this thesis is not to verify or contradict such a proposition, but to read specific instances of the spatio-temporal 'iteration' of so-called 'supermodernity' in process, to explore its apparent 'stabilization' as a 'selfsame', quasi-ideal form and the 'relations of force' through which this occurs.[102]

Process and relation are key. If 'place' and 'non-place' are not entirely other, if they already contain each other as a trace, or a potential, how might this binary

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[100] Derrida, 'Limited', p. 45.
[101] Derrida, 'Afterword', pp. 119, 145. See also, p. 151: 'I say that there is no stability that is absolute, eternal, intangible, natural, etc. But that is implied in the very concept of stability. A stability is not an immutability; it is by definition always destabilizable.'
[102] Compare with Cresswell 'metaphysics of fixity and flow'.

opposition be rethought? Augé's text does offer an alternative reading. Where the discussion is not foreclosed in apocalypse or absolute categorization, it seems to figure 'non-place' as the other *within* (rather than *of*) place, that which does not fit the notion of an anthropological place fully present to the individual or group: the irreducible otherness of culture, of technology, of laws and, especially, of all kinds of movements – of people, goods and meanings – that cannot be stilled. This would be 'non-place' as a haunting of place, a disturbance of all ideals of unity and categorization. Both Lawrence and Augé identify such a haunting of the known by the unknown, local by global, domestic by generic, human by machinic, conditions seen as puzzling and intriguing by the former, socially, culturally and politically problematic for the latter, but which are never explored in detail.[103] Where the architectural historian becomes jubilantly immersed in a spatial imbroglio – 'apparently adrift and out of time, and apparently ordinary, motorway services are extraordinary in the round of daily life and therefore special'[104] – the anthropologist focusses on the 'paradox of non-place':

> A foreigner lost in a country he does not know (a 'passing stranger') can feel at home there only in the anonymity of motorways, service stations, big stores or hotel chains. For him, an oil company logo is a reassuring landmark; among the supermarket shelves he falls with relief on sanitary, household or food products validated by multinational brand names.[105]

This 'non-place' of placing/being placed, of places uncannily interrelated with other places, of hauntings without limit, is my focus here. For it is, I argue, in the complexity and porosity of boundaries assumed to be absolute that the position of spaces such as service areas in wider political, cultural and historical currents might be better understood. Thus I respond to the questions posed by Derrida by paying close attention to connections, interrelations, displacements and differences at sites where they are commonly overlooked. I argue that the significance and role of service areas in various processes of exchange, in various political, social and cultural economies, is, though far from obvious, traceable. Rather than to seek to unveil a structure – one that would always escape definition – I proceed by complicating and problematizing the apparently neutral, transparent and straightforward. How the service area relates to

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[103] On haunting in Derrida's texts, and its architectural significance, see Mark Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995). See also Derrida, *Specters of Marx*; Sigmund Freud, 'The "Uncanny"' (1919), in *Art and Literature*, The Pelican Freud Library, 14, ed. by James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 335-76.
[104] Lawrence, *Food on the Move*, p. 9.
[105] Augé, *Non-places*, p. 106.

discourses of architecture, how its challenge to the discipline has left it overlooked is the focus of the next section.

Architecture's other and the limits of place

> A bicycle shed is a building; Lincoln Cathedral is a piece of architecture. Nearly everything that encloses space on a scale sufficient for a human being to move in is a building; the term architecture applies only to buildings designed with a view to aesthetic appeal.[106]
>
> Learning from the existing landscape is a way of being revolutionary for an architect. […] The commercial strip […] challenges the architect to take a positive, non-chip-on-the-shoulder view […] We look backward at history and tradition to go forward; we can also look downward to go upward. And withholding judgment may be used as a tool to make later judgment more sensitive. This is a way of learning from everything.[107]

These seemingly contradictory positions, well known and oft repeated in architectural discourse, appear to mark a significant shift in notions of architecture, of what constitutes an object worthy of architectural consideration. The two statements of intent, respectively introducing Nikolaus Pevsner's *An Outline of European Architecture* of 1943 and Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour's *Learning from Las Vegas* of 1972, differ in the weight they give to intentionality, to creative autonomy, to a historical canon of great works. Shockingly, for the architectural establishment of the time, *Learning from Las Vegas* embraced 'the commercial vernacular' of the roadside, comparing 'the A&P parking lot' to Versailles, 'The Long Island Duckling' to Baroque domes, challenging both modern and historical orthodoxies.[108] For Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, Pevsner's would be a 'chip-on-the-shoulder view', elitist in its exclusion of what they call 'ugly and ordinary architecture', of that which carries everyday significance for the majority of people in today's world.[109] Within a disciplinary discourse obsessed, the book claims, with the Italian piazza, the automotive strip is architecture's other: garish and chaotic where Modern dogma prescribed ordered, unadorned functionalism.

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[106] Nikolaus Pevsner, *An Outline of European Architecture* (1943) (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 15.

[107] Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (1972), rev. edn (Cambridge MA.: MIT Press, 1977), p. 3.

[108] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 15. For critical responses to the text, see, for example, contributions to *Casabella*, The City as an Artefact, 36 (December 1971).

[109] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, pp. 128-30.

Reading the roadside, aestheticizing 'autopia'

Learning from Las Vegas was not the first text to consider the American roadside less judgementally. At least fifteen years earlier John Brinkerhoff Jackson defended highway architecture as 'folk art in mid-twentieth century garb', 'reflecting a new public taste', while Reyner Banham's *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, with a chapter on 'Autopia' that embraced the landscape of 'hamburger bars and other Pop ephemeridae at one extreme [and] freeway structures and other civil engineering at the other', was published the year before Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour's text.[110] However, *Las Vegas* was, perhaps, more provocative than others, for some of the same reasons that it is now problematic from the perspective of this thesis: it tends to assimilate the roadside.[111]

The book is challenging in its mix of semiotics, art criticism, architectural history and urban theory. It contests the significance of the canon and architecture's assumed status as autonomous art.[112] Nevertheless, as I explore further in Chapter 2, *Learning from Las Vegas* retains a relatively orthodox centre: it is written as a piece of design theory from within the architectural establishment. While it shifts and expands the discipline's focus, it leaves much of the established theoretical and methodological framework intact. The discussion of function and aesthetics throughout the text is a reworking of Modern themes to incorporate issues of popular 'communication',[113] a way of drawing the strip into 'high-design architecture', while references to Pop Art stake out a position that remains within the fine arts – and the exclusions this permits:

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[110] See, for example, 'Other-Directed Houses', in *Landscapes: Selected Writings of J. B. Jackson*, pp. 55-72 (p. 62) (first publ. in *Landscape*, 6.2 (1956-7), pp. 29-35); *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (1971) (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009), p. 5.

[111] This is not to underestimate the controversy caused by Banham's work. As Joe Day records, *Four Ecologies* was unpopular with prominent local critics who saw it as exoticist – 'one in a series of postcolonial "appreciations" of Los Angeles written by vacating Brits' – while, on the other hand, 'for many people of culture and taste, he ceased to exist' following publication. In some respects more radical in its wide-ranging reading of architecture and urban form as found, the book does not, however, directly address the practice of architecture in the manner of *Learning from Las Vegas*. It is written as history rather than design primer, as description not manifesto, and, while, as Day suggests, it implies a wide-ranging rethinking of architecture, many interpreted it as merely an unusual and eclectic guide book. See Joe Day, 'Foreword to 2009 Edition: After *Ecologies*', in *Los Angeles*, pp. xv-xliv (pp. xv-xvi).

[112] In Chapter 2, I also tackle the question of the relevance of a 1970s study of Las Vegas to that of the 2010s service area.

[113] As Derrida notes, 'communication' tends to assume a logic of unmediated transmission, a means to a predetermined end, and is thus bound up with functionalism. See *Limited Inc.*, for example, pp. 79, 106-7. I discuss this further in Chapter 2.

Las Vegas is analyzed here only as a phenomenon of architectural communication. Just as an analysis of the structure of a Gothic cathedral need not include a debate on the morality of medieval religion, so Las Vegas's values are not questioned here. The morality of commercial advertising, gambling interests, and the competitive instinct is not at issue here, although, indeed, we believe it should be in the architect's broader, *synthetic* tasks of which an analysis such as this is but one aspect. The analysis of a drive-in church in this context would match that of a drive-in restaurant, because this is a study of method, not content. Analysis of one of the architectural variables in isolation from the others is a respectable scientific and humanistic activity, so long as all are resynthesized in design.

Analysis is seen as partial, only design 'synthetic'. Context is determined – limited – by 'method', a purposeful method of sublimation: 'downward to go upward'.[114] As the text embraces 'commercial' architecture, many of the exchanges which implicate the roadside are repressed: billboards, signs and casinos are seen more as sources for designerly abstraction, patterns of repeated elements for recomposition, than as complex manifestations of diverse forces and relations. Though the authors argue their case in terms of socio-economic pragmatism and emphasize the significance of existing cultural meanings – of connections beyond architecture, understood in its traditional sense as art or construction – they see little problem in separating imagery from the politics of its production, the play of meanings from 'gambling interest' and 'competitive instincts', power from pleasure. While perhaps not to the extent of Charles Jencks's postmodernity of 'incessant choosing',[115] a politics of liberalization stresses individual freedom over collective constraint, which here comes not from corporations, but from 'design review', 'beautification' and professional prejudice. Mass market imagery shows openness and vitality, far from the stereotype of commercial superficiality and manipulation. It is, the text implies, what people want; why they want it seems not particularly relevant.[116] In spite of some caveats to the

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[114] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, pp. 3-4. Italics original. See also, pp. 53, 72, 161-3. For a fuller critique of this position, drawing on Theodor Adorno's notion of art as resistance to commodification, see Kenneth Frampton, 'America 1960-1970: Notes on Urban Image and Theory', in *Casabella*, The City as an Artefact, 36 (December 1971); Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. by Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: The Athlone Press, 1997). On Venturi and Scott Brown's relation to Pop Art, see 'Re-learning from Las Vegas', Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi interviewed by Rem Koolhaas and Hans Ulrich Obrist, in RemKoolhaas/OMA-AMO, *Content: Triumph of Realization* (Cologne; London: Taschen, 2004), pp. 150-7 (pp. 154-5). In this reading of Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour's position, as an ambivalent process of interaction between 'populism' and 'high-design' that tends in the end to the former into the latter, I differ from Frederic Jameson's unequivocal assertion that their work heralds a complete loss of boundaries in *Postmodernism*, pp. 1, 61.

[115] See Charles Jencks, *What is Post-Modernism?*, 3rd edn (London: Academy Editions, 1989), p. 7

[116] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, pp. 152-63: 'The symbolic meanings of the forms in builder's vernacular also serve to identify and support the individualism of the owner'; 'developers build for

contrary, roadside architecture tends, overall, to be idealized, politically as model of popular emancipation, aesthetically as process of free play. However, as commercial freedom is celebrated, its imagery is tamed within a model that the discipline would recognize: the vicissitudes of the other are expressed as a pattern-book of the same.

In this thesis, I resist such tendencies to aestheticization, which, I argue, limit attention to the complexities of context – whether in the form of abstraction, as here, or nostalgia, as discussed in the last section. But was Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour's appropriation of the roadside nevertheless effective in securing its acceptance as a subject of architectural and cultural discourse? As Bracewell notes in 1999 – and the flurry of recent publications discussed in the first section of this introduction suggests – it has taken a lot longer for the British motorway and its environs to be considered as anything other than a benchmark of 'banality', as something so mundane as to be uninteresting:

> In Britain, the cultural status of the motorway remains ambiguous, to say the least. Whereas America has hymned the romance of its highways and freeways in a national history of generic, iconic art forms […], there is no such tradition in Britain. This country's experience of the motorway is comparatively young […] and rooted, unwaveringly, in the very opposite of America's road-movie romance with the highway. […] Eternally modern, yet dreary and functional, a necessary evil perceived to be synonymous with bad weather, tailbacks and stewed tea, the ambience of the British motorway has usually been described through varieties of Social Realism, or sudden flashes of disturbing psychological allegory.[117]

In the year that Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour's study of Las Vegas was published, and that Banham warmed to the flashier operations then opening on the M6, such as 'the joky, snub-cornered, fibreglass futurism of Corley', the *Architectural Review* dismissed service areas, primarily for their commercialism, as 'children of the thoughtless architecture of the quick buck'.[118] Jeremy Till argues that this suspicion of the so-called vernacular – especially the contemporary vernacular – remains

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markets rather than for Man and probably do less harm than authoritarian architects would do if they had the developers' power' (pp. 153, 155). For an interpretation of the ethics of Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour's approach, see Karsten Harries, *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

[117] Bracewell, 'Road to Nowhere'.

[118] Reyner Banham, 'New Way North', *New Society*, 4 May (1972), 241-3 (p. 241). Lance Wright, 'Food, Petrol but No Joy', *Architectural Review*, 151.904 (1972), 368-84. Corley MSA, located on the M6, near Coventry, was opened in 1972.

widespread within the architectural establishment today.[119] Indeed, *Learning from Las Vegas* has had more impact on some disciplinary certainties than others. If the book was significant within a trend that opened up space for discussion of the contradictory, quirky, historical and, eventually, the everyday in architecture, it was less so – in part, I suggest, for the reasons outlined above – in instigating a more nuanced or unrestricted discussion of its commercial aspects.

Learning from Las Vegas became, for many readers, closely associated with an eclecticism of composition commonly gathered under the heading 'postmodern'. For these critics, the book, like this architecture, came to be seen as apolitical or affirmative of the status quo, no more than a 'style' in service of commercial interests.[120] Critical approaches to modernity, in opposition to this apparent alignment with market forces, have since tended to remain split between positions of explicit autonomy, most closely associated with Peter Eisenmann, Aldo Rossi and Anthony Vidler, and later with Daniel Libeskind, Zaha Hadid and others, and 'Critical Regionalism', as espoused by Kenneth Frampton (after Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre), and other approaches to rethinking a materially grounded place. Both discourses (in theory but not necessarily practice) tend to be overtly resistant to commercial factors, to challenge modernity not just aesthetically for reductivism or irrelevance, but politically for a functionalism, or, as Frampton puts it, an 'instrumental reason' – redirected, but arguably still present in *Learning from Las Vegas* – that produces homogeneity and limits the possibilities of critique, for a tendency towards what Augé would call 'non-place'. The enemy is thus the commodified 'International Style' and global brand imagery of multinational developers, but also those seen as its

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[119] Jeremy Till makes this observation in discussion of Stuart Brand's *How Buildings Learn*. See *Architecture Depends* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 98-9. Making a similar point, *Learning from Las Vegas* notes that architects find it easier to embrace a vernacular of the past than of the present, because that which is no longer 'spoken' is less well understood and seen in abstract from its cultural context. See pp. 6, 151-3.

[120] See, for example, Kenneth Frampton, 'Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance', in *Postmodern Culture*, ed. by Hal Foster (London: Pluto Press, 1985), pp. 16-30 (pp. 19, 21): 'The so-called postmodern architects are merely feeding the media-society with gratuitous, quietistic images, rather than proffering, as they claim, a creative *rappel à l'ordre* after the supposedly proven bankruptcy of the liberative modern project.' In 'Re-learning from Las Vegas', Venturi and Scott Brown distance their work from what they describe as 'horrible' postmodernism: '[*Complexity and Contradiction*] does not advocate revivalism, but this is what postmodernism came to mean. […] We never call ourselves postmodernists or ever use the term in our writings. We feel we are modernists. So our influence, ironically, has been negative, involving misunderstandings and misappropriations.' (pp. 150, 156). In the associations I draw here, I do not mean to endorse the view that *Learning from Las Vegas* was *responsible* for post-modernism. Nevertheless, the primarily pragmatic and aesthetic manner of their engagement with commercial architecture was part of an overall discourse that, as I explore further below, allowed certain considerations to be unproblematically discounted.

'Hi-tech' enthusiasts and 'Po-Mo' apologists. For both modes of resistance, questions of meaning and agency are to be explored through an architecture understood as differentiated from the mainstream and singularly authored, a process from which certain undesired external influences – standardization, commodification and popular culture – are consciously excluded.[121]

These two tendencies are, I suggest, crucial to understanding how place and non-place have come to be understood in architecture, how a renewed interest in the former has paralleled challenges to the possibility or desirability of the latter, and how the terms resonate in questions of architectural agency, legitimacy and ethics. To explore the context and wider significance of debates within the discipline, I situate these two different (but not unrelated) strands of architectural discourse within wider theoretical currents of place and non-place – currents that they implicitly or explicitly reference and within which Augé's text has been seen to mark a significant shift. These intersections show up political implications in the use of the term 'non-place' to designate contemporary transport and commercial spaces, such as service areas; in particular, how this generalized branding of certain spaces as 'non-place' reinforces a tendency for the roadside – and more generally, the normative, popular and ubiquitous (as distinct from the 'everyday' or 'ordinary') – to remain an unexplored taboo in architectural research, the unthinkable other against which the discipline is defined. I thus trace why, despite the efforts of Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, the study of contemporary commercial spaces has, until recently, remained the preserve of cultural geographers and other social scientists.[122] Though the parallels I draw between architectural and other discourses are inevitably not exhaustive, and cannot cover the diversity of viewpoints within each field, they help further to differentiate the approach I take in this thesis to 'place' and 'non-place', but especially to what constitutes 'architecture'.

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[121] See, for example, Peter Eisenman, 'Autonomy and the Will to the Critical', in *Written into the Void: Selected Writings, 1990-2004* (New York; London: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 95-9; Kenneth Frampton, 'Towards a Critical Regionalism'; Alexander Tzonis and Liliane Lefaivre, 'The Grid and the Pathway: An Introduction to the Work of Dimitris and Susana Antonakakis', *Architecture in Greece*, 15 (1981), 164-78. The claim of both to resist universalization and commodification has been questioned, as I later explore.

[122] See, for example, Mark Gottdiener, *The Theming of America: American Dreams, Media Fantasies, and Themed Environments*, 2nd edn (Colorado; Oxford: Westview Press, 2001); Sorkin, 'Variations'; Chaney, 'Subtopia'; Normark, 'Tending to Mobility'; Lloyd, 'Dwelltime'; Sharma, 'Baring Life'.

Place to come or place without difference?

In his 'topography of contemporary French theory', Bruno Bosteels traces 'a
momentous change of perspective that has been taking place over the past few decades
within the parameters of the so-called spatial turn' – by which he, like others,
distinguishes postmodernity from a temporally focussed modernity.[123] This
'momentous change' has, he suggests, been overlooked by Augé's readers, especially
those reading in translation:[124]

> Non-places […] figure much more prominently in contemporary French
> thought than even a careful reader would be able to surmise from Augé's [book
> …]. In fact, almost *all* contemporary French thinkers whom English-language
> commentaries associate with so-called post-structuralism and the critique or
> deconstruction of humanism, at one point or another in their trajectories, assign
> a central role to a certain notion of non-place.

Where non-place is, for Augé, an objectively verifiable reality – 'the place of post- or
supermodernity' as Bosteels puts it – for many other thinkers it has been a 'conceptual
tool […] to draw the contours of new modes of critical philosophical thinking': not 'a
concrete, geographical or architectural site', but a place to come.[125] In the work of
Foucault, Barthes, Gilles Deleuze, Alain Badiou, Michel de Certeau and others, non-
place [*non-lieu*] (otherwise termed or translated *u-topos*, *heterotopia*, out-of-place

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[123] Bruno Bosteels, 'Nonplaces: An Anecdoted Topography of Contemporary French Theory',
Diacritics, 33.3-4 (2003), 117-39. Bosteels illustrates the point with reference to the work of Foucault,
in which 'a vital emphasis on space, geography and territoriality forces us to take leave of the modern
paradigm of consciousness – typically associated with the category of time and its unfolding in the mind
or spirit – in favour of a situated understanding of knowledge, subjectivity and power' (pp. 117-18). As
Edward Casey points out, Gaston Bachelard's 'topoanalysis' similarly resists an emphasis on time in
consideration of the psyche: 'At times we think we know ourselves in time, when all we know is a
sequence of fixations in the spaces of the being's stability [...]. In its countless alveoli space contains
compressed time.' See Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press,
1994), pp. 8-9; Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley, CA.; London: University
of California Press, 1998), pp. 288-9. Others have made the case empirically. Jameson, for example,
makes strong claims for a defining spatial turn in *Postmodernism* (p. 15), while Harvey more cautiously
observes a renewed attention to space, balancing a past focus on time, in *The Condition of
Postmodernity* (p. 355). See also discussions on modernity in the next section.
[124] Such a criticism might, for example, be levelled at Cresswell's unqualified assertion that 'Augé's use
of the name non-places does not have the same negative moral connotations at [Edward] Relph's
"placelessness" [see note … below]. Augé's arguments force theorists of culture to reconsider the theory
and method of their disciplines. While conventionally figured places demand thoughts which reflect
assumed boundaries and traditions, non-places demand new mobile ways of thinking.' See
'Introduction: Theorizing Place', in *Mobilizing Place, Placing Mobility: The Politics of Representation
in a Globalized World*, ed. by Ginette Verstraete and Tim Cresswell (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002) pp. 16-
17. While I agree with Cresswell's approach to thinking 'non-place', his reading of the text overlooks
the pejorative tone and perfunctory analysis of the text. The challenge to disciplinary thought may be
there, but so is a sense of political closure that would render such thoughts futile.
[125] Bosteels, p. 119. Bosteels' argument is not so much that 'non-place' marks a shift from structuralism
to post-structuralism, but that the incompleteness of structure was always key to structuralism and that
this becomes increasingly stressed around the events of 1968.

[*horlieu*], non-site, void, lacuna, interval) alludes to the absence or excess within any system, structure, concept or law that prevents its absolute closure, that ensures its centre, order or origin can never be absolutely fixed, and is thus always destabilizable. It is the space of movement, of becoming, of the event, 'between continuity and rupture, between history and novelty':

> Nonplaces, nonsites or nonloci [are] where various forms of thinking in terms of structure come to grips with an element of irreducible contingency, that is, with the need to think the haphazard nature of an event without losing track of its structural overdetermination.[126]

In 'Deconstruction and the Other', Derrida describes a position 'neither inside nor outside' existing discourse – not outside because 'we are *in* a determinate language', and 'not inside as we might be *inside* a box', but traversing a boundary that is not 'simple':

> The idea of the finitude and exhaustion of metaphysics does not mean that we are incarcerated in it as prisoners or victims of some unhappy fatality. It is simply that our belonging to, and inheritance in, the language of metaphysics is something that can only be rigorously and adequately thought about from *another topos* or space where our problematic rapport with the boundary of metaphysics can be seen in a more radical light. Hence my attempts to discover the non-place or *non-lieu* which would be the 'other' of philosophy. This is the task of deconstruction.

Within 'poststructuralist' discourse, non-place is thus key to theories of the other: a place through which existing 'limits' are made to 'tremble', foundational narratives, such as those of traditional anthropology, displaced.[127]

There are some parallels here with the work of Eisenman, Libeskind and others (long before the former collaborated with Derrida over the design of Parc de la Villette), with attempts to de-centre dominant notions of architecture, to resist its reduction to rationalized, commodified formula, to draw attention to what the status quo represses without recourse to past styles.[128] It is important to note, however, that

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[126] Bosteels, pp. 120-5. *Heterotopia* is a term coined by Foucault, but defined in two different ways. Following Bosteels, I here refer to the less specific notion of *heterotopia* as opening in structure set out in the introduction to *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. xvi-xxvi.

[127] Derrida, 'Deconstruction and the Other', p. 162.

[128] On this collaboration, see *Chora L Works: Jaques Derrida and Peter Eisenman*, ed. by Jeffrey Kipnis and Thomas Leeser (New York: Monacelli Press, 1997). Casey gives a philosophical account of the exchange, albeit, I would argue, with insufficient consideration of how 'place' features elsewhere in Derrida's writing, or attention to the differences between the two, especially on questions of autonomy. See *Fate of Place*, pp. 309-21. Eisenman is perhaps most well-known and uncompromising in his

these attempts to approach an other architecture tend to be sought more explicitly beyond the socio-economic and political norms they critique, within a supposedly autonomous, unfolding of 'architecture'. Anxiety in the face of architecture's perceived appropriation as techno-scientific, socio-political or commercial instrument of a larger system is manifested in such work as a claim to absolute detachment from mainstream architectural production, in a focus on 'interiority', 'disciplinary processes', formalism, 'abstraction' and 'figuration': in a reinforcing of institutional boundaries and exclusions of the kind that some of the writers of non-place mentioned above seek in different ways to transgress.[129] Here, there is no 'downward to go upward', no 'learning from everything'. Where *Learning from Las Vegas* reasserts disciplinary mastery by sublimating the commercial other into an aestheticized same, Eisenman and others advance a strategic repression of undesired outside forces. This is what Koolhaas critiques, in 'Bigness', as 'the defence line of dismantlement':

> The world is decomposed into incompatible fractals of uniqueness […]: a
> paroxysm of fragmentation that turns the particular into a *system*. […] In this

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formulation of architectural 'autonomy' – and it is this that I follow most closely here. Nevertheless there are, I argue, clear parallels with the concerns of other contemporaneous theorists, such as Vidler and Rossi, as well as with the work of Libeskind, Hadid and others. K. Michael Hays traces and contextualizes debates surrounding autonomy, in 'Introduction: The Oppositions of Autonomy and History', in *Oppositions Reader* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), pp. ix–xv. Despite some similarity in built work, Bernhard Tschumi's emphasis on the disruptive potential of programme, on event as a trigger for social change, on the role of socio-political context in any reading of architecture and the necessity of tactical engagement in design (like the approach of Rem Koolhaas that I discuss later) marks an important difference from the formalist work of other so-called 'Deconstructivist' architects. See *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1996), pp. 2-24.

[129] In much of what has been associated with 'architectural autonomy', especially before the 1990s, there is a latent essentialism of Hegelian or Platonic form, a search for evolving 'typologies', or 'deep structures' yet to be revealed; in such studies, external contingency tends to be seen as subordinate to some notion of an inherent structural or narrative order, however abstract and elusive. Thus, in a subtle mirroring of the non-place recounted by Bosteels, this approach relies more on the pursuit of an autonomous internal structure with which to resist external contingency, than of an event that would undermine the apparent closure of an overdetermined, all-pervasive system. This position has changed in more recent work, due, in Eisenman's view, to the insights of post-structuralism and digital techniques. Although the process described is less idealist, the heavy stress on separation as necessary for criticality remains: 'Autonomy [… is] engaged in the survival of the discipline. The discipline is critical within its own project when it detaches itself from other projects rather than from difference in itself. Here, the critical becomes generative as opposed to being reactive or resistant. It becomes part of a dynamic internal condition opening architecture's discourse.' Architecture, in other words, has wider critical implications in so far as it follows its own self-reflexive, internal critique, an unfolding of internal differences, the difference of which is inherently challenging to mainstream construction. While there is no longer the pursuit of an architectural 'essence', there is the assumption of an essential separation that preserves the purity of a disciplinary process, 'autonomy's inexorable will to manifest its singularity'. See Eisenman, 'Autonomy', especially p. 99.

landscape of dismemberment and phony disorder, each activity is *put in its place.*[130]

For Koolhaas, behind these formal representations of dynamism, there lie tightly controlled 'systems' of great formal and functional 'rigidity'. Thus, where a notion comparable to that of non-place in (post-)structuralist thought has been pursued in architectural discourse, an emphasis on self-reflexive, generative design rather than critical engagement, has tended to exclude from direct consideration the commerce of architecture, its processes of materialization, dissemination and inhabitation, the complexity of local and global contexts of which it is inevitably part.[131] If architecture is seen within a movement, it is that of its own, self-critical course, supposedly insulated from mainstream processes of architectural production that are more contingent upon the vicissitudes of wider cultural and economic currents.

To return to the non-place of 'French theory', Augé's text challenges associations of the term with a liberatory otherness. In appropriating non-place to describe the condition of 'supermodernity' – 'the face of a coin whose obverse represents postmodernity: the positive of a negative' – Augé seems to announce at once the total success and failure of (post-)structuralist approaches; theories that he, like Jameson and others, seems to see not as drivers of change in space, time and subjectivity, but as disturbing symptoms of it.

'Postmodern' thought is credited with 'the belief that one mode is worth the same as another', with celebrating the disruption of traditional structures, narratives and hierarchies to the extent that any condition seems equally valid and thinking becomes so self-reflexive that it has little to say about wider socio-cultural trends – hence 'negative'; for Augé, concurrent spatial-social changes – excesses of time, space and individuality – are thus the material 'obverse' of postmodernity, 'positive' only in the sense that they are productive of a new (dis)order, one in which the promise of a transgressive otherness has become nothing more than a convenient illusion within a reality of ahistorical, atopographical sameness. Thus he describes a non-place of solitary subjects amongst fragments of structures that no longer cohere, trapped out of

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[130] 'Bigness', in Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau, *SMLXL* (New York: Montacelli Press), pp. 495-516 (p. 505-6).

[131] My aim here is not primarily to pass judgement on the logic or effectiveness of such endeavours, but to note the ongoing exclusion from architectural discourse of the kind of commercial and institutional practices, and of global flows and exchanges, that receive attention in the work of, for example, Foucault, Barthes and Deleuze, whose concern is not only to define what the social sciences, cultural criticism or philosophy might be, but to engage beyond them.

place where new places or systems of thought will not re-form; a condition of illusory freedom that 'postmodern' discourse, he implies, at best reflects, at worst conceals in narratives of self-liberation.[132] For Bosteels, this Augéan notion of 'non-place' without escape, of non-place as 'the opposite of utopia', is nihilistic:

> Nonplace […] no longer seems to be the site of a possible event; it marks, rather, a space completely emptied out of eventfulness or, which is but the other side of the same coin, a world saturated by an overabundance of utterly meaningless events.[133]

Despite some acknowledgement that non-place is, like anthropological place, an 'invention', it seems, through Augé's account, to become the final incarceration '*inside a box*' that Derrida rejects – final not because its boundaries cannot be approached, but because they are mistakenly assumed to be already breached.[134] As traditional structures are fragmented and displaced, as process and event seemingly triumph over order and stability, they leave an unreadable condition with no visible centre to be challenged, or foundation to be undermined, no possibility of counter-movement. Ian Buchanan, from a very different – explicitly Marxist, Jamesonian position – finds this implication of stasis similarly problematic and apolitical because it fails to link forces 'inside' and 'outside' in any kind of dynamic struggle:

> Theoretically speaking, Augé's approach is most certainly dialectical, but practically this is less certain. Ethnology, he says, must always deal with two spaces at once: 'that of the place it is studying (village, factory) and the bigger one in which this place is located, the source of the influences and constraints which are not without effects on the internal play of local relations (tribe, kingdom, state)'. Yet that second place is never treated as truly defining, or determining, by him, never said to condition the other space in a significant and necessary way, so his method is not actually dialectical at all. While Augé does not celebrate the advent of supermodernity […] he is not able to critique it either.[135]

Whether the sense of closure in Augé's text describes a 'reality' of non-place, or just the experience of its 'illusions', remains ambiguous through much of the book –

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[132] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 17-19. Compare with Jameson, 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', in *Postmodern Culture*, pp. 111-25 (pp. 124-5). The description of 'supermodernity' in *Non-places*, may thus be read – consistent with Augé's notion of 'ethnofiction' – as in part a parody of the futility that he sees in 'postmodern' thought. In this respect, it becomes even less a consideration of a spatial condition of complexity than of a psychological condition of confusion (or academic frustration).

[133] Augé, *Non-places*, p. 111; Bosteels, p. 136.

[134] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 42-3, 78-9.

[135] Ian Buchanan, 'Non-Places: Space in the Age of Supermodernity', *Social Semiotics*, 9.3 (1999), 393-8 (pp. 397-8), citing Augé, *Non-places*, p. 117.

frustratingly so, for readers like Buchanan. What is, however, made clear is that current notions of collectivity, seen as still bound up with nation states, seem to be increasingly irrelevant in a world dominated by global market forces that champion the 'free individual course'. Indeed, the only possibility of moving beyond the illusory freedom of the present – presumably to some form of more authentic freedom of mutually-acknowledged constraints – seems to lie in the return of a clearly bounded place and form of collective consensus, for which he muses on one – slim – possibility:

> One day, perhaps, there will be a sign of intelligent life on another world. Then, through an effect of solidarity […] the whole terrestrial space will become a single place. […] In the meantime, though, it is far from certain that threats to the environment are sufficient to produce the same effect. The community of human destinies is experienced in the anonymity of non-place, and in solitude.[136]

In this positing of a condition in which no other place can be collectively thought – unless, perhaps, a new, real other appears – Augé seems, like Jameson, to announce an end to conceptions of utopia.[137]

'Real' space and the resistances of place

If promoters of architectural autonomy, such as those mentioned above, claim the possibility of non-place as an other space still to come, 'Critical Regionalism' seems to mark a loss of confidence in a contemporary *avant-garde* that would break the closure of modernity, to focus instead on a loss of place and how it might be regained through some form of global localness. Frampton's notion of an '*arrière-garde* position', seems, like Augé's description of non-place, to mark what is at once a retreat from modes of global exchange and mobility, and an acknowledgement of their inevitability. His definition of an approach that 'distances itself equally from the Enlightenment myth of progress and from a reactionary, unrealistic impulse to return to the architectonic forms of the pre-industrial past', seems, at first, to open the possibility of a position similar to that of Derrida discussed in the last section, 'the need to move

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[136] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 111-120 (p. 120). Augé qualifies references to images and illusions on p. 118, and addresses the relation to national governments on pp. 111-5.

[137] See Frederic Jameson, 'The Politics of Utopia', *New Left Review*, 25 (January-February, 2004), 35-54 (p. 36): 'Yet the waning of the utopian idea is a fundamental historical and political symptom, which deserves diagnosis in its own right – if not some new and more effective therapy. For one thing, that weakening of the sense of history and of the imagination of historical difference which characterizes postmodernity is, paradoxically, intertwined with the loss of that place beyond all history (or after its end) which we call utopia.'

both slowly and quickly'. Indeed, Frampton draws on some similar sources and language to describe 'Critical Regionalism' as a process, rather than a fixed style or structure:

> As a cultural strategy [it] is as much a bearer of *world culture* as it is a vehicle of *universal civilization*. […] Since we are, in principle, subject to the impact of both, we have no choice but to take cognizance today of their interaction. […] The practice of Critical Regionalism is contingent upon a process of double mediation. […] It has to 'deconstruct' the overall spectrum of world culture which it inevitably inherits; [… and] it has to achieve, through synthetic contradiction, a manifest critique of universal civilization.[138]

The use of the generalized term 'world culture' to describe local difference is clearly problematic and contradictory to the stated aim of resisting 'universalization', as Keith Eggener has noted.[139] More significant for this discussion, however, is how this process quickly becomes a redrawing of boundaries according to a specific, grounded notion of place taken from Martin Heidegger's 1954 essay 'Building Dwelling Thinking':

> Against […] the antique *abstract* concept of space as a more or less endless continuum of evenly subdivided spatial components or integers […] Heidegger opposes the German word for space (or, rather, place), […] *Raum*. Heidegger argues that the phenomenological essence of such a space/place depends upon the *concrete*, clearly defined nature of a boundary, for, as he puts it, 'A boundary is not that at which something stops, but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing.' […] Heidegger shows that etymologically the German gerund *building* is closely linked with the archaic forms of *being*, *cultivating* and *dwelling*, and goes on to state that the condition of 'dwelling' and hence ultimately of 'being' can only take place in a domain that is clearly bounded.[140]

'Abstract' is a term that appears in the translation of Heidegger's text; 'concrete' is not. Consistent with many other architectural appropriations of philosophical 'space', this reading takes a notion bound up with a particular ontology, with inseparable

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[138] Frampton, 'Six Points', pp. 20-1.

[139] For a challenge to critical regionalism as 'a construct most often imposed from outside, from positions of authority' that 'inadvertently marginalized and conflated the diverse architectural tendencies it championed', see Keith Eggener, 'Placing Resistance: A Critique of Critical Regionalism', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 55.4 (May 2002), 228-37. (pp. 228, 233).

[140] Frampton, 'Six Points', p. 24. In Heidegger's text, the last three words of the quotation are italicized. I maintain the flattening of Frampton's usage, as this not only switches attention from 'presencing' to 'boundary' (a term that appears only here in Heidegger's text) in line with Frampton's argument, it allows the emphasis of this passage of his commentary to be placed instead on a term of his own: 'concrete'. Compare to 'Building Dwelling Thinking', *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), pp. 143-59 (p. 152). On the problems of translating *Raum* and other terms in Heidegger's essay, especially in terms of the distinctions architects have sought to draw, see Adam Sharr, *Heidegger for Architects* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2007), pp. 50-2.

cognitive, sensory, social, temporal as well as topographical dimensions – in this case, Heidegger's 'presencing', 'dwelling' as '*the basic character* of Being' – and turns it into something closer to an independent material substance, rationally identifiable and thus reproducible.[141] With descriptions of dwelling as 'to remain, to stay in a place', 'to remain at peace', 'to spare, to preserve', there is much in Heidegger's text that emphasizes stasis; yet there is also a stress on interrelation, on process, on 'gathering' which suggests that 'place' could never be strictly bounded, construed as an entity in itself.[142]

In Frampton's reading, Heidegger's relational 'place' becomes an empirical, 'bounded domain', a 'precondition' for the survival, not only of regional differences, but – in a mirroring of claims to autonomy discussed above – of the discipline of architecture itself:

> While we may remain skeptical as to the merit of grounding critical practice in a concept so hermetically metaphysical as Being, we are, when confronted with the ubiquitous placelessness of our modern environment, nonetheless brought to posit, after Heidegger, the absolute precondition of a bounded domain in order to create an architecture of resistance. Only such a defined boundary will permit the built form to stand against – and literally to withstand in an institutional sense – the endless processal flux of the Megalopolis.[143]

In this revealing passage, skepticism for what seems to be an unpalatably 'hermetical' reaction is quickly legitimized by exceptional contemporary conditions, a restless motion, alienation and standardization associated with modernity, urbanization, and, as Frampton makes clear elsewhere in the essay, the automobile, 'automotive distribution' and a 'motopia' of 'serpentine freeway[s]' devoid of real public space.[144] Like Augé's analysis of space-time excess (and Heidegger's concern that 'the frantic abolition of all distances brings no nearness', but 'places everything outside its own

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[141] Jeremy Till discusses this tendency to conflate architectural and philosophical notions of 'space' in 'Thick Time: Architecture and the Traces of Time', in *Intersections*, pp. 283-95 (p. 284-5); Heidegger, p. 158.

[142] Heidegger, pp. 144, 147-8, 151. The analogy of language is significant here: 'Man acts as though *he* were the shaper and master of language, while in fact *language* remains the master of man. Perhaps it is before all else man's subversion of *this* relation of dominance that drives his nature into alienation' (p. 144).

[143] Frampton, 'Six Points', p. 25.

[144] Frampton, 'Six Points', pp. 17, 25. As indicated above (and below), I would dispute Frampton's assertion that Heidegger's notion of Being is necessarily 'hermetical'. However, as 'Six Points' makes clear, it certainly carries a danger of being read as such.

nature'),[145] he rejects distant social interactions as inauthentic, in the process allying Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* with Webber's 'non-place urban realm'.[146] The multinational movements and currencies that Venturi brought to attention and, by a process of sublimation, contained, are here resisted by a drawing of boundaries – not around an autonomous disciplinary space of becoming, but, rather, around an architecture bound up with the unfolding specificity of place.

In this notion of place, related to 'Being', 'dwelling', 'presencing', Frampton's 'Critical Regionalism' is one example within a wider turn, already in process within architecture and geography at least from the 1970s and -80s, to emphasize distinct places in the face of 'universal placelessness'. This may be seen in the writings of humanist geographers Edward Relph and Yi-Fu Tuan, architectural theorists and practitioners, such as Christian Norberg-Schulz and Peter Zumthor, and philosopher Edward Casey, especially his *Getting Back into Place*.[147] Many of the more architectural propositions tend, like Frampton's, to overlook the ambiguities of Heidegger's centring of people in place, of a gathering that, as 'Building Dwelling Thinking''s privileged example of a bridge implies, carries within it tendencies to movement, to instabilities both social and structural.[148] Indeed, the notion of an authentic place as enduring centre of authentic human experience has become a common theme in redefinitions of architecture as process- and people-focussed 'place-making', many resembling a selectively appropriated and concretized version of Heidegger's distinction between dwelling and building:

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[145] Heidegger, 'The Thing', *Poetry, Language, Thought*, pp. 163-80 (p. 163-4). Following similar themes to Augé, albeit perhaps with more references to the apocalyptic, Heidegger draws on atomic references, like those Derrida negotiates in 'No Apocalypse': 'Man stares at what the explosion of the atom bomb could bring with it. He does not see that the atom bomb and its explosion are the mere final emission of what has long since taken place, has already happened.'

[146] Frampton, 'Six Points', p. 25.

[147] See Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976): 'Roads, railways, airports, cutting across or imposed on the landscape rather than developing with it, are not only features of placelessness in their own right, but, by making possible the mass movement of people with all their fashions and habits, have encouraged the spread of placelessness well beyond their immediate impacts' (p. 90); Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977) (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1979): 'Man dwells when he can orientate himself within and identify himself with an environment, or, in short, when he experiences the environment as meaningful. Dwelling therefore implies something more than "shelter". It implies that the spaces where life occurs are *places*, in the true sense of the word. A place is a space which has a distinct character' (p. 5); Peter Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1999), pp. 34-7. Edward Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1993).

[148] Heidegger, pp. 150-55.

We attain to dwelling, so it seems, only by means of building. The latter, building, has the former, dwelling, as its goal. Still, not every building is a dwelling. Bridges and hangars, stadiums and power stations are buildings but not dwellings; railway stations and highways, dams and market halls are built, but they are not dwelling places. […] These buildings house man. He inhabits them and yet does not dwell in them, when to dwell means merely that we take shelter in them. […] Yet those buildings that are not dwelling places remain in turn determined by dwelling insofar as they serve man's dwelling. Thus dwelling would in any case be the end that presides over all building. […] Yet at the same time by the means-end schema we block our view of the essential relations. For building is not merely a means and a way toward dwelling – to build is in itself already to dwell.[149]

Architecture thus becomes, for example in Christopher Alexander's *The Timeless Way of Building* or Simon Unwin's 'architecture as identification of place', a process of inhabitation, of crafting, of appropriation through active marking of territory, a concrete investment over time, but which is also – for the architect as anticipator and facilitator of place – a language that may be decoded and reproduced.[150] Such positions, recalling distinctions discussed in the last section between an inherently varied and meaningful 'living' speech and an automatic 'dead' writing, might embrace Pevsner's bike shed, but rarely Venturi's billboard – unless, perhaps, if it were self-made, reworked or reused. Indeed, this humanist emphasis – on timeless, authentic forms of human dwelling – recurs widely in otherwise quite different architectural notions of place, for example, in the lines that follow Aldo van Eyck's much quoted aphorism of the early 1960s, 'whatever space and time mean, place and occasion mean more': 'for space in the image of man is place and time in the image of man is occasion'.[151] Rather than place as a gathering that is human and inhuman, known and

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[149] Heidegger, pp. 143-4.

[150] See, for example, Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa and Murray Silverstein, *A Pattern Language of Architecture: Towns, Building, Construction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Christopher Alexander, *The Timeless Way of Building* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 7: '*There is one timeless way of building.* […] *It is not possible to make great buildings, or great towns, beautiful places, places where you feel yourself, places where you feel alive, except by following this way.* […] It is a process through which the other of a building or a town grows out directly from the inner nature of the people, and the animals, and the plants, and the matter which are in it.' For 'architecture as identification of place', mixing notions of 'place-making' and 'place-choosing', see Simon Unwin, *Analysing Architecture*, 3rd rev. edn (London: Routledge, 2009), especially pp. 5-6, 25-34.

[151] Aldo van Eyck, 'The Medicine of Reciprocity Tentatively Illustrated', *Forum* (Dublin), 15.6-7 (1961), 237-238, 252 (p. 237). Van Eyck repeats the formula in the same terms in a number of other publications around this time. Seen in architectural discourse as 'structuralism', in its concern for the continuity of certain spatial forms in human settlement, the emphasis on inhabitation and appropriation draws close comparison with Heidegger's texts. Though primarily pedestrian-focussed, van Eyck's writings remain within a discourse of harmony between dwelling and city, tradition and modernity, fast and slow, and thus do not draw the kind of absolute boundaries between a motorized world and local place that are found in Frampton's Critical Regionalism. When distinctions are drawn, they are (not so

unknowable, there is for van Eyck, a closer resemblance between subject and place, a reflection. Place is seemingly determined by human agency, a humanizing of space that furthers the possibility of certain kinds of beneficial human relationships – occasions. If this place is contingent, it is only within a limited economy of *human* activity.

There is another angle to this concern for authenticity, which, as much as it too stresses architecture as unfinished and inhabited process, as sensory, poetic and material as well as rational, likewise limits the object of study according to a notion of space freely appropriated. More recent attention to the 'everyday' or 'ordinary' in architecture, often drawing on Henri Lefebvre's focus on '"real" space, […] the space of social practice', has similarly tended to concentrate on the local, non-expert and self-organized as a way to resist global capitalism – albeit with closer attention to the way in which such spaces are socially (as opposed to naturally or individually) constituted, by collective practice rather than design. Lefebvre's explicitly Marxist, materialist emphasis on 'production' confronts modern assumptions that space is a neutral medium (or void) with 'a sort of reality of its own'; rather, space is, he insists, inherently political and ideological, a social product bound up with a particular mode of production, allied to dominant arrangements of knowledge, power and control: 'every society […] produces a space, its own space'. The contemporary 'neo-capitalist' space he describes is divided and unequally contested: its dominant representations of space are abstract and 'logico-mathematical', a rationalized 'technological utopia' in which all is seemingly rendered transparent and intelligible; this conceptually ordered 'Cartesian' space, is seen as imposed upon what would otherwise be a varied and complex 'practico-sensory realm of social space', of everyday life – and works to conceal the resulting contradictions and impoverishments. As *The Production of Space* thus critiques the contemporary fragmentation of space and the unequal power relations it manifests, it posits a past in which space was perceived, conceived and lived with a greater degree of unity:

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differently, perhaps, from those of Lefebvre discussed below), in terms of participation: 'Since […] place and occasion imply participation in what exists, lack of place – and thus of occasion – will cause loss of identity, isolation and frustration.'

> A code at once architectural, urbanistic and political, constituting a language common to country people and townspeople, to the authorities and to artists – a code which allowed space not only to be 'read' but also to be constructed.[152]

While Lefebvre's text distances his project from nostalgia, seen as part of the neo-capitalist myth of realism, it does, however, ally 'authenticity' with 'natural space', link technology to a condition of 'social entropy', and draw distinctions between 'appropriated' and 'dominated' space very similar to Augé's loaded pairing of anthropological place and non-place.[153] There are thus more than traces of a past seen as idealized unity of unmediated natural, social space, an 'imaginary happiness' of the kind Foucault cautions against. It is here, in this lost, traditional place, that architectural readings have often rested, focussing on the alternative to the exclusion of the normative, chiming with Augé's suggestion that 'the social game is being played elsewhere than in the forward posts of contemporaneity'.[154]

In architectural readings of *Non-places*, it is these notions of a self-organized, sedentary place – a differentiated, usually bounded, *unity* of material, social and cultural relations, where people are always together, *in* place – that are taken to be negated.[155] Mirroring architectural interpretations of Heideggerian 'place' or Lefebvrian 'social space', 'non-place' is concretized, to a greater extent even than in Augé's text, as an identifiable spatial category, a real space, but one unworthy of architectural thought or attention.[156] According to theories of architecture dependent on notions of '*genius loci*', 'Critical Regionalism' or the 'everyday', such a non-place of 'building' without 'dwelling', 'domination' without 'appropriation' lies outside not only authentic society, but the discipline, too. By this logic, it is only the local and

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[152] See Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (1974), trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 7-9, 14-15, 25-31.

[153] Lefebvre, pp. 23, 52, 164-8.

[154] Augé, *Non-places*, p. 111.

[155] See, for example, Edwin Heathcote, 'Architecture and Health', in Charles Jencks and Edwin Heathcote, *The Architecture of Hope: Maggie's Cancer Caring Centres* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2010), pp. 52-91 (p. 89); Kieran Long, 'Casa da Musica', *Icon*, 24 (June 2005), <http://www.iconeye.com/read-previous-issues/icon-024-%7C-june-2005/casa-da-musica-%7C-icon-024-%7C-june-2005> [accessed 27 September 2011].

[156] This tendency to concretization and tendency to exclusion in urban design may be seen in Mahyar Arefi's commentary, 'Non-place and Placelessness as Narratives of Loss: Rethinking the Notion of Place', *Journal of Urban Design*, 4.2 (1999), 179-93. This pragmatic approach ends in an encouragement to urban designers to consider both types of spaces, but to do so according to different criteria. It thus continues to reinforce a separation between two monolithic place types of the kind that the texts considered in the first section of this introduction undermine, and which I challenge theoretically, below.

small-scale that is seen to be intricate and inhabited, an authentic locus of resistance in a world increasingly commodified and universalized.

Economies of place and non-place

These tracings, inevitably partial, of notions of place and non-place in architectural theory and philosophy, are important in several ways. The recent identification of non-place with commodified mass culture, with a concrete reality of globalized, commercial space not only describes a contemporary condition; it asserts that claims to a progressive other space, be they architectural or theoretical, end up complicit with the forces they purport to resist, that spatial visions of utopia have been hijacked. Similar accusations have been directed towards post-structuralism by Lefebvre,[157] and to the architectural *avant garde* by, amongst others, Manfredo Tafuri:

> Architecture might make the effort to maintain its completeness and preserve itself from total destruction, but such an effort is nullified by the assemblage of architectural pieces in the city. It is in the city that these fragments are pitilessly absorbed and deprived of any autonomy.[158]

Any claim to purity or autonomy cannot avoid appropriation as a commodity within a system from which nothing can simply escape, as Derrida's notion of iterability introduced in the last section – whereby 'one time is in itself divided or multiplied in advance' – implies.[159]

In architecture especially, this discrediting of the possibility of an other space runs parallel to assertions of a more concrete, material resistance, that might, like the

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[157] See *Production of Space*, pp. 5-6: 'A powerful ideological tendency, one much attached to its own would-be scientific credentials, is expressing, in an admirably unconscious manner, those dominant ideas which are perforce the ideas of the dominant class. To some degree, perhaps, these ideas are deformed or diverted in the process, but the net result is that: a particular "theoretical practice" produces a *mental* space, which is apparently, but only apparently, extra-ideological. In an inevitably circular manner, this mental space then becomes the locus of a "theoretical practice" which is separated from social practice and which sets itself up as the axis, pivot or central reference point of Knowledge.'

[158] Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development*, trans. by Barbara Luigia La Penta (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1974), p. 14. See also, pp. 176-82: 'The ideology of design is just as essential to the integration of modern capitalism in all the structures and suprastructures of human existence, as is the illusion of being able to oppose that design with instruments of a different type of designing, or of a radical "antidesign"' (p. 179). For more recent critique of architectural autonomy, see Tahl Kaminer, 'Autonomy and Commerce: The Integration of Architectural Economy', *Architectural Research Quarterly*, 11.1 (2007), 63-70; and Till, *Architecture Depends*, pp. 17-26. While Till critiques escapism and irrelevance, Kaminer argues, with reference to Baudrillard's *System of Objects*, that by stressing uniqueness – as 'model' distinct from existing 'series' – the architecture of Eisenman and others becomes a highly sought-after commodity in spite of – or rather because of – its claimed autonomy.

[159] Derrida, 'Limited', p. 45.

pedestrian movements of Self and Sinclair, in some way slow the pace of change, restore an authentic existence. This return to place has, in turn, been critiqued for a tendency to reinforce not only existing and traditional structures, but with them, the hierarchies and exclusions inevitably involved in the drawing and policing of those boundaries. Such arguments are directed at architectural advocates of Heideggerian place by Neil Leach, who draws on Jean-François Lyotard's philosophical critique and the links he explores (albeit loosely and non-causally) between the philosopher's thought and his involvement with the Nazis.[160] For Lyotard, bucolic 'dwelling' is a myth that haunts the rise of the techno-scientific city:

> The *domus* is [not] the figure of community that can provide an alternative to the megalopolis. Domesticity is over, and probably it never existed, except as a dream of the old child awakening and destroying it on awakening. […] Thought today makes no appeal, cannot appeal, to the memory which is tradition, to the bucolic *physis* to rhyming time, to perfect beauty. In going back to these phantoms, it is sure to get it wrong – what I mean is, it will make a fortune out of the retro distributed by the megalopolis just as well (it might come in useful). Thought cannot want its house. But the house haunts it.

Not only is this figure of bucolic domesticity as politically problematic as it is illusory, it, too, may be seen as a commodity in the contemporary phase of capitalism, in which (as I explore in detail in the second case study) nostalgia and difference are highly profitable – they 'come in useful' as Lyotard puts it: 'I'll take it, your *domus*, it's saleable, your nostalgia'.[161] 'Autonomous' place or 'autonomous' non-place, both seem, in light of Derrida's 'No Apocalypse', to be a form of 'stockpiling', a 'capitalization' that is also a 'potentialization of speed', a difference that contains within it the promise of transaction.[162]

Beyond debates surrounding the effectiveness of, or dangers inherent within, the two positions, their apparent opposition disguises a common feature. Discourses of place and non-place have been differently mobilized to address urgent questions of architecture's relevance and survival as a non-instrumentalized, critical discipline in a highly industrialized and commodified culture; such attempts at redefinition, whether as *avant garde* or *arrière garde*, be it through the abstractly 'formal' or materially

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[160] Jean-François Lyotard, '*Domus* and the Megalopolis', in *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 191-204 (pp. 194-6); Neil Leach, 'The Dark Side of the *Domus*', in *What is Architecture?*, ed. by Andrew Ballantyne (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 88-101.
[161] Lyotard, '*Domus*', pp. 201-2.
[162] Derrida, 'No Apocalypse', p. 21; see also, Jacques Derrida, 'The Principle of Reason: The University in the Eyes of its Pupils', *Diacritics* 13.3 (Autumn 1983), 3-20 (pp. 13-14).

'concrete', have, with few exceptions, involved a distancing from the commercial mainstream, from a common enemy with which each side tries to prove the other's complicity. With architecture seemingly more at risk of assimilation into this repressed, yet dominant condition, disciplinary notions of place and non-place have, I argue, become more polarized and concretized than they are in the philosophies on which they draw. Thus, the relation between architectural production and wider networks of exchange, the irreducible intermixing of so-called place and non-place, has, until recently, gone under-explored by architects, and been left, instead, to cultural critics, geographers, urban planners and economists.

Similar observations of a problematic divergence in approaches to place have, however, also been made by writers describing the so-called 'mobilities turn' in the social sciences: Cresswell and John Urry, amongst others, identify a polarization between advocates of a 'sedentarist metaphysics' and a 'nomadic metaphysics', neither of which seems to offer a sufficiently rigorous engagement with the complexities of material context. While the former – in which they include Relph and Tuan – is critiqued for a humanism that favours established norms and stabilities at the expense of the marginal and transitory, the latter – largely drawing on the texts of Deleuze and Guattari to emphasize nomadism and becoming, but which could also include Webber – is seen to overlook the extent to which people and things are bound up with contexts not so easily escaped, and within which everyone is not equally able to move.[163] Thus movement, they argue, tends to be ignored or rendered homogeneously smooth, put in place or not placed at all. More recently in these fields, Doreen Massey, Urry, Thrift and others have pointed to dynamic, interwoven notions of place not dissimilar from that traced in terms of iterability in the last section, whereby place is no longer seen as a specific, bounded location in a general space (or non-place), but as a constant play of

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[163] Cresswell, *On the Move*, pp. 25-56; *Mobilizing Place*, pp. 12-26; Urry, *Mobilities*, pp. 31-2.

competing and unequal forces in a context full of interrelated placings in motion.[164]
Faced with such complexities, Thrift responds: 'Escape, no. Work with and on, yes.'[165]

Engaging architecture: politics, risk and responsibility

This thesis challenges architecture's mutually supportive and still powerful notions of place and non-place, their common assumption that the discipline must be defined as external to the market, and their preoccupation with recapturing some form of bounded presence, in the past or to come; it argues, instead, that architectural discourses must pay attention to all conditions, all processes of placing, and their interrelations – not just to retain relevance, but, I will argue, out of responsibility. As the texts discussed in the first section of this introduction confront, culturally, the division between social and asocial, public and private space, so this thesis cuts across dominant notions of architecture's object and how that object – or 'thing', borrowing Heidegger's emphasis on relations, but without the allusions to authenticity, essence or fixity – should be engaged.[166] I thus follow Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour's efforts to expand the scope of architectural research, but by an opening to the other that resists the tendency to gather within, a 'withholding judgement' that does not mean assimilation.[167] This is not a political (or apolitical) gesture towards popularism, as *Learning from Las Vegas* has been read by some; nor is it an aestheticizing or romanticizing of the service area. Rather, it is a study of architecture in process and in relation, driven by a concern for what is excluded. This, then, is a contribution to a closer reading of service areas, from their smallest details to their place in regional, national and global networks, considering materials, surfaces and constructions, forms, spaces and arrangements, structures, orders and hierarchies, as sensory and peripatetic experiences inseparable from conscious and unconscious associations. In this, I draw on the approaches of, for

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[164] See, for example, Doreen Massey, 'A Global Sense of Place', *Marxism Today*, 38 (June 1991), 24-9 (especially, pp. 28-9): 'Instead […], of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself, whether that be a street, or a region or even a continent. And this in turn allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local.' 'One of the great one-liners in marxist exchanges has for long been "ah, but capital is not a thing, it's a process". Perhaps this should be said also about places; that places are processes, too.'
[165] Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory*, p. 88.
[166] See Heidegger, pp. 164-84.
[167] Compare with Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 3.

example, Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*, Unwin's *Analysing Architecture*, David Leatherbarrow's *Architecture Oriented Otherwise*,[168] which variously focus on how the homely is multiply meaningful in wider material, cultural and social contexts; I use such methods of close but expansive reading to explore how sites long seen as meaningless and undifferentiated, too little designed, too frequently renewed – architecture's repressed, its unhomely – are just as intricate and significant within contexts that are not just socio-cultural, but political and economic, too – non-human as well as human.

But this still leaves an important question for this thesis: compared to the tightly bounded notions of architecture described above – whether aspiring to utopian non-place beyond a reality too placed, or to re-found place against the grain of a generic non-place – is this thesis's determination to engage not in danger of legitimizing the *status quo*? In approaching commercially-driven architecture, in seeing it as a valid locus of disciplinary study, is there not the risk of denying the possibility of resistance – just as, I have argued, Augé appears to do?

The architect and theorist who has, more than any other, embraced the commercial within architectural discourse, tried to work 'with and on', has been accused of just such nihilism by some.[169] Koolhaas sees architecture of the kind defined by Pevsner as irrelevant at a time when orthodoxies of (architectural) aesthetics or functionalism no longer retain even the illusion of authority over production, as his essay 'Junkspace' makes clear:

> Because we abhor the utilitarian, we have condemned ourselves to a lifelong immersion in the arbitrary … […] If spacejunk is the human debris that litters the universe, Junk-Space is the residue mankind leaves on the planet. The built […] product of modernization is not modern architecture but Junkspace. Junkspace is what remains after modernization has run its course, or, more precisely, what coagulates while modernization is in progress, its fallout. […]Architecture disappeared in the twentieth century; we have been reading a footnote under a microscope hoping it would turn into a novel […]. Junkspace seems an aberration, but it is the essence, the main thing, the product of an encounter between escalator and air-conditioning, conceived in an incubator of Sheetrock (all three missing from the history books). […] Air-conditioning has dictated mutant regimes of organization and coexistence that leave architecture behind. A single shopping center is now the work of generations of space

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[168] David Leatherbarrow, *Architecture Oriented Otherwise* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009).
[169] See, for example, Antonio Negri, 'On Rem Koolhaas', *Radical Philosophy*, 154 (March/April 2009), pp. 48-50.

planners, repairmen, and fixers, like in the Middle Ages; air-conditioning
sustains our cathedrals. […] Because it costs money, is no longer free,
conditioned space inevitably becomes conditional space; sooner or later all
conditional space turns into Junkspace …[170]

Koolhaas reads architecture as process: as inevitably contingent and arbitrary no matter
how rational and singular it seems, as bound up with wider economies in which space
is a manipulable, 'conditional' commodity; unlike research in other social and cultural
fields, 'Junkspace' reads contemporary commercial spaces through materials, details,
forms and surfaces, while still seeing them within wider relations and flows. In this, it
is an important reference point for this thesis. But there are also important points of
difference.

For all its specific examples and allusions to contemporary buildings,
'Junkspace' generalizes and exaggerates, describing a condition that is at least as
fragmented and unreadable as that of *Non-places*: 'A fuzzy empire of blur, it fuses
high and low, public and private, straight and bent, bloated and starved to offer a
seamless patchwork of the permanently disjointed'; 'it is subsystem only, without
superstructure, orphaned particles in search of a frame-work or pattern'; 'there is no
form, only proliferation'; 'more and more, more is more'.[171] While the text is full of
insightful readings, associations, and intertexts, the overall impression is of a context
in which it is not possible to perceive difference, to make any sense beyond the
instance, to move slowly as well as quickly. Architecture (or building) is seen as
byproduct of wider processes, tending to stasis, but always being moved; the only
response is seemingly to try to ride the flow, to be with the movement rather than
against it.

The premise of this thesis, by contrast, is that architecture is not only being
moved by, but always moving with, and against, the wider networks of which it is part,
producing as much as it is being produced, meaningful even when it seems
unmemorable.[172] For – as Koolhaas otherwise acknowledges – the forces and flows

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[170] Rem Koolhaas, 'Junkspace', in Rem Koolhaas/OMA-AMO, *Content: Triumph of Realization*
(Cologne; London: Taschen, 2004), pp. 162-71 (pp. 162-3). (also published in *October*, 100 (Spring,
2002), pp. 175-190 and *Project on the City 2: Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping*, ed. by
Chiuhua Judy Chung, and others (Cologne: Taschen, 2001), pp. 408-21)

[171] Koolhaas, 'Junkspace', pp. 163-4.

[172] Thrift makes a similar argument for the relevance of that which seems left behind: 'As practices lose
their place in a historical form of life, they may leave abandoned wreckage behind them which can then
take on new life, generating new hybrids or simply leavings which still have resonance. Take the
example of things. These may have been vital parts of particular networks of practice, only to fall out of

that mark as they are marked by buildings and spaces are not homogenous or predictable, and architectural encounters, like other relations and experiences, are not only conscious: if all is 'fused', not all fusings are equally 'seamless', smooth or transparent. This is how I interpret Foucault's response when questioned on the possibility of architectural determinism, of a precise match between form and society or ideology: 'I do not think that it is possible to say that one thing is of the order of "liberation" and another is of the order of "oppression".' This is, he makes clear, not to render that thing neutral, indeterminate, passive or unreadable, but instead to insist on attention to the specificity of contexts and practices, to how it positions and is positioned within 'fields of power relations' that are never absolutely fixed: 'If [social relations and spatial distributions] are separated, they become impossible to understand. Each can only be understood through the other.' And as he later stresses: 'Nothing is fundamental. […] There are only reciprocal relations and the perpetual gaps between intentions in relation to one another' – reading 'intentions' here to be not only architectural, or even human, but to include a diversity of forces and affects.[173]

Drawing on Derrida (Deleuze, Thrift and others), I likewise see capitalism – in its inseparability from the diverse socio-cultural, political and economic fields within which architecture takes place – not as a unified force or system, a single entity, but as a multiplicity of differential processes and affects, within which there are always tensions and slippages:

> There is no longer, there never was just capital, nor capitalism in the Singular, but capitalisms plural – whether State or private, real or symbolic, always linked to spectral forces – or rather capitalizations whose antagonisms are irreducible.[174]

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use as these networks metamorphose. Consequently their meanings may become hollowed out but may still retain a presence as enigmatic signifiers. Or they may find new uses in other networks. Or they may linger on as denaturalized reminders of past events and practices, purposely memorialized in various ways or simply present as ruins, as melancholy rem(a)inders. In other words, things can have a potent afterlife.' See *Non-Representational Theory*, pp. 8-9. In the formulation I offer above, however, I mean to emphasize not only a 'lingering' significance, but one that through wider social, cultural and political changes might morph into a significance different, perhaps greater, than at time of 'production'.

[173] Foucault, 'Space, Knowledge, Power', pp. 371-3.

[174] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 73. See also, Thrift, *Knowing Capitalism* (London: Sage, 2005), pp. 1-6: 'The unified field is a dream. Every system is overcoded and proliferates in only relatively stable and relatively predictable ways. There are all kinds of gaps and hesitations, excesses and remainders, which arise from the fact that all kinds of things other than capitalism are constantly going on which constitute lines of interference which can never totally be tuned out. Opacity, division and wildness result […] Thus […] capitalism is performative: it is always engaged in experiment, as the project is perpetually unfinished. Capitalism is therefore a highly adaptive and constantly mutating formation; it is a set of poised systems.' As I have already noted, Thrift does not, however, consider only movement to be

And, as Massey argues, within this mobile 'capitalism', there are multiple, differentiated places, which cannot be reduced to a pattern of meaningless repetition, an undifferentiated proliferation:

> The specificity of place is continually reproduced, but it is not a specificity which results from some long, internalised history. […] Globalisation (in the economy, or in culture, or in anything else) does not entail simply homogenisation. On the contrary, the globalisation of social relations is yet another source of (the reproduction of) geographical uneven development, and thus of the uniqueness of place.[175]

As 'Junkspace' boldly confronts architects with the 'generic' and 'arbitrary' so long repressed from disciplinary discourse, frenetically slipping between examples, undermining certainties of place and authorship, it also, however, tends to render unified and monolithic what it claims to be ungraspable and continuous – an impression that the ever-present ellipses, paragraph-less prose and lack of introduction or conclusion are not enough to escape.

With this thesis, I argue that there remains a 'non-place' to be explored in architectural research, a 'non-place' not simply bounded or boundary-less, hollowed out within or projected without, conceived as neither wholly rational or irrational. In a speech given to Cornell University, published in 1983, Derrida considers the university and its research, questioning their reliance on 'autonomy', on the 'principle of reason' as their '*raison d'être*', in the context of an increasingly 'end-orientated' agenda bound up with 'military-industrial complexes' and 'techno-economic networks'. 'Within the university itself,' he notes, 'forces that are apparently external to it […] are intervening in an ever more decisive way', to the extent that 'one can no longer distinguish between technology on the one hand and theory, science and rationality on the other', in the way that Immanuel Kant, for example, does in *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798) and that persists in notions of 'applied' and 'fundamental'.[176] In this context,

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significant: 'It is all too easy to get carried away and depict capitalism as a kind of big dipper, all thrills and spills. But capitalism can be performative only because of the many means of producing stable repetition which are now available to it and which constitute its routine base' (p. 2).

[175] Massey, p. 29.

[176] Jacques Derrida, 'The Principle of Reason', pp. 3, 11-13. As Derrida makes clear, this orientation of research is bound up with global, not simply national, systems: 'Such a problematics cannot always – cannot any longer – be reduced to a problematics centered on the nation-state; it is now centered instead on multinational military-industrial complexes or techno-economic networks, or rather international technomilitary networks that are apparently multi- or trans-national in form.' 'A State power or the forces that it represents no longer need to prohibit research or to censor discourse, especially in the West. It is enough that they can limit the means, can regulate support for production, transmission, and diffusion.' This reading of 'informatization' – as that which 'integrates the basic to the oriented, the

Derrida seeks to 'resituate' a notion of 'responsibility', 'whether one belongs to [the university] or not':

> Those analysts who study the informative and instrumental value of language today are necessarily led to the very confines of the [techno-scientific] principle of reason thus interpreted. This can happen in any number of disciplines. But if the analysts end up for example working on the structures of the simulacrum or of literary fiction, on a poetic rather than an informative value of language, on the effects of undecidability, and so on, by that very token they are interested in possibilities that arise at the outer limits of the authority and the power of the principle of reason. On that basis, they may attempt to define new responsibilities in the face of the university's total subjection to the technologies of informatization. Not so as to refuse them; not so as to counter with some obscurantist irrationalism (and irrationalism, like nihilism, is a posture that is completely symmetrical to, thus dependent upon, the principle of reason).[177]

Responsibility is here seen to lie in resisting instrumentalization within dominant forces of rationality, but also in daring to engage those forces; for to ignore or to resist absolutely is to be in greater danger of unseen integration. Architectural attempts to engineer the autonomy of place or non-place risk, in different ways, the blind refusal that Derrida cautions against:

> Desiring to remove the university from 'useful' programs and from professional ends, one may always, willingly or not, find oneself serving unrecognized ends, reconstituting powers of caste, class, or corporation. […] To claim to eliminate that risk by an institutional program is quite simply to erect a barricade against a future.

Koolhaas does, unlike those who invoke barriers of place and non-place, engage in what lies outside the institution of architecture. Yet, as 'Junkspace' seeks a different, non-rational language to describe dominant commercial forces, to disrupt their logic from within by a form of *reductio ad absurdum*, it also tends to cast them as pure irrationality – as unthinkable. This is, I argue, only to describe the other side of a simulacrum, to stage a wholly irrational 'reality' in contrast to dominant, overly rational conceptions of it, but not to engage in the deconstruction of their complex interrelation, to explore how each might be convenient illusions for the other –

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purely rational to the technical, [and] thus bear[s] witness to that original intermingling of the metaphysical and the technical' (p. 14) – and of the university's grounding in a principle of reason [*Grund*] – grounding in a principle of grounding – draws heavily on Heidegger's *The Principle of Reason* [*Der Satz vom Grund*] (1957): 'The abyss, the hole, the *Abgrund*, […] would be the impossibility for a principle of grounding to ground itself. This very grounding, then, like the university, would have to hold itself suspended above a most peculiar void' (p. 9).
[177] Derrida, 'Principle of Reason', pp. 14-15.

reciprocally 'useful' as Lyotard puts it. Thus, while 'Junkspace' is certainly an iconoclastic 'event' to shake the boundaries of architectural theory, it risks limiting the terms of the discussion it provokes.

So there is always a gamble in all thought and study, a double danger of appropriation, a challenge which Derrida calls on universities to take on:

> Beware of what opens the university to the outside and the bottomless, but also of what, closing it in on itself, would create only an illusion of closure, would make the university available to any sort of interest, or else render it perfectly useless.[178]

This thesis responds to this Derridean notion of responsibility, the need to be aware of both dangers. It challenges boundaries between what is inside and outside, self and other, but without dissolving the difference between the two, or allowing one to become pure reflection of the other. Rather than retreat from the status quo or critique it outright, I explore the constructedness of dominant spaces and places, how the provisional comes to be seen as permanent, the exclusions and divisions on which this depends, and the power relations involved. This is how I interpret Lyotard's notion of 'bear[ing] witness to the secret timbre', to trace that which is excluded or concealed by dominant discourses – in this case, a discourse that pitches rational institutions (or professions or beings) against irrational markets.[179] This space between is the non-place of this thesis. In the next section, I explore the historical context of motorways and service areas, to show how discourses of boundaries and flow, order and chaos, human and inhuman mark their development. I trace how they came to be and how they remain located within notions of modernity that advocate rational separation as a means to harmony, concentration as a response to freedom, organization as a way to solve the challenges of mobility.

Modernity, mobility and the motorway

> Our motorways and their ancillaries are the product of the way we are now: a mixed economy, a primarily preventive body of planning law, the arable-land-is-sacred lobby, diversifying cinema companies, a belief that advertising is

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[178] Derrida, 'Principle of Reason', pp. 18-19.
[179] Lyotard, '*Domus*', pp. 203-4.

inherently offensive, and a whole gamut of other Island Attitudes. We have got the motorways and service areas we asked for and they are very nearly what we deserved.

[…] And we […] decided, for reasons that escape me, that motorway users must be some sort of social lepers whose hungers, thirsts and overloaded bladders must be satisfied as near as possible, right on the motorway itself, for fear they might contaminate surrounding communities, or (oh horror!) lead to development pressures there.[180]

Banham's caustic assessment of service areas, written in 1968, draws attention to a number of key tensions within the motorway project, most of which are, I argue, still relevant to understanding sites today. It is Banham's assertion, largely affirmed by Lawrence's archival research, that motorways, and especially service areas, represent complex negotiations between various interests, including: private and public, country and city, local and national, tradition and modernity, freedom and control. In this section, I contextualize these interrelated debates and explore how attempts to draw a sharp distinction between road and its surroundings, what Banham at the time called a 'quarantine approach', relates to contemporary questions of place and non-place. First, however, I look at what goes without saying in Banham's tale of compromise and constraint – that cars are the future, a future that should not be held back.[181]

The history of the automobile is seen as closely intertwined with twentieth century western modernity – 'surely, if we want to give it a name, the "century of the car"', remarks Urry – with what are seen as its defining economic models, processes, structures, settlement patterns, buildings, cultures, lifestyles, groups and rhetorics: globalization, mass production, motorways, suburbs, shopping centres, individual consumption, personal mobility, family, freedom.[182] 'Around a relatively simple mechanical entity,' Thrift suggests, '[…] a whole new civilization has been built'.[183] Brian Ladd emphasizes the car's popular significance:

The car combines the promise of thrills with the sovereign assurance of mobility. Mobility is freedom – freedom is mobility – and before the car, mobility was unavailable, or slow, or […] dependent on the whim or goodwill

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[180] Reyner Banham, 'Disservice Areas', *New Society*, 11, 23 May (1968), pp. 762-3 (p. 762).
[181] Reyner Banham, 'Disservice Areas', p. 762.
[182] John Urry, 'The "System" of Automobility', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 21.4-5 2004, 25–39 (p. 26); Mimi Sheller and John Urry, 'The City and the Car', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24.4 (2000), 737-57 (pp. 738-9).
[183] Thrift, *Non-representational Theory*, pp. 79-80.

of others. No wonder cars have the power to stir the blood like no other modern invention.[184]

The car not only facilitates greater flexibility and convenience in motorized travel, it is symbol of individual autonomy and mobile marker of social status, of power, success, wealth and taste, whether on the road or parked on the driveway.[185] For Barthes, automobiles are the twentieth century 'equivalent of the great Gothic cathedrals: […] the supreme creation of an era, conceived with passion by unknown artists, and consumed in image if not in usage by a whole population which appropriates them as a purely magical object.'[186] In Barthes's reading, automobility amounts to a shared belief system, with its sacred objects, rituals of worship, and myths of a better life – but one that allows everyone to own their own church, to take the position of god. The car is thus seen as key to individual and cultural identities, the most coveted object of a society in which, to quote Richard Sennett, 'the modern individual is, above all else, a mobile human being'.[187] But this is not the only link between cars and modernity.

As enabler of mass movements, no longer limited to rails or prescribed by timetables, cars posed new questions of control that were difficult to resolve locally. Cresswell and others point out that, as much as modernity is associated with increasing freedom and speed of mobility, it is also figured as a greater and more centralized ordering of movement – as already seen here, for example, in discussions of Augé, Lévi-Strauss and Lefebvre. Where, in the nineteenth century, railways – and the risk of collision that came with them – were instrumental in the adoption of standardized, rationalized national time, the car is seen as key to a move in the twentieth century towards an increasingly standardized, rationalized space, with national and local planning, zoning patterns and uniformly lit, curved and cambered streetscapes a response to the disorder and safety issues associated with automotive transport. If the synchronization of 'clock time' allowed time to be partitioned and measured more

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[184] Brian Ladd, *Autophobia: Love and Hate in the Automotive Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 1.

[185] Jim Conley, 'Automobile Advertisements: The Magical and the Mundane', in *Car Troubles: Critical Studies of Automobility and Auto-mobility*, ed. by Jim Conley and Arlene Tigar McLaren (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 37-58 (pp. 39-40).

[186] Barthes, 'The New Citroën', in *Mythologies*, pp. 88-90 (p. 88). Barthes plays on the homonym of the Citroën D.S. and *Déesse* [Goddess].

[187] Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (London: Penguin, 2002), pp. 255-6. In *On the Move*, Cresswell traces such notions back at least as far as Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), and a surge in interest in movement around the time of Galileo's emphasis on movement in the physical world and William Harvey's *An Anatomical Study of the Movements of the Heart and of Blood in Animals* (1628), pp. 14-15.

effectively, to be treated as a resource that might be better exploited, by, for example, tighter management of the work day, the motorway as uniform space of ordered individual movement seems bound up with thinking of the nation as a single, organized system.[188] As Merriman notes, service areas have formed part of a drive to control and educate the motorist, distributing advisory literature, encouraging regular refuelling and re-caffeination, and, through the prohibition of alcohol sales, signalling an increasingly tough line on drink-driving.[189] Services are thus part of an infrastructure that, as it provides dedicated spaces for automobiles where they can travel more quickly and efficiently, also shows how myths of unrestricted individual freedom clash with realities of necessary support structures, conventions, laws and limits that moderate such freedoms according to the conditions of collective society. As in Augé's notion of non-place, apparent freedom seems to belie less obvious forms of control. Drawing on Donna Haraway's 'A Cyborg Manifesto', Mimi Sheller and Urry see this duplicity in the prefix 'auto'.

> On the one hand, 'auto' refers reflexively to the humanist self, such as the meaning of 'auto' in notions like autobiography or autoerotic. On the other hand, 'auto' often occurs in conjunction with objects or machines that possess a capacity for movement, as expressed by terms such as automatic, automaton and especially automobile. This double resonance of 'auto' is suggestive of the way in which the car-driver is a 'hybrid' assemblage, not simply of autonomous humans, but simultaneously of machines, roads, buildings, signs and entire culture of mobility.[190]

I now explore this aporia of automobility, this interrelatedness of subjects, machines and contexts in some of the themes to which Banham alludes, beginning with country and city.

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[188] See Cresswell, *On the Move*, pp. 4-6; Urry, *Mobilities*, pp. 90-125; Thift, *Non-Representational Theory*, pp. 79-80. On time as socially constituted, see Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythm Analysis* trans. by Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore (London: Continuum, 2004).

[189] Merriman, '"Mirror, Signal, Manoeuvre"', pp. 87-8. Until very recently, the prospect of 'motorway rest areas' was ruled out, on grounds that such less intensively developed picnic spots lacked sufficient surveillance to ensure that they were used appropriately for resting, rather than dwelling.

[190] Sheller and Urry, p. 739. See also, Donna J. Haraway, 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century', in S*imians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 149-181. Following the problematizing of distinctions between subjects and the technical and cultural prosthetics of context in, for example, Derrida's *Of Grammatology* and Bernhard Stielger's *Technics and Time*, I would place 'autonomous humans' within quotation marks, to put this 'auto' similarly in question, and to avoid the impression of a simple hybrid of unified subject and context. See Stiegler, *Technics and Time I: The Fall of Epimetheus*, trans. by Richard Beardsworth and George Collins (Standford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998).

laissez-faire versus legislation: taming the beast

From the 1930s, as mass production made cars more affordable, they became associated with escape from the ills of the industrial city, a way to spend more leisure time in the countryside, or to live in a green suburb within commuting distance of an urban centre. Guides for newly mobile tourists proliferated.[191] Yet, for many contemporary writers and cartoonists, Barthes's magical objects were one side of a Faustian pact – with a dragon, beast, octopus or, as architecture critic Ian Nairn would later suggest, an 'amorphous destroyer' that consumed the better life promised: the new freedom and speed of movement allowed the city to extend, seemingly unrestrained into the countryside, to threaten this resource of health and beauty in the act of making it widely available.[192] 'The road that was specially made to escape the town has now become a sort of town itself', a 'Third England' of 'filling stations and factories […] of giant cinemas and dance-halls and cafés', laments John Priestley.[193] For Clough Williams-Ellis, they amounted to a pestilence plaguing the country: 'the disfiguring little buildings grow up and multiply like nettles along a drain, like lice upon a tape-worm'.[194] Uncontrolled 'ribbon development' of shacks, bungalows and mock-Tudor semis along arterial routes, sprawl at the fringes of cities and motorized intrusions into once remote areas of countryside were, like the installation of the pylons of national grid around the same time, widely perceived as having a profoundly negative and homogenizing effect on the English landscape, dissolving the seemingly natural divide between country and city to produce a 'hermaphrodite' perversion. Mass

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[191] J. Conley, p. 39. Lawrence traces the emergence of motoring guides to the countryside, such as H. Morton's *In Search of England* (1930), rev. edn (London: Methuen, 2000) and those commissioned and published by Shell-Mex and B.P. during the 1950s and 60s, in 'A Bit of Town', pp. 52-4.
[192] See Clough Williams-Ellis, *England and the Octopus* (1928) (Portmeiron: Golden Dragon Books, 1975); *Britain and the Beast*, ed. by Clough Williams-Ellis (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1937); Ian Nairn, *Outrage* (London: The Architectural Press, 1955) (reprint of *Architectural Review* (June 1955)), p. 365. See also, for example, *The Face of the Land*, ed. by Harry Peach and Noel Carrington (London: Allen and Unwin, 1930); John Priestley, *English Journey* (1934) (London: Mandarin, 1994); John Priestley, *Our Nation's Heritage* (London: J.M. Dent, 1939); Ian Nairn, *Counter-Attack Against Subtopia* (London: The Architectural Press, 1956); Colin Buchanan, *Mixed Blessing: The Motor in Britain* (London: Leonard Hill Books, 1958). Moran contextualizes some of these texts, see pp. 133-8.
[193] Priestley, *Our Nation's Heritage*, p. 165; *English Journey*, p. 401.
[194] Williams-Ellis, *England and the Octopus*, p. 162.

mobility was thus associated with Moral degeneracy and social decline, a bestial, alien – or, perhaps worse, American – other out of control.[195]

As the car and modernity threatened the *status quo* in which everything had its proper place, debates over how to restore order focussed on structures of local and national control. Some lamented the erosion of landed power, seen as reserve of local stability and morality, and feared government intervention would bring a very un-British move towards standardization. Others cited Roman roads and cities as proof that effective nations need centralized national plans, for which Nazi Germany was, in the 1930s, a successful, if problematic, contemporary example. The social, cultural and material implications of the automobile put pressure on the government to change its *laissez-faire* approach, as they stirred others to resist all forms of outside intrusion.[196] One result was Banham's 'primarily preventative' planning law, as set out in the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act; the other was that the case for motorways came to be supported, not only by motoring organizations and enthusiasts, but also by many preservationists who wanted new roads to bypass congested towns and villages and to draw traffic, and therefore development, away from rural areas. Lawrence sums up this unlikely alliance, a freeing of the vehicle that would also be its control and containment, a mutually beneficial separation:

> The car was inevitable, useful, and consummately modern, but it was also the chief cause of suburban sprawl and destruction of the countryside. Thus ways had to be invented of coalescing the potentially disparate concerns of preservation and progress. Modernity expressed as a contained, ordered and formal practice, provided a link between the two agendas. The special character of the motorway was one such method: the design of roads in which all necessary services were tidied into a few discrete groups. The motorway service area would occupy a territory somewhere between town and country,

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[195] The term 'hermaphrodite' was used by planner Thomas Sharp to describe a wider moral malaise manifested in the blurring of city and country, quoted in David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion, 1998), p. 33. It was in response to similar concerns that the Council for the Preservation of Rural England was formed in 1926.

[196] Matless traces debates surrounding urban sprawl and possible solutions, pp. 25-70. As Moran points out: 'The problem was that no one was quite sure who owned the roadside' (p. 138). On the political dilemmas of *autobahnen*, see also Merriman, 'M1', pp. 55-8. The analogy between motorways and roads of the Roman Empire persists in accounts of the contemporary network, for example in George Charlesworth's sympathetic history: 'The idea of a national road system was introduced to Britain by the Romans, who needed a network of roads, first for military purposes of conquest and maintenance of Roman authority and, second, as Romanisation spread, for purposes of trade and general communication. It is interesting to compare a map of main roads in Roman Britain [...] with the motorway netowrk of 1980.' See Charlesworth, *A History of British Motorways* (London: Thomas Telford, 1984), pp. 2-4.

and thus it presented, and has continued to present, problems for planners and designers of motorway facilities.[197]

To ensure that the new roads would not become further stimuli to rural development, access points and advertising would be highly restricted, and they would have their own self-contained, 'in-line' service areas, sited well away from junctions, with no connections to surrounding locations. So that the government could not engage in land speculation for its own ends, powers of compulsory purchase were strictly limited, a significant factor in the small size and limited number of service area sites.[198]

Timing was key to the balance between public and private agencies in the production of motorways. Compared to Germany, Italy and the USA, where significant construction of new high speed roads took place during the 1930s, motorways came late to the UK.[199] Interwar movements to address the inadequacies of the existing road network, mostly driven by engineers and motoring organizations, rather than government, brought few major improvements during a period when the volume of motorised traffic rapidly increased. The dominant model of infrastructure provision at the time, as exemplified by the railway construction of the nineteenth century, was, as in other areas of government, *laissez-faire*: lightly regulated by parliament, financed and managed by private companies – and it was this model that early, unsuccessful road-building initiatives sought to replicate.[200] As the state gradually gathered key routes – few of them substantially improved since their operation as turnpikes – from local authority control into a centrally administered and planned trunk road network, there remained many in government reluctant to take on the responsibility of new construction in times of economic constraint. Motorways remained a low priority in the immediate aftermath of World War II, despite intense lobbying from the British Road Federation and other organizations, which published various proposals for routes, carriageway layouts and landscape integration.[201] By the early 1950s, however, the case for new roads was widely accepted and politicians of all sides endorsed plans announced in 1953 for rapid motorway construction.[202] The first substantial section,

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[197] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', p. 36.

[198] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 122-4.

[199] Moran, pp. 21-3.

[200] Merriman, 'M1', pp. 37-47.

[201] Merriman, 'M1', pp. 81-110.

[202] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 35-44; Charlesworth, pp. 4-31. See also, Harold Dyos and Derek Aldcroft, *British Transport: An Economic Survey from the Seventeenth Century to the Twentieth* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), pp. 325-98.

the M1 from Aldenham to Crick, opened in November 1959,[203] together with the first

service area, Watford Gap, albeit in rudimentary form.[204] Many of the decisions that

would shape the roads programme and strategies for service area provision were,

Lawrence argues, taken hastily in this period, hampered by a lack of governmental

expertise and resources, and principally according to a narrowly functionalist,

engineering logic. Through the 1960s and early -70s motorway construction proceeded

rapidly, with over a thousand miles completed by 1972.[205] Service area policies were

little changed until a process of partial deregulation in the 1980s, which culminated in

privatization in 1993.[206]

Commercialism unsigned: national road, private services

Motorways thus formed part of an unprecedentedly centralized programme of national

reconstruction and modernization, undertaken at a time when funds were scarce, and

when initial political enthusiasm for large state-driven projects was already waning.

Banham derided a 'Law of Parsimony', an '*anti*-aesthetic' pragmatism that he saw as

ruthlessly shaping motorway construction.[207] Though issues of safety, prestige and the

detrimental effect of through-traffic on towns and villages were also important,

documents suggest that the economic case for the new roads was key.[208] Competing

with other post-war projects, motorways had to be cheap, and service areas were seen

as a good place to limit expenditure, defer risk and even offset some costs, while

maintaining close control: the Ministry of Transport would determine the location of

service area sites, purchase the land and pay for a bridge to connect operations on

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[203] The eight-mile Preston bypass, opened almost a year earlier in December 1958, was technically the first stretch of motorway completed in Britain. It now forms part of the Lancashire section of the M6. At this short length, however, compared to the seventy-two mile first stage of the M1, it did not mark a significant demonstration of the aspiration to a nationwide network of self-contained fast roads; nor was it sufficiently close to the capital to gain the same attention.

[204] On events surrounding the opening of the first motorways and service areas, see Moran, pp. 19-29, 127-8. As Moran notes, Watford Gap services initially operated out of a series of temporary sheds, while the buildings were finished. Newport Pagnell was the first service area to open in complete form in August 1960.

[205] Charlesworth, p. 74.

[206] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 161-3.

[207] Banham, 'Disservice Areas', p. 762; 'Road to Ubiquopolis', p. 784. In the latter, written not long after the opening of the first stretches of motorway, Banham derided their 'cheap-skate' design as 'a revival of […] face-grinding Victorian "economy"'. (p. 785). For its unremitting straight lines and inelegantly lumpen bridges, Banham called the first section of the M1 'the ugliest stretch of motor road in the world.' By 1972, however, the critic's view of the motorway system as a whole had improved with the opening of the picturesquely curved M6 through Cumbria. 'New Way North', p. 242.

[208] Charlesworth, pp. 32-7, 62-3.

either side of the road; but it would be private companies that would bid to build and operate service area facilities according to strict Ministry regulations and steep rental agreements, and following a closely vetted tendering process.[209] Since the conservative government came to power in 1951, and with some nationalized industries proving to be a financial burden, there was suspicion of any expanse in the role of the state – especially into a field like catering – and an agenda to increase the role of the private sector.[210] According to this 'mixed economy' that so frustrated Banham, there would be competition between operators and sites – to secure leases and win customers – but within a motorway system so restricted and standardized that differentiation was hard to achieve – and even harder to publicize.[211] Thus, there was the paradox that no two adjacent sites along the same motorway could be operated by the same company, and yet roadside advertising was prohibited to the degree that not even company names could be displayed at the entrance to slipways. The facilities to be offered were highly prescriptive: as well as the mandatory toilets, fuel and basic shop, at least two, but preferably three, separate dining areas were to be provided – a cafeteria offering snacks, a transport café for commercial drivers and, in most cases, a restaurant with waitress-service – and very little could be added to the specified programme. Sites were identical in size and shape, irrespective of context; circles centred on the motorway to minimize necessary land purchase, arrayed almost exactly 25 miles apart.[212]

Consistent with the functional bent of the Ministry as leaseholder, more attention was apparently paid during the bidding process to schedules of equipment, furniture and finishings than to building form or elevation, and established mass-caterers or national entertainment companies with more ambitious proposals were consistently preferred by risk averse and profit-minded officials over modest or local bids.[213] Moves to make buildings stand out, to liberate inevitably cramped sites, to avoid duplicating services and to exploit the Ministry-provided bridge, contributed to what Banham saw as the 'patently silly' practice of variously combining bridge, buildings and sometimes towers in close proximity to the road: structure as substitute

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[209] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 129-31, 137-8.
[210] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 113, 124-6.
[211] Banham asserts the superior quality of service areas both in continental Europe and North America, and implies that either 'wide open cut throat commercialism, or […] a single state-run authority' would be better. See 'Disservice Areas', p. 762.
[212] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 119-21, 123-5, 130-1, 138.
[213] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 126-8, 174-5, 191-3.

for advertising – but one that came always inevitably too late for those who had not already decided to stop.[214] Moreover, the long distance between sites – extended as far as the Ministry thought they could safely get away with – tended to make choice irrelevant compared to convenience, quality and service less important to profitability than location and traffic flow. Pockets of architecture aspiring to the boldness and novelty of the Las Vegas Strip were concealed behind the strict homogeneity of a non-commercial roadscape.[215] According to a now accepted narrative, high government charges coupled with onerous service requirements, long, inflexible leases with no incentive to innovation, as well as inappropriately inflexible buildings difficult to adapt to changing cultures of road travel, left businesses barely profitable and initial aspirations towards distinct qualities and experiences were soon replaced by a pragmatism of standardization and efficiency.[216] By the 1990s, the concentration of facilities in relatively few large sites and the high cost of initial development had restricted the number of operators to a handful of national or global companies – which Lawrence calls 'the big three'.

Drawing on a similar reading of contradictory forces at play in service area (pre-)history, Lawrence's doctoral thesis – as distinct from the more interpretative *Food on the Move* – traces the development of a building type through five phases, recording how architects respond to the competing demands of Ministry, clients, economic and cultural trends. Its focus is, for the most part, on the moment of each building's completion and the events leading up to it, on architecture as a design process, albeit one that is complicated and, at least to a degree, multi-authored. Subsequent changes to buildings are largely interpreted as a means to evaluate the functionality of the original scheme, as flaws in architects' conceptions, clients' ambitions, and, most often, Ministry plans, processes and priorities. In particular, the analysis regrets that the service area has never quite settled into a stable type specific

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[214] Banham, 'Disservice Areas', p. 762. The bridge restaurant form had the backing of Ernst Marples, Minister of Transport, 1959-64, and Sir Owen Williams, lead consultant on the M1. See Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 177-84

[215] On the failure of competition, see See Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 139, 169.

[216] See Bev Nutt 'Motorway Service Areas', *Architectural Review*, 143.853 (1968), 189-94; Bev Nutt, 'Motorway Services: A Deserving Case', *Design*, 301 (1974), 74-9. Nutt, of the Bartlett School of Architecture was commissioned in 1965 to report on the failings of motorway service areas, later publishing these conclusions when it became clear that, after the work was completed in 1967, the Ministry had suppressed and failed to address the findings. As Lawrence shows, the 1978 Committee of Inquiry into Motorway Service Areas (also known as the Prior Committee) drew many of the same conclusions, which were significant in the process of deregulation that followed. Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 148-9, 159-60.

to the roadside, sufficiently flexible to negotiate elegantly all possible trajectories of motoring trends. Rather, it is seen as too dependent on other architectures, with buildings overly concerned with form and imagery at the expense of both efficiency and experience.[217] Paradoxically, given his enjoyment of the service areas' varied incarnations, Lawrence follows one line of Banham's thinking, echoed by various official studies, that service areas should be built to a relatively standardized system – perhaps provided by the state on the model of the German autobahns – that could nevertheless accommodate local variations and be inhabited by local operators. A critique of overtly modern service areas that echoes *Learning from Las Vegas*'s attack on the expressively formalist 'dead ducks' of the international style leads to proposals for a merging of 'universal' and 'world culture' not dissimilar from Frampton's critical regionalism. For Lawrence, as for Banham, service area history seems to show up a quest for the wrong kind of difference, which the restricted nature of the British roadside renders irrelevant. This thesis takes a different approach. It is not a design, cultural, political, or any other kind of history. The socio-cultural, theoretical, architectural and historical contexts outlined in this introduction are not seen as tools with which to evaluate the past and distil its lessons; rather, they are seen as key to an informed understanding of how service areas take place today within webs of human, material, political and economic relations – that resonate with the past, but are always changing.

Thesis Itinerary

This thesis is made up of two case studies, two service area conditions that are seemingly opposite in approach, imagery, ownership structure and business strategy, but both seen as models for the future of roadside facilities, with favourable popular and press reviews. In each case, I look at two buildings. The first two, which opened in the same year, are found on what are amongst the busiest stretches of UK motorway, one on the edge of a large conurbation, the other next to a regional airport midway between three medium-sized cities. The second pair of buildings, which share the same site but were built at different times, are situated in one of the remotest rural settings on the network. Three of the four buildings I study were developed (and the other

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[217] See Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', for example, pp. 315-16.

substantially expanded) since deregulation of service area provision, when full responsibilities for site-selection, design, planning and oversight were transferred to developers, with local planning officials, rather than with the Ministry of Transport (and its various successors) as arbiters.[218] Though minimum service requirements and restrictions applied to certain activities, then as now – a 'quarantine approach' stressing that sites should be self-contained, unobtrusive amenities rather than destinations – more retail space, sub-leasing and franchising had been permitted for some time. Both conditions seem to show service areas closely allied to consumer trends, savvy about branding and marketing, pushing the boundaries of official notions of what a service area should be. Reading the two pairs of buildings in detail, and with reference to other relevant roadside examples, I explore how, while the two conditions are seemingly associated with very different contemporary myths and desires, and claim origins in very different relations of force, they also show some striking similarities in the way that they filter relations to wider context, stress the natural while concealing the human, dissimulate the size and extents of their operations, conceal service as they allude to freedom, mix allusions to public and private spaces, and control the passing of time.

In Chapter 1, I look at Hopwood Park and Donington Park, opened in 1999, respectively, by Welcome Break on the M42 near Birmingham, and by Moto on the M1 near East Midlands Airport. I explore how these service areas, operated by subsidiaries of multi-national investment groups, conceals their identity in white surfaces and seemingly unbounded, open spaces. I read this neutral framework and the intricate café-scape that inhabits it as what I call 'lounge space', a setting at once domestic and urban, personal and universal, familiar but unplaceable, ever-present yet timeless, where brands dominate and limits are obscured. As ideal of hi-tech-human-nature, it is absent host to both franchises and motorists. Drawing on Derrida's discussion of 'hospitality', I consider how these details emphasize free choice and self-determination as they conceal wider contexts and interrelations, differences in time or

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[218] See Lawrence, pp. 162-5. Site leases were offered for sale in 1980, at which point sub-letting and franchising were also permitted. In 1992, responsibility for new service areas was delegated to the private sector. Site freeholds were put on the market in 1995-6. What was from 1945 to 1970 called the Ministry of Transport (except for 1953-9 when it was Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation) has been several times renamed. Part of the Department for the Environment from 1970, it has most commonly been known as Department for Transport since 1976 (except when it briefly reverted to a Ministry from 1979 to 1981, and a period amalgamated with other departments between 1997 and 2002). In 1995, responsibility for most administrative duties related to service areas were transferred to the Highways Agency.

space, presenting a one-sided social contract. Seemingly transported beyond road and landscape, locality and nation, state and private ownership, the building appears to escape the tensions traced in this subsection. Contrary to pervading emphasis on the theming of commercial spaces, I stress the significance of this silent hosting, the non-theme established as a norm that goes unquestioned.

Tebay West and East, located on the M6 at the edge of the Lake District National Park are the focus of Chapter 2. Both are owned by 'independent', 'local' operator Westmorland. Opened in 1972 and 1993, respectively, the service areas emphasize authenticity, regional distinctiveness and local production, in their menus, products, imagery and architecture. On one level, the buildings' siting, materials, forms and details seem to epitomize imagery common in local, national and international marketing of the area as rural idyll. On another, however, the company's big-roofed barns contradict much of the 'local', 'authentic' architectures visible on surrounding hills. Tracing these displacements of matter and meaning, I consider how Westmorland's architecture is inevitably 'impure' in its attempts to 'capture' an 'essence' of a place that is so widely reiterated, and dispersed. Haunted by associations with other architectures and places beyond their control, the buildings seem shaped by the forces they purport to resist, tending towards a national language of 'local' 'authenticity' as common as that of the roadside they reject. At the same time, in what is, I argue, a contesting of place, they claim this national vernacular for the locality.

The service areas also draw associations between the company's history, which runs contrary to dominant trends in service area provision, and Romantic poets, such as William Wordsworth, who lived in, wrote about, and resisted industrial encroachment on the area in the nineteenth century. I explore how the service areas simulate an agrarian rural existence, which, though similar, is not quite the harmonious, but fragile and threatened idyll of Wordsworth's poetry. Rather, the sites multiply historical references to offer a timeless but unplaceable past in the present: not one golden age, but the summation of many. Concealed by vast roofs of slate, low eaves and rough walls, the buildings hide the human within the inhuman, movement within stability, progress within tradition. So disguised, the service areas promise the landscape of human and natural unity desired by tourists, while allowing their own operation to spread unseen.

The Romantic poets have become profitable brands and, like related notions of the Lake District as English rural idyll, part of wider economies of imagery and desire.

In the final part of the analysis, I look at how this deference to the tourist gaze goes further, how – mixing allusions to 'noble' country houses and churches, with 'humble' barns and cottages – Westmorland gives visitors a position of apparent ownership of the landscape, and a sense of exclusivity, comfort and autonomy. At the same time, it controls them. The architecture is instrumental in selecting who enters, orchestrating how they behave and limiting their movements. Here hosting is not so silent, but it is distantly deferred – from company to place. Conflated with the region in more than name, Westmorland assumes a degree of mastery, not only over the local landscape and imagery, but over the economy and culture of the region too.

These two studies show very different ways in which place is mobilized: place entirely distanced from material location as a nexus of seemingly generic urban and sub-urban conditions, of familiar surroundings, scales, materials and commodities, which allows a bubble of personalized space to follow the apparently free movements of the individual; and place as a specific material location, but one which it is also part of a currency of material localness, a promise of an other, idyllic, rural life of harmonious community and personal dominion, always waiting just beyond spaces of the modern world. Rather than reading these conditions as evidence of a loss of stable social relations, common identities and histories, I suggest that both depend on stressing a myth of the free, autonomous individual, while downplaying that which is inevitably shared and interrelated – between service area users as well as between inhabitants of contemporary Britain in general: social contracts and laws, network of economic interdependencies that interlink the most mundane aspects of everyday life on an increasingly global scale, a dance of power relations that is played out in spatial experience as much as it is in other areas of culture's signifying networks. Both conditions – of the context-less subject with infinite choice and of the 'lord'/'shepherd' of a place observed without affect – are, I argue, nevertheless haunted by traces of this otherness that they repress. This condition, then, is what I call 'lounge space': a space of consumption where freedom is seemingly unlimited and yet tightly controlled, where life is always sedentary but without rest. Whether as many lounges in the white city or the grand lounge in the wild landscape, whether as house in the street or big house in the country, what is missing is public space. Where hosting is effaced or deferred as natural law, the company and the relations it mediates are concealed.

CHAPTER 1

Hopwood, Donington and relations: the homely city ever-present

Inside without outside, the outside within

> We've got to compete with the big boys on the high street. It's not enough to provide cigarettes, cans of Coke and sandwiches.[219]

> We believe that relaxation is the key requirement for people when they have been on the motorway for a while. […] We felt a nature reserve would be the ideal place to relax and give drivers and passengers the chance to unwind.[220]

These publicity statements from the opening of Hopwood Park figure the service area as both urban centre and rural retreat. Hopwood Park, on the M42 near Bromsgrove, was opened by Welcome Break in August 1999; marketed as 'the service station of the future', with an 'airport-style environment' 'set in 60 acres of landscaped grounds', it was to be 'a haven of tranquility'.[221] Together with other service areas completed around the same time, including the same operator's Oxford Wheatley (M40, 1998) and South Mimms (M25/A1(M), 2000), and especially Moto's Donington Park, which

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[219] Steven Franklin, then chief executive officer of Welcome Break, commenting on the opening of Hopwood Park, quoted in Jamie Doward, 'Motorway Meccas Get Mall Makeover; Service Areas Seem to Be Turning into Air Terminals', *Observer*, 22 August 1999, section Business, p. 6.

[220] Paul Johnson, then marketing director for Welcome Break, quoted in John Griffin, 'Vroom with a View!; Wild Times at M-Way Station', *Birmingham Evening Mail*, 21 August 1999, p. 16.

[221] Griffin, 'Vroom'. Hopwood Park was designed by JWA Architects (formerly John Ward Associates) and developed by Bryant Homes at a reported cost of £25m. Welcome Break's service areas include most of those formerly operated or acquired by Forte Group (known for a time as Forte's & Co. and Trusthouse Forte amongst other variations), one time owner of Little Chef and Happy Eater roadside restaurants, as well as Travelodge and Posthouse hotels. Forte was involved in MSAs since winning the bid for one of the first two sites, Newport Pagnell (with Blue Star Garages as Motorway Services Ltd). Welcome Break (formerly Ross and Motoross), another established operator of MSAs, was acquired by Forte in 1986, and adopted as a brand for its five existing MSAs. Granada launched a successful hostile takeover of Forte Group in 1996, but to satisfy competition regulations was unable to retain Welcome Break MSAs, which were sold to Investcorp of Bahrain in 1997. See Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 88-9, 138, 150, 161; Paul Vallely, 'King of Catering: How Forte Changed the Face of Britain', *Independent*, 1 March 2007, p. 20, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/king-of-catering-how-forte-changed-the-face-of-britain-438335.html> [accessed 5 October 2011). Since 2008, Welcome Break is owned by Appia Investments. See 'Investcorp sells Welcome Break', *Forecourt Trader*, 3 April 2008, <http://www.forecourttrader.co.uk/news/fullstory.php/aid/2225/Investcorp_sells_Welcome_Break.html> [accessed 5 October 2011].

opened a month earlier on the M1 in Derbyshire,[222] it was seen to mark a new model for roadside facilities, much repeated since.[223]

Different in form and appearance, Donington Park likewise stresses a harmony of natural and urban features. The building and extensive site – advertised as 'a little town by the roadside' – were designed in the 'Romantic tradition of English architecture', reports Lawrence, and launched with a tree-planting ceremony attended by celebrity gardener Charlie Dimmock.[224] Yet despite the 'paths and walkways' through Hopwood's 'wildlife reserve',[225] it is, I argue, not a place to *be* outside. Though Donington Park has 'panoramic' views,[226] it does not encourage movement into the landscape; and if the interior space of each resembles a high street, even the high street of an airport, it also recalls the home and the interior of the car. In this chapter, I argue that though nature and the city are significant to the experience and affects of these service areas, it is not in the ways that the statements above suggest. For if the buildings seem extroverted and open, this only serves, I will argue, to enhance the enclosure within.

These characteristics of Hopwood and Donington mark a significant shift in approach to service area architecture. As noted above, buildings of the late 1950s and -60s represented the novelty and modernity of motorways, alluding to the freedom and

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[222] Donington Park, designed by Broadway Malyan architects, was opened by Granada Roadside Services, before the company's MSAs were rebranded 'Moto' in 2001. This followed the merger in 2000 between Granada and Compass Group, and subsequent reorganization and de-merger with Granada retaining the media business and all hospitality operations consolidated in Compass. An established entertainment and media company, Granada entered the MSA business in 1965, with Toddington (M1). Since the mid-1970s when the company bought up a number of already developed sites, it has been the largest operator on the network. See Helen Slingsby, 'Dreary Granada Gives Way to Cheery Moto', *Guardian*, 23 May 2001, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2001/may/23/17> [accessed 5 October 2011]; 'Out goes the Granada brand and in comes Moto', Moto online news archive, 2 July 2001, <http://www.moto-way.com/about-us/news/2001-07-02/out-goes-the-granada-brand-and-in-comes-moto> [accessed 5 October 2011]; Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 140, 149. Since 2006, Moto is owned by a consortium of investors and pension funds, led by Macquarie Bank. See 'In Brief', *Forecourt Trader*, 2 May 2006, p. 4.

[223] Hopwood Park, Oxford Wheatley and South Mimms, all designed by the same architects, are different in plan and form – instead of the former's simple, double-height rectangular volume, the latter two have differently curved roofs and no mezzanine, while Oxford has a radial plan – but share a similar strategy and palette of materials. Lawrence discusses these variations, seeing South Mimms as a logical assimilation of the complex Oxford and the rational Hopwood Park. The more significant differences of Donington Park are discussed below. The airport model continues to be the dominant influence on new service areas, redevelopments and extensions, including Roadchef's Northampton (formerly Rothersthorpe, Ml, 2002), Strensham southbound (M5, rebuilt 2002) and Norton Canes (M6 Toll, 2003), and Extra's Beaconsfield (M40, 2009). See *Food on the Move*, pp. 138-46.

[224] Lawrence, *Food*, p. 138. At the time, Dimmock starred alongside Alan Titchmarsh in BBC Television's *Groundforce*, a garden make-over programme that ran between 1997 and 2005.

[225] Griffin, 'Vroom'.

[226] Lawrence, *Food*, p. 138.

speed of air travel with bridge and tower restaurants that overlooked the road. Through the 1970s and -80s, sites sought to evoke separation from a mundane and congested driving experience, simulating escape into the stabilities of rural place via local materials, traditional details, pitched roofs and themed interiors.[227] Westmorland, an enduring and complex example of this movement is considered in the next chapter. Hopwood, Donington and their siblings, by comparison, invoke very different associations, which are less bound to road or rural context, neither local or national, but at once domestic and global.

In scale and rhetoric, these sites seem to represent a renewed challenge to the long-established principle that service areas should not become 'destinations in their own right'.[228] 'Are we providing out of town shopping centres or are we just providing service areas?', asked Maurice Kelly, then Managing Director of Granada (now Moto): 'It's open to debate.'[229] Compared to the 'barn'-style of earlier service areas, Lawrence similarly suggests that 'these schemes play on uniqueness, rather than the potential for constructing part of a sequence of similar buildings along the road'.[230] I read these service areas differently: if they do tend to become 'destinations', it is not, I argue, so much by differentiation of experience or distinctiveness of site, but by a form of non-identity and casual familiarity, a denial of specificity rather than its simulation: not so much city, country – or even roadside – as a new hi-tech-human-nature forged of all three. There is, in this position, clearly some similarity with Augé's non-place of excessive space, time and identity; but the reading I offer is more nuanced. As I trace certain illusions of displacement, ever-presence and similitude, I also explore their constructedness, the exclusions on which they rely, and how, as a form of placing, they interrelate with socio-cultural structures that the anthropologist might still term 'place'. Thus, this chapter is also about what I call lounge space, a condition of being seemingly hosted without host that refigures relations between citizen and society, world and home.

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[227] For a comprehensive history of these movements, see Lawrence, *Food*, especially pp. 42-91, 104-115; and 'A Bit of Town', pp. 171-235.

[228] Maurice Kelly (25 June 1999), quoted in Lawrence, *Food*, p. 138. *A Big New Future: A Town by the Roadside* was the title of the launch press pack. *DfT Circular 01/2008*, p. 4.

[229] Doward, 'Motorway Meccas'.

[230] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', p. 220.

White city, consumer caves: urbanity unlimited

Recent service areas allude to familiar urban spaces – if only via the sanitized and cohesively organized form of the shopping centre. Lines of ostensibly private retail units flank an ostensibly public space. Like a stereotypical (pre-twentieth century) British town centre or contemporary mall, most service area buildings since the mid-1980s include both a 'high street' – a linear space, primarily for movement – and a 'square' – a more static space for assembling, in this instance, sitting and eating – the one widening into the other.[231] At Donington and Hopwood, the two urban forms become intertwined: units edge a roughly rectangular open-plan space that includes distinct areas for both circulation and seating. But there are important differences between the two examples, too. With triple-height 'urban' blocks on either side of a 'public' route from front to back, Donington provides more 'squares' within a pedestrianized 'high street'. It seems more densely urban, more city centre. Hopwood, by comparison, is a shallower, barely double-height 'public' space, broader than it is deep, bounded by an 'L' of shops to the left and rear. It provides more 'streets' around a 'square' – more market place (or post-war suburban shopping precinct) than thoroughfare *[1-4]*.[232] I discuss the significance of these variations later. Taking the form of 'hi-tech' sheds – Lawrence characterizes Welcome Break's recent service areas as 'techno-sheds' – such buildings are similar to the wide-span spaces of airport terminals, such as Foster and Partners' Stansted Airport or Richard Roger Partnership's Heathrow Terminal 5.[233] Yet, as Koolhaas and others have observed, airports have

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[231] Examples with a separate street and square tend to be from the late 1980s and 1990s, at which time any hi-tech shed, occasionally visible within, was externally hidden by seemingly local materials and an array of pitched roofs. Examples include Moto's Chieveley (M4/A34, 1986), Welcome Break's Warwick (M40, 1994) and Birchanger Green (M11, 1995), and Roadchef's Tibshelf (M1, 1998), Chester (M56, 1998) and rebuilt Strensham northbound (M5, 1993). Though very different in spatial qualities – with lower ceiling height, more tightly contained routes and units – these buildings mark a decisive shift in service area design, away from a singularly branded space towards town/city allusions in form and imagery. I discuss some of these buildings, which Lawrence terms the 'barn' type further in chapter 2. See Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 220-5, 298-304. On shopping malls related to traditional urban forms, see Barry Maitland, *Shopping Malls: Planning and Design* (London: Construction Press, 1985), especially pp. 1-22, 64-91.

[232] For Suburban/New Town outdoor shopping centres, such as Harlow, see Maitland, pp. 16-17

[233] Lawrence, appearing to draw on material supplied by Welcome Break, describes Hopwood Park as 'inspired by the technological aesthetic of Richard Rogers and Norman Foster' (*Food on the Move*, p. 139). The suggestion that these 'light and sparkling, steel, aluminium and glass enclosures' are part of the company's brand image is complicated by the recurrence of similar features not only in the recent service areas by other operators noted above, but also in other building types, such as recent offices, supermarkets and airports. This 'brand image', like other aspects of the service area I discuss below, seems concerned to efface itself within a ubiquitous global commercial space (albeit of a more executive class than the majority of other service areas), rather than to establish uniqueness.

become cities of commerce and inevitably take urban forms: vast hangars become laced with sequences of compressed routes leading to open squares, flanked by commercial and administrative accommodation – irrespective of whether this was the architects' plan.[234] Smaller and more tightly focussed, the spaces of service areas seem more urban still: pedestrianized and public in a landscape of private vehicles.

The separate commercial units are bright and semiotically distinct, their identity clearly marked by signs and differences of interior fit out, from floor, wall and ceiling materials, to furniture and light fittings. They occupy alcoves of various depths. Shops are defined on three sides by walls lined with products, restaurants and cafés by arcs of food-filled counters surrounded by signs. Here, walls are more dispensers than boundaries, where objects are advertised and offered for selection. The visitor is enveloped in the space of the brand, from fit-out to packaging, from materials and colours to uniforms and slogans. What might lie behind this array is, although functionally predictable, invisible and unknown. These are caves of consumption: interiors without exteriors; Bachelard's privileged space of unconscious intimacy, reverie and 'consolation' filled with contemporary objects of desire.[235] Through the shelved strata of each separate chamber, diverse resources seem, magically, to flow from a deep, impenetrable reserve, a bounty of technologized nature.[236] Each unit is clearly owned, a private space dominated by one brand (or brand host) to the exclusion of others.

By contrast, the 'public' space between seems to evade identity, to express continuity and efface differences: between inside and outside, between floor and wall. Defined by the objects that surround it, but itself immaterial, there seems to be almost nothing to it. Two traits are particularly important here.

First, the space alludes to the outdoors. Exteriority is simulated by a reduction of enclosure: 'streets' tend to have glazed roofs in the manner of arcades, while

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[234] In 'Junkspace', Koolhaas satirizes the development of Modern airports: 'There are too many raw needs to be realized on only one plane. […] Transparency has disappeared, replaced by a dense crust of provisional occupation: kiosks, carts, strollers, palms, fountains, bars, sofas, trolleys' (p. 166), and goes on to claim that 'All of Junkspace's prototypes are urban – the Roman Forum, the Metropolis' (p. 168). On the internalizing of the urban and its convergence with airport, see also 'Bigness' and 'Generic City', in *SMLXL*, pp. 495-516, 1248-64 (pp. 1249-50). On shopping centre as city, see Crawford, 'The World in a Shopping Mall'.

[235] On alcoves as spaces of intimacy, see Bachelard, pp. xxxvii, 130-2.

[236] For cultural associations of caves – with authenticity, stability, purity and sensory intensity – here turned to commercial effect, see Samuel Austin, 'Themes in the Architecture of the Cave', *Made*, 2 (2005), pp. 80-91.

'squares' have full-height glazing to at least one side – two at Hopwood and Donington. The latter has regular strips of north-facing roof lights in a saw-toothed arrangement, which reflects an even daylight into the space below.[237] The resulting spaces ostensibly have no walls, and often no ceiling either; they seem not to contain, but only to open onto other spaces, be they branded units, external picnic areas or landscape views. This impression of external space is supported, at Donington Park and elsewhere, by the inclusion of generic exterior fittings such as street lamps, canvas umbrellas, plants and trees, advertising banners and large clocks – familiar signifiers of 'outdoor' streets in shopping malls.[238] At Hopwood Park, a deep, exposed roof structure with pendant lamps makes the vertical closure of the space less abrupt, while at Oxford, for example, the main columns and roof form allude to trunks, branches and canopies. More space than mass, even the envelope of these service areas seems to dissolve. Although it occupies the largest volume, the 'street' or 'square' appears as an absence between presences, a leftover space subordinate to, and overshadowed by, the commercial enclosures that surround it, lacking specific identity of its own.

Second, opaque surfaces are concealed or suppressed. In 'streets', 'squares' and other 'public' spaces, signs cover most of the few vertical surfaces, from the brand names and logos that mark out each unit, to advertisements on columns – and even above WC urinals. Any remaining walls, columns and floors, tend to be finished in smooth white, off-white or whitish materials: painted plaster, painted steel, polished vinyl tiles.[239] The absence of grain, together with bright, uniform lighting, avoids

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[237] Arcade spaces with more traditional style glazed roofs are found at Tibshelf, Chester and Strensham northbound.

[238] Not present at Hopwood Park, similar features are prominent at Beaconsfield, while Tibshelf and Chester have lantern-style street lights. These elements are common in shopping malls, especially those dating from the 1960s to -80s. See Maitland, especially pp. 64-91; Kathryn Morrison, *English Shops and Shopping: An Architectural History* (New Haven, CA.: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 257, 262: 'Seating areas enabled shoppers to rest and enjoy the array of planting, fountains, big clocks and sculptures that compensated, in the largest city-centre malls, for low levels of daylight, and softened their rigidly geometric architectural features.' The novelty here is the incorporation of such urban forms, representing pedestrianized 'public' spaces, into roadside architecture.

[239] In discussing the whiteness of MSA surfaces, there is an inevitable generalization, as in many cases they are closer to grey or cream. In Mark Wigley's discussion of white walls in modern architecture, he challenges not only the assumed 'passivity' of surfaces that are, in fact, 'far from neutral or silent', as I do differently in the context of service areas below, but also the rhetoric of 'whiteness' that conceals within apparent homogeneity different shades of modern discourse and the prevalence of colour in modern buildings: 'Modern architecture was never simply white. The image of white walls is a very particular fantasy.' See *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1995), pp. xiv-xv. By generalizing here, I do not intend to further the assumption of sameness of service areas (or of colours), but rather to explore how the buildings come to be seen as the same, in part because various white and off-white shades tend already to be conflated and associated with neutrality; I later speculate briefly on how differences of shade remain significant.

shadow and thus signs of depth, matter, presence. This ostensible lack of variation in texture and tone across different surfaces, and between different materials, furthers the sense of immateriality and continuity: an apparent nothingness that fills every gap to discretely unify the space, denying any traces of material resistance: this is matter polished, civilized, humanized, but not personalized.[240] This consistency of mute surface gives the appearance of neutrality and passivity. It is only there to accommodate the ostensible diversity of brands. Thus, as in Augé's description of 'non-place' and Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour's analysis of Las Vegas, where 'symbol dominates space', signs appear to be the prime – perhaps the only – means of way-finding, the source of all meaning.[241]

This whiteness of the service area demands closer attention. In this pursuit, I do not mean to suggest that whiteness is particular to the service area, or even that the service area is the most extreme instance of a tendency common to many other kinds of buildings – commercial, institutional, residential and otherwise. My intention is, rather, to explore how the significance of whiteness in service areas is bound up with the colour's wider cultural currency – its privileged position in Western architecture and beyond – and the nebulas of contested meanings with which it has come to be associated. Likewise, I am not asserting conscious intentionality on the part of service area developers, architects or others, whereby the 'choice' of white would be one taken to promote the particular values or to create the particular illusions I describe. White may have become, in architecture especially, a cultural norm, a default option. I argue, nevertheless, that every instance of whiteness still carries other meanings, meanings that exceed the immediate economic or cultural logic of its application. If the dominance of white in diverse buildings and products makes it seem banal and ubiquitous, these associations remain contested, I argue, by others still powerful in culture. White, I suggest, means more than neutrality, and I trace some themes in the significance of whiteness below.

First, white disguises boundaries. Against bright signs, white appears to recede into the background, like the hazy horizon used to enhance depth in Renaissance

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Moreover, in identifying this trait in service areas, I am not reinforcing an established rhetoric, but pointing out a significant omission from other analyses, as I note below.

[240] On the significance of smoothness, see Leatherbarrow's discussion of 'picturesque roughness' (pp. 97-102). Where roughness represents sublime nature, smoothness is the perfection of beauty, often more closely associated with human form and craft, as in sculpture.

[241] See Augé, pp. 1-6, 94-6; Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, pp. 7-9, 13, 116-17.

paintings; at the same time, however, this whiteness of floors as well as walls and ceilings seems to envelop the space. To borrow the distinction developed by Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky, while glazed facades effect a literal transparency of the building envelope, the multiple white surfaces produce an effect closer to phenomenal transparency. For Rowe and Slutzky, transparency is understood as more than a literal seeing-through, a binary opposite of opacity. It has a 'phenomenal' dimension, defined as 'a simultaneous perception of different spatial locations [whereby] space not only recedes but fluctuates in a continuous activity'. Contrary to common definitions, this transparency describes a condition not of openness or clarity, but of spatial and perspectival ambiguity. The whiteness of service areas is clearly very different from the sophisticated, multi-layered phenomenal transparency that the authors trace through the work of Georges Braque, Fernand Léger and Le Corbusier, amongst others. It does, however, complicate the perceived dimensions of space in a way that description in terms of *material* opacity and transparency alone cannot explain. As a single flat horizon, the whiteness at Hopwood and Donington appears at once proud of the foreground and far behind it, solid and spacious, depthless and depth-ful: indeterminate.[242] But whiteness not only suggests ambiguous depth.

As Mark Wigley notes, in architecture, as in wider culture, whiteness tends to go unseen – or at least to escape conscious attention. Despite the centrality of white in modern architectural discourse, it remains, he argues, little interrogated – 'the blind spot that occupies[ies] its center'.[243] Unlike the whiteness of modernism, that of service areas is neither theorized nor consciously aligned with a particular set of values. It is, nevertheless, telling that this whiteness, too, like that of other commercial spaces, tends to go unremarked. White backgrounds – and, more generally, all that is not signed – are conspicuously absent from recent studies of commercial and travel spaces, which tend to overlook the seemingly mute background to describe such sites

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[242] Gyorgy Kepes, quoted in Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky, 'Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal', *Perspecta*, 8 (1963), 45-54 (p. 45). For comparison, see 'Transparency, *n.*', in *OED*. In its multiple layers and ambiguity between foreground and background, the authors' notion of phenomenal transparency as defined through Braque, Léger and Le Corbusier is different: more ambiguous and certainly more layered. Though the whiteness described here may be, by comparison, more literal, it nevertheless depends on reading a surface as simultaneously flat and deep. See also: Anthony Vidler, 'Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 56.4 (2003), 6-7.
[243] Wigley, *White Walls*, p. xv.

only as surface simulations, foreground only.[244] Despite, indeed perhaps because of, their ubiquity, white structures and surfaces seem to go unseen. That which is taken to be visually 'neutral', an absence of colour, is assumed to have no cultural affect. Whiteness disappears.

Second, in a building that exists primarily to service bodily needs, this unnoticed whiteness alludes, I argue, to a higher purpose, stresses culture over the corporeal. Considering the 'prophylactic "whiteness" of our perfect functional objects', Baudrillard notes that:

> [white] remains largely pre-eminent in the 'organic' realm: bathrooms, kitchens, sheets, linen – anything that is bound up with the body and its immediate extensions has for generations been the domain of white, a surgical, virginal colour which distances the body from the dangers of intimacy and tends to neutralize the drives.[245]

Alongside invisibility and neutrality, whiteness implies, Baudrillard suggests, truth, virginity, civility and modernity. As ubiquitous datum, the commercial whiteness, of which the service area is but one instance, is not nature, but in some ways like nature: a universal, sanitized human context that chimes with reassuring imagery of moral rectitude and liberal democracy: of enlightened, urbane normality – from Baudrillard's bathroom and Le Corbusier's classical temples to the 'magnolia' walls of newly constructed homes and offices.

In one sense, then, the whiteness of each service area is unexceptional, nothing but an unremarkable instance of a spatial condition ceaselessly reproduced in diverse forms, scales and contexts as part of the interrelated economies of production and desire that Baudrillard describes in *The System of Objects*. In another, however, context remains significant. Hopwood and Donington's allusions to urban space intersect urbane associations of whiteness, so that, as they recall other service areas, shopping centres and hotel rooms, they also suggest an ideal city of opportunity. In both buildings unmarked whiteness seems, however unconsciously, to promise spatial carte blanche, freedom of occupancy, use and movement: an openness that applies to

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[244] See, for example: Koolhaas, 'Junkspace'; Sorkin, 'Variations'; Gottdiener, *The Theming of America*; Anna Klingmann, *Brandscapes: Architecture in the Experience Economy* (Cambridge MA; London, MIT Press, 2007).

[245] Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects* (1968), trans. by James Benedict (London; New York: Verso, 1996), pp. 33, 55.

brands as much as to visitors, as popular as it is apolitical.[246] The service areas thus suggest the perfection of urbanity and modernity: pure, 'public' space. Whiteness, in its cultural associations, as much as in its perceptual ambiguity, creates the impression that there are no absolute boundaries to define or exclude. It is only the brands – and their fit-outs – that contain, only brands that mark space *[5]*.[247]

As at most shopping malls, the internalization of the street allows 'inside' of shop to be seamlessly united with 'outside' of 'street', without any physical barriers or awkward sensory transitions. As a volume of air, both Donington and Hopwood are sealed and self-contained, regulated to indoor temperatures and humidities that are the same 'outside' in the 'street' as they are 'inside' the shops and cafés: a whole piece of 'city' becomes a single volume of air. This focusses visitors' experiences, conscious and unconscious, on each unit's specific visual and olfactory themed environment: not only is there no glass facade or door to negotiate, there is no hot blast of a thermal buffer, or shiver of a return to the outdoors. As Koolhaas notes, this amounts to an unseen collectivity: 'Air-conditioning […] imposes a regime of sharing (air) that defines invisible communities'.[248] Here air, like the whiteness of space, creates an unnoticed unity. Where air is consistently tempered and gently moved, unaffected by changing weather or seasons, people do not have to adapt to changing surroundings, because they are precisely tailored to them: a universal human norm. Otherwise undifferentiated, this neutral air concentrates attention on the branded smells of fast-food or coffee that flow through it.

This may follow the model of the mall, but it takes the possibilities for spatial continuity further. Not only do units have no windows or doors, their product displays

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[246] On whiteness in culture, see David Bachelor, *Chromophobia* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), pp. 9-49. For connotations of purity and naturalness, see Barthes's discussion of milk in *Mythologies*, pp. 58-61 (p. 60): 'milk is cosmetic, it joins, covers, restores. Moreover, its purity, associated with the innocence of the child, is a token of strength, of a strength which is not revulsive, not congestive, but calm, white, lucid.' White as signifier of purity may be traced at least as far back as the Bible: '"Come now and let us reason together," says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow"' (Isaiah 1:18). For associations with classical civilization and modern utopia, see, for example, Le Corbusier, *When the Cathedrals Were White*, trans. by F. Hyslop (New York: McGraw Hill, 1947) and Mabel O. Wilson's interpretation, 'Dancing in the Dark: The Inscription of Blackness in Le Corbusier's Radiant City', in *Architecture Theory: A Reader in Philosophy and Culture*, ed. by Andrew Ballantyne (London: Continuum, 2005), pp. 212-30. As Wigley puts it, white walls have become a 'unified image of modern architecture', whereby 'the whole moral, ethical, functional and even technical superiority of architecture is seen to hang on the whiteness of its surfaces'. see *White Walls*, pp. xiv, xvi.

[247] Drawing on T. J. Jackson Lear's analysis of Victorian culture, Crawford similarly describes shopping malls as a '"weightless realm" [that] receives substance only through the commodities it contains' (p. 14).

[248] Koolhaas, 'Typical Plan', in *SMLX*, pp. 335-46 (p. 339).

and, in many cases, their furnishings extend out into the 'street'. There is no way to browse at distance: arrangements of stands physically impede the routes of visitors, while the seating and retail areas of cafés and fast-food outlets occupy large areas of 'streets' and 'squares', their respective territories marked by barriers but also by floor surfaces, stands, tables and chairs in identifiable brand styles. While the brand's base, its own most 'interior' space, might be clearly indicated by bold signs, its extents become uncertain. With multiple thresholds implied by furniture, finishes and signs, the border between 'outside' and 'inside', 'public' and 'private' is difficult to determine. This neutral, pure context seems to offer no resistance to occupation, to offer itself to appropriation by citizen brands as by outsiders. This is a city seemingly centred on the visitor, flowing out to meet him or her, ready to satisfy desires. To a degree that surpasses the contemporary UK shopping centre, this is a street that is always open – and always full. In some areas, movement perpendicular to the route is easier than movement along it. More than a thoroughfare flanked by shops, it feels like a route cut through a single space of retail: the dense, contorted fit-out of a department store overlaid upon the linear space of an arcade or geometric layout of a public square.[249] In the purity of whiteness, of space without bounds, people and things seem to move freely between private units – insides without outsides – and the public street – the outside within.

Between auto and eco: greenscape

If the idea of 'outside', or 'street' is here rebranded as a neutral and consistent, yet readily occupied, context – a space that is, contrary to the traditional urban realm, environmentally regulated for human comfort – how does this interior relate to the space that lies beyond it, on the other side of the thermal buffer of the lobby? I will explore this from outside in and then inside out – transitions that are, I argue, very

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[249] As Maitland's tracing of shopping mall morphology reveals, the conflation of street and square in service area and airport design echoes a development in malls during the 1960s and -70s, towards what he terms 'the department store mall', exemplified by Fox Hills Mall, Los Angeles and, on a smaller scale, the Arndale Centre, Manchester. Maitland suggests that this was soon followed by a 'return of the arcade', in part because, following the oil crisis of the early 1970s, it allowed the mall space again to be treated as untempered, semi-outdoor 'transition space', but also because a growing interest in lost streetscapes – including, ironically, their appearance as a themed interior to department stores – made such forms appear more popular compared to large, seemingly more integrated, centres. See, especially, pp. 23-91. The spaces of contemporary service areas are, however, different from the 'department store malls' described in the fullness of their street/square and lack of depth, allowing large areas of glazing for natural light – for Maitland a trait of 'arcades' – and exterior views.

different. Pedestrian approach routes at Hopwood and Donington, along building frontages and as avenues through the car park, echo many of the urban, human-scale features also found within: lower-level lanterns replace the tall streetlights of the auto realm; benches, bins, signs, trees and hanging baskets flank paths made of stained concrete 'cobbles'. This leads towards an entrance marked, even in the most recent terminal-style service areas, by some form of portico. At Hopwood, this takes the form of a lobby with a wave form roof – echoing what was then the company logo – projecting asymmetrically from an otherwise uniformly glazed elevation. At Donington, by contrast, the whole facade alludes to a pylon gateway (or Renaissance villa) – derived architecturally from, as Lawrence notes, 1930s Art Deco cinema architecture.[250] Compared to 1980s and early-90s UK service areas, where diminutive glazed gables suggest vernacular architectures, suburban porches, Victorian conservatories and arcades,[251] these more recent roadside portals allude more strongly to (neo-) classical precedents, to architectures apparently more public than individual, and decidedly not domestic – to what John Summerson describes as a cultural *lingua franca*, 'the *Latin* of architecture'.[252] Alongside the shopping centre, airport, retail park, and cinema, these markers of entrance also recall older civic architectures, be they town halls, museums, universities or even stately homes – the latter now adopted as local or national monuments and sites of mass urban pilgrimage. They allude to the public buildings of an urban – or at least urbane – civilization *[6, 7]*.

Beyond entrances, the facades of these buildings – the repeating bays at Hopwood (and its relations) or simple mass-void-mass symmetry of Donington – seem to produce an image of unplaceable harmony and wholeness. Hopwood, in particular, recalls a tradition of hi-tech sheds seen, in architectural criticism at least, as examples of contemporary classicism, as modern temples – as one recent description, of Foster's Sainsbury Centre as 'Parthenon in the English landscape' demonstrates.[253] Very different from the mannered irregularity of the multiple-pitched roofs of 1980s and early-90s service areas, the effect of the modular unity and symmetries of recent

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[250] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', p. 132

[251] See, for example, Tibshelf, Chester and Strensham northbound. Lawrence discusses this symbolism in 'A Bit of Town', pp. 220-5, 298-302; *Food*, p. 111.

[252] John Summerson, *The Classical Language of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1963), p. 7. The text goes on to link this 'language' to civlization, referring to 'its use as the common architectural language, inherited from Rome, of nearly the whole civilized world in the five centuries between the Renaissance and our own time'.

[253] Kester Rattenbury, Robert Bevan and Kieran Long, *Architects Today* (London: Lawrence King, 2004), p. 75.

roadside buildings is perhaps similar to that of the whiteness within. Rendered in glass and steel, the 'classical' here seems to become more transparent, more immaterial, seemingly stripped back to the essential: pure and, as Deborah Ascher-Barnstone notes of the recurrence of transparency in parliamentary buildings and liberal rhetoric, democratic.[254] Significantly, however, this transparency, like that of the interior whiteness, is not particularly literal (in Rowe's definition) – and perhaps more effective for it. The heavily tinted glass allows little view of the interior. This allows it to symbolize transparency, democracy, the open society, without revealing the interior, the extent to which the space is already full, occupied, limited. Inside lies another world – one that is, by implication, bright, free, open, urbane, and yet protected from the outside. Jameson draws a pertinent analogy between the facade of the Westin Bonaventura Hotel – his exemplar space of postmodernity – and 'reflector sunglasses'. In his reading, the glass skin, like other aspects of the building's construction and organization, expresses autonomy from the surrounding context. But it does not only effect 'a peculiar and placeless dissociation' from the rest of the city; by making it difficult for outsiders to see within, the facade 'achieves […] a certain power over the Other', the security of seeing without being seen.[255] At Hopwood and Donington, the enigmatic, 'classical' transparency that reveals little from outside, promises a position of power within.

The relation between inside and outside is thus significantly transformed within the service areas. In the process, the identity of the outdoor realm seems to change, too: from car park to parkland. When approaching from outside, signifiers of urbanity and community seem to spread from the building into the car park to greet the pedestrian, marking a transition from machinic to civic realms. From within, by comparison, interior views onto outdoor spaces emphasize, by arrangement of view and vegetation, a different interface, between a hi-tech-human-nature inside and a natural greenscape outside. What was autoscape is represented as landscape – a landscape that seems to be made transparently available to the visitor. Thus the double promise in the names

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[254] See Deborah Ascher Barnstone, *The Transparent State: Architecture and Politics in Postwar Germany* (London: Routledge, 2005); Edward Wainwright, 'Transparency and Obfuscation: Norman Foster, Henri Lefebvre and the Politics of Modern Architecture', unpublished doctoral thesis, Cardiff University, 2010. For Baudrillard, glass – 'a sort of zero level of matter' – is inseparable from notions of modernity: 'Advertising calls it "the material of the future" – a future which, as we all know, will itself be "transparent". Glass is thus both the material used and the ideal to be achieved, both end and means.' See *System*, p. 41.

[255] Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 41.

Hopwood *Park* and Donington *Park* is ostensibly realized in the same space: an 'urban' parking of vehicles and the rolling parkland of a country estate, urbane rest from driving in the tranquillity of nature *[7, 8]*.

On the one hand, this might be seen to create a heightened contrast between white city and green nature, each emphasizing the difference of the other. In a world in which, as Mark Gottdiener puts it, 'there is hardly a pristine area left that hasn't been the subject of some government regulation or human resculpting to fit the needs of commercial interest', the surroundings seem as natural as many other areas of (managed but seemingly natural) countryside:[256] there are no well-surfaced routes projecting from public terraces, no scenically circuitous paths, sinuous flower beds, lined pools or ornamental plants as might be found in a municipal park.[257] Grassland is dotted with clusters of trees and crossed irregularly by hedgerows. Reed-edged pools either precisely follow the geometry of the buildings, like the 'canal' at Oxford,[258] or seem convincingly natural as at Hopwood and Donington. Artifice is obvious or well concealed. On the other hand, however, this is a tamed nature, a generic 'greenscape' of gentle undulations, shallow lakes, cut grass and trimmed trees – sometimes forming irregular shaped thickets, but usually regularly spaced, even gridded, and all limited to a similar height. There is thus a closer correspondence between inside and outside than would initially appear to be the case. Although this nature is green, it is also, in the senses of purity and homogeneity described above, *white*. Like whiteness, this greenscape is neutral, predictable and unremarkable. Apparent contrast between hi-tech-human-nature and 'natural' greenscape becomes, I will argue, a reflection.

The prevalence of glass suggests unmediated continuity between two different realms – inside and out – yet contact with the outside is discreetly managed: veiled visually and limited physically. All external views are to be had through a screen of 'nature', from the ostensibly expansive grassland behind Donington, screened on one side to exclude the motorway, to the narrow turf strip with established, densely planted trees in front of Hopwood, where full-height glazing would otherwise directly face the car park. Even when vehicles remain visible beyond, it is through a green filter, signifying a move into a natural environment. Yet there are few doors in these glazed

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[256] Gottdiener, pp. 3-4.

[257] The routes visible at Donington Park are rough and associated with various access or maintenance routes – and thus do not project directly from the terrace behind the building.

[258] This is the term used in architectural plans of Oxford, reproduced in Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', p. 306. This distinguishes it from a 'natural pond' to the west of the building.

facades. The dominant experience of the relation between interior and exterior is, as Baudrillard puts it, of 'transparency without transition: we see, but cannot touch'.[259] Water is a common feature, especially adjacent to outdoor seating areas. At Oxford, a linear pool with a continuous strip of vertical fountains separates the café terrace in front of the building from picnic and parking areas beyond, while the outdoor seating to the south side of Hopwood is on a platform, seemingly surrounded by, and at some points projecting over, a small lake with large, central water feature. At Donington, where the café terrace lies to the rear of the building and the natural setting is only revealed after passing through the atrium, a large pool fills the foreground.[260] There is, I suggest, a close relation between this use of vegetation and water, and the interior whiteness described above: they are immaterial boundaries, seemingly natural, pure and open, but at the same time marking limits – here, discouraging further movement into the landscape. Ditches and hedges edge sites without the need for fences. Pools and reeds suggest bogginess, but there are no surfaced paths, boardwalks or benches to reassure travellers who are frequently unprepared for mud and unwilling to dirty their vehicles. Where, inside, whiteness and transparency disguise enclosure in symbolic openness, outside, the seemingly extensive greenscape is 'naturally' closed by landscape features *[9]*.

There are other dimensions to this green whiteness. Fountains rising from the surface of pools not only stress that water is moving rather than stagnant, they freshen the surrounding air, its smell and humidity and muffle (or recast as natural) the sound of traffic, visitors, activities, movements. Greenscape is purified and filled with unifying '*white* noise'. Like the consistent flora, neither wild, nor entirely tame, this irregular babble of water seems to effect a natural conformity, a greenwash. This is a vision of nature – like the 'public' space within – as not only extensive and unbounded, but also smooth, simple and constant. It is a reassuring veil wrapped around travellers but one which, as I explore further below, tends to render the observer static and soundless. Thus, the realm of urban purity within is surrounded by a moat of natural

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[259] Baudrillard, *System*, p. 42.

[260] In all three cases, the pools are not purely aesthetic or symbolic features, but part of a SuDS drainage strategy, a localized, on-site solution for water runoff promoted by HA, which also creates wetland habitats. See, for example, <http://www.ciria.org.uk/suds/cs_hopwood_msa.htm> [accessed 11 October 2011]; <http://www.sustainabledrainage.co.uk/index.html> [accessed 11 October 2011]. As such, however, there is also a sense in which the greenscape is, like the much-publicized 'nature reserve' at Hopwood, part of a process of greenwashing to make the sites seem more sustainable in spite of their relation to road transport and more acceptable to local planning committees sceptical about greenfield development. Hopwood, for example, was only approved on appeal.

purity without; or, rather, one is reflected in the other: pure whiteness in pure greenscape.

What kind of urbanity is suggested by this mirroring of white-green human-nature? As glowing temples with chambers of abundance, Hopwood and Donington might be read as promises of paradise in the motorway wilderness, oases in the desert of the car, which not only offer the ideal city, but prospects of an ideal landscape. This idyll, if that is what it is, seems highly modern as well as natural, more utopian than nostalgic. It is a hi-tech condition of plenty, predictability and balance – but one in which the technology that sustains it is apparently absent. This environment excludes from view the vehicles necessary to reach it and the motorized landscape of which it is part. Similarly, while 'hi-tech' structure is exposed inside and outside, building services are not. Without any visible ducts, air is circulated at Hopwood via diffusers and grilles set within high level wall surfaces, and at Donington via discreet vents within the saw-tooth roof. Technology is 'natural' in this utopia, essential but unobtrusive. This condition seems similar to Tim O'Callaghan's description of CenterParcs leisure domes as 'the machine in the garden', where a harmony of disguised high technology and pseudo-wild landscape seems to offer a natural retreat for an auto-mobile and predominantly urban clientele.[261] But there are some important differences, too.

First, the controlled interiors of CenterParcs domes are expressively exotic, exploiting the possibility of simulating distant climates and cultures, housing plant species and activities incompatible with the surrounding environment: the technology might not be on display, but the artifice and otherness is, within the dome at least, unconcealed. Margaret Crawford describes a related trend in shopping malls, of which the 'Mediterranean Village' and 'Roman Forum' themed malls of the MetroCentre, Gateshead, are a prominent British example:

> Exaggerating the differences between the world outside and the world inside established a basic mall trope: an inverted space whose forbidding exteriors hid paradisiacal interiors.[262]

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[261] See Tim O'Callaghan, 'CenterParcs', *Journal of Architecture*, 13.6 (2008), 675-700 (p. 686). As Callaghan traces, this marks a shift from 'the villa in the forest' approach with which the company began, a notion of leisure as return to nature very different from the simulations of Disney.
[262] See Crawford, p. 22.

At Hopwood and Donington, by comparison, not only is there a complex visual interrelation between inside and outside (precluded at CenterParcs, as at malls, by perimeter service buildings), there is nothing exotic about what lies within (as without): the little vegetation, if any, is of 'native' species. Both landscape and interior seem unremarkably neutral, commonplace, natural: this is no themed, other world.

Second: where, as O'Callaghan puts it, CenterParcs fabricates 'a city in nature and nature in the city – a blurring of the boundary between the two',[263] and shopping malls of the kind Crawford describes internalize nature, these service areas maintain a clear distinction between a microcosm of urbanity within and a benign, extensive nature beyond. Hopwood and Donington are thus very different from suburbia and its idealization in Ebenezer Howard's 'Garden City' or as 'villas in the forest' at CenterParcs,[264] but also from the rural retreat and period details of earlier 'barn' style service areas. Instead, they fabricate urbanity in the middle of the countryside, a highly serviced yet self-contained humanity in harmony with a self-regulating nature – something closer to the country estate, perhaps, but without axial routes, elevated viewpoints, statues or follies to indicate human domination. Indeed, in a kind of phenomenal transparency, two planes of existence, two norms, two purities – one a hi-tech-human-nature, the other a 'natural' greenscape – seem to coexist in the same space and yet remain separate, neither reliant on the other. And both, in different ways, appear somehow universal. Inside and outside, human and nature seem only to interact *phenomenally*; like the 'urban' space within, greenscape is seemingly not owned. With its familiar countryside and generic high street/square, this is then not so much a vision of an other place, but a highly edited version of contemporary 'reality': a white city in harmony with a green world, both natural, both open.

Other shades of white and green

The resulting roadside condition is very different from the 'glittering-in-the-dark' of Las Vegas interiors described by Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour – yet it is, I argue, related. Rather than an 'interior oasis', another world deep within, these service areas – in their architecture and fittings, if not their products – promise a kind of purification of the messy motorized world outside: somewhere light, airy, temperate and

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[263] O'Callaghan, p. 694.
[264] See Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965).

predictable, where actions – such as over-consumption and waste production – seem buffered from their problematic effects. There is no complex sequence of initiation: little more than a canopy and a glazed draught lobby separate the street of the car park from the seemingly naturally-lit 'outdoor' 'street' inside. And yet, this casual transition not only idealizes the urban as white 'public' space, seamlessly opening onto not one but a whole series of colourful, 'glittering' grottoes of recognizable brands; it also re-presents the space beyond its envelope. No longer seen as a landscape of oil, litter and other detritus of car-travel, grey becomes green, auto becomes eco. Unlike the casinos with their 'exaggerated enclosure' and layers of introversion, if these service areas are hermetic, it is within – and in contrast to – an exaggerated openness. These are *immaterial* caves, offering unlimited prospect – of nature – as well as refuge – in brands.[265] Immaterial, because here all matter seems consumable and all boundaries – whether white or green – as indeterminate as they are 'natural'.

Like *Las Vegas*'s casinos, however, Donington and Hopwood are in other, less obvious, ways closed. Despite apparent openness to difference, the brands admitted are limited, partly by commercial pressures, but also by official sanction, to preserve the image of the whole; moreover, those permitted tend to operate according to tight conditions. Indeed, if the role of owner is more disguised than in the Las Vegas casino, it is more comprehensive than in any urban context. Rather than separate shops run by different companies, the majority of brands are operated as franchises by employees of the service area. Here, ostensibly 'private' spaces are organized and controlled by the same company that owns the apparently 'public'. The 'choice' between brands implied by the 'public' space between thus conceals the sovereignty of the whole.[266]

Contrary to appearances, service areas are not public, and carefully policed. Access is, in most cases, restricted to road users, while suspicious behaviour, such as the taking of photographs, is soon challenged (as I discovered during research).[267]

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[265] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, pp. 49-50, 55; Austin, 'Themes'.

[266] On the rise of franchises and brands in service areas, factors that make the model attractive, and the processes of deregulation that made it possible, see Lawrence, *Food*, pp. 94-111, 123-4, 134-5.

[267] I noted this during a study visit along the M1 and M6 motorways undertaken 10-15 July 2008. On the concealed control of seemingly public roadside spaces, see Chaney, 'Subtopia in Gateshead, pp. 49-68. On mall spaces as purified urban realms dependent on exclusion and control, see Jon Goss, 'The "Magic of the Mall": An Analysis of Form, Function and Meaning in the Contemporary Retail Built Environment', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 83.1 (1993), 18-47 (pp. 25-8, 37-43), Crawford, pp. 22-7. On the privatisation of seemingly public space and its surveillance, see Mark Gottdiener, *The Theming of America: American Dreams, Media Fantasies, and Themed Environments*, 2nd edn (Colorado; Oxford: Westview Press, 2001).

Together with other aspects already described, this produces, suggests Crawford of the mall, 'a fantasy urbanism devoid of the city's negative aspects: weather, traffic, and poor people' – those who cannot afford a car, but also those unable to drive – thus 'repackaging the city in a safe, clean and controlled form'.[268] Spatially and materially, this city seemingly has no hierarchies, no back alleys, no inequalities, no deficiencies. Yet spaces are patrolled by multiple security cameras: power, and its unequal disposition, is concealed. Koolhaas's assertion that 'Junkspace is authorless, yet surprisingly authoritarian' also applies to the white space of the service area.[269] Despite low levels of staffing, the building layout – a single, large, open-plan space with few above-waist-height obstructions surrounded on two sides by retail units – allows high levels of 'natural' surveillance. Sight-lines from the serveries and cash desks of franchises overlap to leave few unseen corners. Whether anyone is watching or not, there is the perception of being constantly exposed to the gaze of others, be they staff unseen amongst aisles of goods, or customers sitting in the 'square' or picnicking outside.

Here, the brightness, transparency and openness of service areas takes on a different significance; for, as Foucault puts it, in discussion of Jeremy Bentham's 1791 blueprint for a Panopticon prison – where identical cells are arrayed circularly around a guard's hut at the centre – 'to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility' is to '[assure] the automatic functioning of power'.[270] At both Hopwood and Donington, the spatial arrangement of observer and observed is the inverse of that at the Panopticon, with power not symbolically concentrated at the centre but distributed around the periphery. Nevertheless, there is a similarity in the way in which, in both cases, the combination of dense periphery and open centre produces a condition where, as Foucault puts it, 'surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous

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[268] Crawford, p. 23.

[269] Koolhaas, 'Junkspace', p. 168.

[270] Foucault describes the Panopticon as follows: 'At the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows of the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible.' See Michel Foucault, 'Panopticism', in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1995), pp. 195-228 (p. 200).

in its action'. The authority that observes is always symbolically present, but its agents remain, for the most part, unseen. Thus, 'visibility is a trap', which catches service area visitors, like Bentham's inmates, 'in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers'. With their seemingly simple volumes, ambiguous surfaces and indeterminate depths, the white spaces of Hopwood and Donington encourage a form of unconscious self-governance.

Bentham's Panopticon is clearly very different from the service areas discussed here, not least in the authoritarian regime its highly introverted, compartmentalized and symmetrically ordered spaces support. Indeed, I do not mean to suggest any deeper correspondence beyond a basic spatial arrangement common to numerous other kinds of buildings across different eras from stadia to libraries, which allows a particular efficiency of surveillance and, dependent on the specific configuration, affords unequal levels of visibility to those in different positions. What is significant at the contemporary service area, as well as at numerous other instances of recent white, internalized consumer spaces, is how, compared to the architecture of the Panopticon, the 'trap' of visibility is here laid far more stealthily, disguised by allusions to freedom and purity. The same spatial arrangements, materials and details that make Hopwood and Donington seem public, civic and democratic also maintain a form of control that requires few conspicuous – and thus directly challengeable – expressions of force.[271]

The 'fantasy urbanism' of Donington and Hopwood thus seems to depend on a mixture of the twin strategies described by Foucault – 'pure community' and 'disciplined society'[272] – and whiteness is implicated in both; the first achieved by the exclusion of undesirables – not only those without automobiles, but those seeking a form of privacy or seclusion disallowed by the architecture; the second by unseen surveillance of those who remain.[273] These spatial conditions, in concert with wider socio-cultural and technical changes – including a reduction in coach stops following the introduction of onboard toilets – have been, I suggest, significant in transforming the image, but also the culture, of a building type that, through the 1970s and -80s was notoriously associated with football hooliganism, vandalism and theft, and which

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[271] Foucault, *Discipline*, pp. 200-1.
[272] For Foucault, 'disciplined society' is exemplified by the control of cities during the plague, whereby every household was required to act in particular ways at certain times. 'Pure community' refers to the way in which various 'others', such as lepers are excluded from normal society. See *Discipline*, pp. 198-9.
[273] Foucault, *Discipline*, pp. 198-9.

remains, in its peripheral isolation, vulnerable to certain forms of criminal or 'antisocial' activity.[274]

 This is not the only way that division into ostensibly 'public' space and 'private' units disguises the coherent orchestration of the whole. Apparent neutrality conceals a sophisticated commercial logic. Uncovering the 'science of malling', Crawford describes various tactics to increase 'dwell time' and encourage consumption. In (US) industry parlance, she suggests:

> The Gruen transfer (named after architect Victor Gruen [a mall pioneer]) designates the moment when a 'destination buyer' with a specific purchase in mind, is transformed into an impulse shopper, a crucial point immediately visible in the shift from a determined stride to an erratic and meandering gait.[275]

The 'destination buyer' of the service area is the apparently desperate traveller with no purchase at all in mind, but only a specific form of bodily relief – a mandatory facility from which the operators are not allowed to directly profit.[276] Surveys suggest this traveller accounts for roughly half of all site visitors, and operators are engaged in encouraging them to deviate from their 'determined stride', as those promoting the sites' commercial prospects report: 'A lot of thought has gone into ensuring the signage and ambience en route from the car to the toilet works to convert single-mission visitors into spending customers.'[277] Yet the route itself is just as important as the 'signage and ambience'.

 'Street' layouts not only organize separate units conveniently while alluding to positive aspects of urbanity, they concentrate visitor flow. Where, even as late as the early 1980s, it was usual to locate toilets next to the entrances to service areas; they are now found, like the 'magnet' stores of shopping centres,[278] near the deepest point of the plan, so that browsing becomes unavoidable in malls that are, to quote 1999 Granada documentation, 'strategically placed so that all users will pass through

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[274] See Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 261-2.

[275] Crawford, p. 14. See also, pp. 6-11.

[276] *DfT Circular 01/2008*, p. 12.

[277] 'Billboards and Beyond'. See also, Doward, 'Motorway Meccas'; 'Service Stations See Footfall Boost over Bank Holiday', *Forecourt Trader*, 1 September 2011, <http://www.forecourttrader.co.uk/news/fullstory.php/aid/4952/Service_stations_see_footfall_boost_over_bank_holiday.html> [accessed 19 October 2011].

[278] Maitland describes the strategy of the mall as follows: 'A "merchandising plan" could thus be devised in which the primary units, or 'magnet' stores, would be so disposed that visitors to them would be led past secondary units, so maximising trading opportunities, turnover and hence rental levels, for the centre as a whole' (pp. 8-9).

them'.[279] Not only that, the routes to these 'magnets' are much more elaborate than the seemingly simple volumes of white, open, transparent space initially suggest. As Koolhaas notes, there is not only a profitable formula governing the sequence of facilities, there is a commercial logic to spatial contortions: 'Instead of design, there is calculation: the more erratic the path, eccentric the loops, hidden the blueprint, efficient the exposure, the more inevitable the transaction'.[280] Thus, at Donington, the toilets, two-thirds of the way along one side of the 'street/square', are reached via a loop of circulation that begins with an entrance on the opposite side, and squeezes visitors between a fenced seating area and retail units before allowing them to cross the space against a centrifugal pull into the café at the end. Hopwood's layout is very different but the effect is similar. Located on a mezzanine at the rear of the 'public' space, toilets draw visitors along a route that, via a pair of angled escalators (which not only ease movement, but slow and standardize it to concentrate the traveller's gaze),[281] amounts to a visual as well as physical tour of the building – a commercial variant of Le Corbusier's *promenade architecturale*.[282] The view up previews the operator's 'Eat In' self-service restaurant and the Starbucks café, down is a trajectory towards Waitrose and W.H.Smith, while the elevated position surveys the whole 'square' of product displays and dining options. This function whereby bodily need is manipulated to stimulate desire is disguised by the whiteness of 'public' space. In its neutral unity and immaterial continuity, it not only denies the significance of biological functions to the building, it implies that such routes could be no other way; an 'urban' realm owned visibly by no-one and open to anyone, it suggests that any obstructions are the work of the inhabitants – the 'private' high street brands, which, consumer research suggests, people are more willing to trust and to forgive *[10]*.[283]

Such tactics to increase consumption reach beyond the building envelope. At Oxford, for example, the 'natural' barrier of water is located so that outdoor terraces

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[279] A Granada Road Services promotional document from 1999, titled *The Journey: Moving into the Future*, cited in Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', p. 227. The document refers to the new 'mini-malls' being introduced at older MSAs, but also aptly describes the strategy of Donington Park.

[280] Koolhaas, 'Junkspace', p. 166. On the interlinked spatial, economic and cultural formations of retail space, see also, *Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping*. Goss describes various spatial strategies to increase consumption (pp. 29-35).

[281] On the escalator as limiting mobility, see Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 41: 'The narrative stroll has been underscored, symbolized, reified, and replaced by a transportation machine which becomes the allegorical signifier of that older promenade we are no longer allowed to conduct on our own.'

[282] See Flora Samuel, *Le Corbusier and the Architectural Promenade* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2010).

[283] See 'Brand Aid', *Forecourt Trader*, 29 March 2010, p. 31.

may be accessed only through the building, rather than directly from the car park. Indeed, the 'greenscape' itself is used as a form of 'magnet'. At both Hopwood and Donington, the entrance to the terrace is even further from the main entrance than the toilets, and the route to it passes every catering and retail outlet: to get to 'nature' the traveller must pass through the 'city'. At another scale, 'nature' becomes a unique selling point in a way that the 'street' within is not. If allusions to airports, malls, hotels and other spaces of 'fantasy urbanism' distance these service areas from older roadside sites and the low levels of choice, service and value popularly attributed to them, alluding, instead to a neutral urbanity, an architectural *lingua franca* of global 'public' space, the setting of Donington and Hopwood offers something those other larger, and often more densely urban buildings, cannot: 'authentic' nature. Important here, is what Crawford, drawing on Sennett, terms 'adjacent attraction': a key strategy of the mall, whereby, with commercial benefit, 'the most dissimilar objects lend each other mutual support when they are placed next to each other'. Or, at the scale of a whole building, it could be said that context is key to evoking the desirability of products, and that the associations of various seemingly disparate aspects of context overlap.[284] By 'adjacent attraction', not only might some of the natural greenscape reflect in the neutral white of the building to render it a 'natural' city; visitors might feel that this green-white nature purifies their otherwise grey journey. As city mirroring nature, the service area might help to disguise alienating or polluting aspects of car travel.

Greenscape, and the emphasis on 'contemplation' and 'tranquility', may also be a way to increase 'dwell time' – by creating an environment, ostensibly distant from the speed and urgency of the road, capable of holding the gaze for longer. Yet, as it implies a non-commercial realm free of human manipulation, it is configured to discourage travellers from straying too far from retail opportunities – opportunities of which it is, I suggest, also an indirect, but ever-present, reminder. In their constant babble, fountains echo the sense of unlimited refreshment within. That which seemingly ensures a tranquil environment also recalls the branded flows emanating from deep within the product-lined chambers of the 'street': apparent stillness is in service of certain, profitable, material flows. It is no coincidence, perhaps, that, at Donington, Oxford and Hopwood, the fast food franchises are located closest to

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[284] Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Vintage, 1976), pp. 144-5; Crawford, pp. 14-17.

outdoor seating areas, where mass-production and inducements to excessive consumption – to 'go large' – might be purified by association with a 'natural' context and thus a healthy lifestyle – a localized architectural equivalent of companies such as McDonalds sponsoring the London 2012 Olympics or other sporting events and promotions *[11]*.[285]

This in turn offers a further reading of recent service area buildings: as what Maitland calls the 'dumbbell form', where two 'magnets' at opposite ends of a mall ensure a high concentration of flow through it.[286] Here, that second magnet is the pairing of greenscape and junk food (the next most popular 'attractor' after toilets). By locating the toilets near the furthest point from both the main entrance *and* the fast food terrace – on a mezzanine in the far corner of Hopwood and two-thirds of the way along the street of Donington – anyone finishing their meal in the fast-food seating areas, or outside, is persuaded to walk back through the whole building to use the facilities, even if they have spotted a shortcut to the car park. This commercial synergy between green and white recalls Koolhaas's argument that 'landscape has become Junkspace', as exemplified by the proliferation of golf courses:

> Trees are tortured, lawns cover human manipulations like thick pelts, or even toupees, sprinklers water according to mathematical timetables … Seemingly at the opposite end of Junkspace, the golf course is, in fact, its conceptual double: empty, serene, free of commercial debris. The relative evacuation of the golf course is achieved by the further charging of Junkspace. The methods of their design and realization are similar: erasure, tabula rasa, reconfiguration.[287]

The golf course landscape of variously rough and smooth green undulations, lakes and ditches is not so different from the greenscape described above – except for the lack of hole, flag, and thus any inducement to move. At the service area, too, the commercial vacuum of nature gives greater 'charge' to the exchanges of the city within.

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[285] See 'McDonald's Makes 2012 Olympics Pledge to Create the Biggest and Busiest Big Mac Diner', *Guardian*, 21 July 2011, p. 8: 'McDonald's is a long-standing sponsor of the Olympics and the World Cup, with its exclusive deals ensuring it is the only branded restaurant on site.' The current McDonalds homepage, for example, features images of footballers, advertising a chance to win coaching vouchers. Alongside 'Food', 'Restaurants', 'People', 'Our World' – promoting the company's environmental initiatives 'working towards a greener future' – and 'About us', 'Sport' is one of the main headers on the website. Pages contain information about a wide-ranging coaching, awards and sponsorship programme at community and national level. See <http://www.mcdonalds.co.uk/>; <http://www.mcdonalds.co.uk/sports/football/football-hub.shtml> [accessed 15 October 2011]. On such indirect advertising techniques, see Naomi Klein, *No Logo: No Space, No Choice, No Jobs* (New York: Picador, 2002), pp. 3-128.
[286] Maitland, pp. 8-9.
[287] Koolhaas, 'Junkspace', p. 170.

This condition of hi-tech-human-nature within greenscape is thus far more complex than the image of neutral, generic, pure space the service areas seem to project. Though bold signs and open volumes do allow the rough proportions of the space and its main brands to be apprehended, *Food on the Move*'s description of such spaces as 'easy to navigate' because 'all [can] be quite readily identified' is, I argue, incomplete.[288] As it accepts at face value the spatio-material allusions to transparency and purity, it overlooks the ambiguous surfaces and complex landscapes of persuasion – internal and external – that orchestrate the space, that dematerialize and naturalize boundaries and that condition or contain movement. Nor does it acknowledge that all is not equally clear. For, even at the level of signage, there is a disparity between different messages. While brands are immediately apparent, toilets are not, and signs for them small or only visible close up, encouraging a certain degree of commercially-beneficial confusion. Yet the spaces are not entirely disorientating, and, in this, my description of Hopwood and Donington also differs from Jameson's reading of the Bonaventura, where the text finds him, 'at a loss when it comes to conveying the […] experience of space':

> I am tempted to say that such space makes it impossible for us to use the language of volume or volumes any longer, since these are impossible to seize. Hanging streamers indeed suffuse this empty space in such a way as to distract systematically and deliberately from whatever form it might be supposed to have, while a constant busyness gives the feeling that emptiness is here absolutely packed, that it is an element within which you yourself are immersed, without any of that distance that formerly enabled the perception of perspective or volume.

Though there are plenty of 'streamers' here in the form of products, signs and 'street' furniture to effect a 'suppression of depth', a sense of 'constant busyness', it does not, in the same way as Jameson goes on to argue, '[transcend] the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world'.[289] A key aspect of these service area interiors is that, despite their dissimulation of boundaries and their allusions to openness, purity and universality, they seem graspable and familiar: an ordinary bit of city, an unremarkable bit of countryside.

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[288] Lawrence, *Food*, p. 135.
[289] Jameson, *Postmodernism*, pp. 41-3.

Jameson's observations become more relevant, however, when considering the relation between inside 'city' and outside 'nature', what I have already described as a form of phenomenal transparency – at once an opposition and an overlapping of distinct planes: the human and the natural, the white and the green. Both seem to promise openness and autonomy – autonomy of each from the other; a harmony undisturbed by the activity of humans. The interior of naturalized technology ostensibly needs no outside support. With so much self-service, there are barely any visible staff. The few human operators are rarely seen beyond a counter, seemingly integrated into the technologized – or naturalized – supply of fast-food – as exemplified by the metal chutes by which burgers are transferred from kitchen to servery. Strictly uniformed according to the brand they represent, staff may just as well be outgrowths of the franchise – the operator itself seeming to have barely any human presence at all. As everything appears to come automatically from within, there is apparently no dependence on the outside, on the environment, on others who provide or produce – the delivery yard being well-concealed to the rear. So, while the flows of water described above reinforce and reflect interior signifiers of abundance and refreshment, they also mark liberation from a nature on which humans have no need to draw, a nature rendered purely aesthetic.

The all-weather street, where it is never cold, rainy or dark, is an industrialized, urban version of Eden, a place of innocent plenty, a city without need of hinterland, a human space from which one only moves for leisure. Hopwood and Donington thus seem to evoke a myth of hi-tech autonomy, distinct from and in parallel to a benign nature – a plane of white above a sea of green. Yet there only *seems* to be a harmonious balance. For the hierarchy here keeps the urban in the centre, the human in control of a natural hinterland rearranged around it to form a relatively homogenous field of contemplation, ostensibly deep, but orchestrated to contain. In the second section of this chapter, I explore further this relation between the buildings and the more complex exterior that they conceal in various ways. So far, I have described the manipulation of local surroundings, how greenscape seems to reflect and to reinforce allusions to free, open, pure, *white* urbanity within, and how together they conceal limits, and disguise power. I now move on to consider how the buildings are in other ways displaced in space and time, and how the experience of the service area is part of a wider experience of travel, of a lifestyle lived between various homes-from-home.

Lounge space: a home without host

The 'outside' space within described above – the 'street-square' – is characteristic of Hopwood, Donington and their siblings but occupies an ambiguous position. On the one hand, its presence is necessary – not only for practical reasons of shelter and thermal comfort. Its uniformity seems to guarantee that no single function or brand is dominant, to reassure that there is an overall organization, a logical structure that connects coherently the different pieces, maintaining certain conventions – however anonymously. It is unusual for any elements associated with a brand – fixed or mobile – to encroach beyond its framing portal in any direction other than forwards. The separations between each unit define a virtual volume of space extending into the 'street' or 'square'. Though they may not be consciously read as such, floor tile patterns, column rhythms and cornices – whether Classical or Art Deco, whether 'modern' curves and up-lighters or 'hi-tech' spotlights and diffusers – and changes of ceiling height mark the continuity of a 'public' route past and through the different 'private' commercial realms. Comparable to the 'Typical Plan' of the New York skyscraper – 'the ideal accommodation for business' – that Koolhaas describes in *SMLXL*, this is the typical space of commerce, where a logic of repeated units rather than floor plates, of modular divisions in plan not section, structures the space. In this sense, Hopwood and Donington are two iterations in a widespread commercial spatial order – one in which transitions between 'public' and 'private' spaces are, compared to those of 'business', more symbolically expressed, but seeming less physically controlled.[290]

On the other hand, however, this common space and structure, which ensures the unity and comprehensibility of the whole as well as the independence of each part, must be almost invisible, so generic as to be unnoticeable, its immateriality ostensibly no barrier to the brands within or greenscape beyond. Like the office floor plate's 'zero-degree architecture, […] stripped of all traces of uniqueness and specifcity', it

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[290] Compare with 'Typical Plan', pp. 335-48 (p. 337). Not dissimilarly from the argument I make below, Koolhaas suggests that, despite the emphasis on repetition, subtle variations in 'Typical Plan' nevertheless have significance. In line with the conclusion to the last section, my argument differs from Koolhaas's in how it reads the buildings' apparent neutrality: where 'Typical Plan' emphasizes 'new territories for the smooth unfolding of new processes', I see such spaces to be more determined and determining – less 'neutral' in spite of appearances – than Koolhaas's reading would suggest. On typical commercial space, see also Hans Ibelings, *Supermodernism: Architecture in the Age of Globalization* (Rotterdam: NAI, 1998), especially the discussion of chain hotels, p. 34.

seems architecturally 'neutral', 'as empty as possible' so that it can be most flexibly and profitably filled – not so much with 'new processes', as is suggested of 'Typical Plan', but with many repetitions of the same, familiar transactions.[291] That which is not branded and consumable, moveable and exchangeable, individuated and appropriable, is not to be seen.

This condition seems related to Augé's non-place, where everything is commodified and codified and the particular loses its distinct identity.[292] In another sense, however, identity is not so much lost, as well concealed. The identity of the service area as a host that orders and confines is disguised in whiteness and obscured behind the brands on offer. This is not to suggest that architectural differences between sites have no significance (as I explore further in the conclusion): perhaps due to the continuous L-shape of retail, the off-centre entrance, the independence of structure from spatial enclosure, or the metallic blue-grey spectrum of its whiteness, Hopwood is experienced as more like a 'terminal', a space where rapid movement is expected, but frustrated – as in the renowned bottleneck on route to the upstairs toilets; Donington, by comparison, with its lofty, top-lit space, column-free symmetry, acoustically softer, matt yellow-white surfaces, and hotel rooms above tends to be seen as a slower environment, more of a place to meet.[293] Nevertheless, with material and formal details suppressed, the focus is primarily on recognizable signs that appear to transcend the limits of place and time. As particular place is variously concealed, abstracted and deferred, the visitor is placed within an ostensibly universal context, what Koolhaas terms 'Public Space^TM', a space that *seems* to be 'subsystem only'.[294] In this section, I look more closely at this relation between universal and everyday, system and object, law and citizen, host and hosted, at how the familiarity of the 'foreground' is as significant as the dematerialization of the 'background'.

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[291] Koolhaas, 'Typical Plan', pp. 335, 344.
[292] Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 94-101
[293] See, comments left on <http://www.motorwayservices.info> [accessed 18 October 2011].
[294] Koolhaas, 'Junkspace', pp. 164, 168. Andrew Wood makes a similar observations of a common language of recognizable terms in 'A Rhetoric of Ubiquity: Terminal Space as Omnitopia', *Communication Theory*, 13.3 (2003), 324-44 (pp. 328-32).

The place is portable, the time is now

The most prominent imagery indicates national, often multinational, brands, with logos but also through the qualities of the unit fit-out: for example, the healthy white and green glow of mini-supermarkets and the red and yellow or white super-sized menus of fast-food chains. These refer beyond the building, not only to other service areas, but to spaces within other building types in different contexts, from shopping centres to airports across the UK and beyond. In shifting the emphasis from building to unit, from host to hosted, there is also a movement from space to object. Attention is directed to products rather than the specific spaces or times of their encounter, away from the driving experience and the events or routine of the journey. Ubiquitous brands, with their breadth of existing, unplaced associations, are both everyday ornament, in the manner of wallpaper, and windows onto other worlds, like paintings. They signify normality, promise a familiar fix for diverse desires and evoke well-advertised fantasies beyond here and now.[295] Indeed, it is brands that ensure consistency of experience, not only across sites operated by the same company, but between those of different operators that even share some of the same franchises.[296] While there are some variations depending on service area size, each company repeats a similar, limited range of brands across their network of sites, typically arranged in roughly the same sequence: irrespective of differences in building form, the service area becomes, symbolically at least, a generically diverse space, a familiar constellation of recognizable signs.[297]

It follows that the main, and in some cases the only, references to the host company are found outside. Bold signs for 'Roadchef', 'Moto' or 'Welcome Break' signify ownership of portals, but not the world within. As intermediaries, they mark entrances to a plural environment into which they seem barely to intrude. Exteriors may make reference to company colours; but inside, restaurants owned entirely by the company are represented as separate brands, in some cases with identities as distinct as those of other unit operators. Moto, for example, uses company turquoise for external details and furniture, whereas its Eat & Drink Co. self-service restaurants have a brown

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[295] On objects as part of systems of symbolic exchange, see Baudrillard, *System*, especially pp. 187-96.
[296] At time of writing, franchises of Costa and Burger King are found in service areas of more than one operator; WHSmith is ever-present in all sites of the main three.
[297] The standardization of brands is an increasing trend. Whereas Granada used to host a variety of high street brands at different sites, including Thorntons, Bodyshop and Halfords, the combination of W.H.Smith, M&S Simply Food and Costa Coffee is now found in most of the company's MSAs.

and cream colour-scheme. Welcome Break service areas seem to exceed this logic: the black background and compressed capitals of the company logo are echoed in its 'Eat In' brand within, albeit with red rather than green lettering. Yet far from increasing the presence of the operator, this seems to produce the reverse effect. The black background clearly separates both liveries from the rest of the building fabric, from the transparency of the exterior and the whiteness of the interior. More prominent within, 'Eat In', the so-called 'sub-brand', seems to subsume 'Welcome Break': the operator becomes privileged brand – but a brand like any other – rather than host. Even on the outside of the building, the operators' logos – distinct to the motorway – are now overshadowed by wall-size banners advertising the more ubiquitous brands that await within: they present a universal space, not of the road.[298] A more extreme trend away from the particular condition of the roadside is evident in the way service areas are signed from the carriageway. To circumnavigate restrictions on roadside advertising, Moto started to change its roadside identity to 'Moto M&S Simply Food' in 2005.[299] When Welcome Break became 'Welcome Break KFC' in the same year, the company reported increased sales of up to 30% at some sites.[300] More recently, both company names have disappeared completely, replaced by 'Costa M&S' and 'KFC Starbucks'. The roadside host is effaced by high street brands.

Where place is referenced, it is as something between a brand and an exhibit. Any representations of the 'locality' depict iconic sites that are not visible from the motorway, yet still seen from a position of automotive detachment. Welcome Break, for example, displays picturesque images of local landmarks, such as historic spires at Oxford, Blackpool Tower at Charnock Richard (M6), pine trees at Fleet (M3), and a sandy beach at Gordano (M5).[301] All are reproduced in high contrast – emphasizing

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[298] At Moto MSAs, for example, signs are headed by a Moto logo, but advertise the company's three main brands – Costa, M&S and KFC – in the larger space below. A similar emphasis is found on company websites. For example, on the Moto site, the company name occupies a discreet position in the top left, while the most prominent content, colour and logo is a rolling banner of hosted brands, set against a 'neutral' white background. See <http://www.moto-way.com/> [accessed 19 October 2011].

[299] On the strictures of roadside signage regulations, see *DfT Circular 01/2008*, pp. 26-9. On some signs there is 'provision for the addition of a header board displaying the operator's name and logo in their house style', but subject to the following constraints: 'Height restrictions apply to this header board, and the width is governed by the width of the main sign below when designed in accordance with the normal design rules. It is not permitted to alter the layout of the main sign to increase the overall width. All lettering on the header board must at least as large as the transport alphabet used on the main sign.'

[300] 'News in Brief', *Forecourt Trader*, August 2005, p. 4.

[301] On this rebranding, see Melanie Godsell, 'Welcome Break Rolls out Identity Revamp', *Marketing*, 4 October 2006, <http://www.marketingmagazine.co.uk/news/596298/Welcome-Break-rolls-identity-revamp> [accessed 23 October 2011].

expanses of sandy stone, country green or coastal blue – often from elevated, unreachable positions, cropped to exclude people or vehicles. The locality is depicted with apparently timeless human artefacts, unpopulated and outside everyday life.[302] Hopwood symbolizes Birmingham in a juxtaposition of old and new landmarks. The tower of the city's St. Martins church is pictured beside Future Systems Architects' scaleless Selfridges store. This suggests a place where history meets the future, masculine meets feminine, but statically, without any sign of activity within or without *[12]*.[303] Usually at the entrance to buildings, these wall-height depictions confirm location, frame it like a postcard, but have little role in the internal experience of the service area. This practice is taken further at the same operator's Telford (M54, 2004), a mini-'techno-shed' not far from Ironbridge, where a Shropshire stone and several 'authentic' artefacts from the industrial revolution are on display around and within the car park. Elevated on a plinth or centre-piece to a picnic area, these objects, like images at sites elsewhere, are decontextualized, static symbols of what gives the locality national significance – and, for the most part, they are kept outside. The only internal indicator of place is a model plane suspended above part of the dining area. This has local relevance, referring to the nearby RAF museum and airbase, but it is also an object without fixed place, something that literally requires no ground for support.

Otherwise, buildings offer barely any practical information about the locality. Menus and product ranges are standardized for each operator and franchise, for example. So, in most cases, there is little or no attempt to enable people to experience the local context – as is more common in France or Germany, for example, where roadscapes are in other respects as homogenized as they are in the UK.[304] Elements of 'local' place, and of other places, are suspended within the neutral white-green space of the services, objectified and isolated from context as museum exhibits. Hopwood and Donington thus relate to place very differently from the processes described by

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[302] I discuss the political implications of distanced views more fully in the next chapter; see also Barthes, 'The *Blue Guide*', in *Mythologies*, pp. 74-7.

[303] This imagery is particularly significant. Selfridges's sinuous facade of circular disks reflects and reframes aspects of context, while allowing little connection between outside and inside – the latter being a more extreme introverted realm of smooth, shiny whiteness. Designed as, and widely seen to be, an instant icon of place, it has received criticism in the architectural press for failing to engage urban context at a human scale, for being conceived as object and image detached from the city. See, for example: 'Blue Blob in Birmingham: Birmingham Continues its Worship of the Slightly Outdated with its Latest Big Building', *Architectural Review*, 1280 (2003), p. 24.

[304] See Augé, *Non-places*, pp. 96-8; Lawrence, *Food on the Move*, pp. 30-2.

Michael Sorkin in 'Variations on a Theme Park' or Mark Gottdiener in *The Theming of America*, whereby 'architecture and decor artfully play out distinctive symbolic appeals'. If there is a 'single, overarching theme' here,[305] it is neutrality, a non-theme that defies dominant notions of simulation as something excessive, hyperactive and hyperreal.[306] This non-theme allows place, like brand, to be presented as a self-contained object, one of many offerings ostensibly for 'contemplation', but preferably to encourage consumption, at a site that seems only to gather a range of choices, without imposing any singular condition. This distancing or quarantining of place recalls Augé's discussion of touristic roadsigns, of a common format, background and font that reduces the complexity of localities to easily readable names and (in France) a simple diagram:

> Main roads no longer pass through towns, but lists of their notable features […] appear on big signboards nearby. In a sense the traveller is absolved of the need to stop or even look. […] The landscape keeps its distance, but its natural or architectural details give rise to a text, sometimes supplemented by a schematic plan when it appears that the passing traveller is not really in a position to see the remarkable feature drawn to his attention, and thus has to derive what pleasure he can from the mere knowledge of its proximity.[307]

Here there is not even the inducement of an arrow or a measure of distance to locate the referenced place more precisely. These service areas thus market themselves as part of a ubiquitous space of global urban exchange; a safe distance from the complicated realities of the locality and the road, which must remain beyond the service area's outdoors-within, its buffers of predictable whiteness and greenscape.

This resistance to location is accompanied by a suppression of differences in time. Whiteness and even lighting do more than suggest a single, uniform space uninterrupted by particularities of place; they also resist the passage of time. It is always bright at Hopwood and Donington; even at night, there are no dark corners. This defiance of diurnal rhythm allows the service area to inhabit an unplaceable present, an ever-presence. In Welcome Break service areas, flat screen televisions suspended above seating areas bring 24-hour news to diners. The time may be always displayed on screen, but the set and format remain the same whatever the hour. This

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[305] Gottdiener, *Theming*, p. 4; Sorkin, 'Variations'. In sections added to the second edition, Gottdiener briefly notes a trend away from overt theming to more subtly allusive mall environments, pp. ix-x, 182-3. See also, Crawford.

[306] See, for example, Baudrillard, *Simulacra*, pp. 1-7.

[307] Augé, *Non-places*, p. 97. On the standardization of UK motorway signs, see Moran, pp. 62-73; DfT, *Traffic Signs Manual: Chapter 7, The Design of Traffic Signs* (London: TSO, 2003), pp. 90-8.

asserts a global present: up to date with world events, irrespective of local time. Similarly, Moto plays its own stream of a national radio station, which features popular music alongside regular news bulletins – synchronizing all sites with a common sound.[308] Neither 'retro' nor overtly futuristic, the buildings, too, seem to defy their age. White surfaces suggest timelessness – an absence of pattern and colour that cannot go out of fashion. Surfaces are wipe-clean and the branding and fit-out of units can be regularly updated without disruption to the whole. Indeed, the buildings seem to embody a fear of time, with marks of the past concealed by regular refit. If the white space of the service area alludes to the gallery, it is not as a museum of all history, but as a constant vessel untouched by changing exhibition.[309] The service area thus seems to inhabit the illusion of eternal contemporaneity that Peter Eisenman traces in modern notions of zeitgeist: universal and of the moment, timeless yet up to date, beyond history.[310]

At home without domesticity: an everyday utopia

Hopwood, Donington and their relations seem to promise an unchanging datum, a predictable experience irrespective of place or time: a timeless contemporaneity. Seemingly unvarying and yet always up to date, they conceal the very processes of travel they are there to accommodate. Such spaces have been linked to Michel Foucault's 'heterotopia': 'a sort of place that lies outside all places and yet is actually localizable' which, by containing conditions and events that exceed normal society, stabilize existing structures and institutions of everyday life, of power and knowledge.[311] Like Foucault's other examples – cemeteries and sanatoria, brothels and circuses – contemporary service areas are 'heterotopic' in their containment of travel

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[308] This service was provided by Virgin Radio until 2008, and its successor, Absolute Radio, since.

[309] The service areas' universalism of the present is then not the same as a universalism of all time. For whiteness as seemingly neutral space out of place and time, with allusions to sacred spaces, see O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, pp. 14-15:

[310] Peter Eisenman, 'The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning, the End of the End' (1984), in Kate Nesbitt (ed.), *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), pp. 212-27 (pp. 216-18).

[311] Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias', in *Leach*, pp. 350-6 (p. 352). Augé cites Sylviane Agacinski making a similar connection between known and other, but at the scale of the town. See *Non-places*, p. 112. This notion of 'heterotopia' is more concrete than the earlier usage referenced in the introduction – a discussion of Borges in *The Order of Things* (pp. xvi-xxvi). On this distinction, ambiguities and architectural interpretations of 'heterotopia', see Henry Urbach, 'Writing Architectural Heterotopia', *Journal of Architecture*, 3 (1998), pp. 347-54; for philosophical context see Peter Johnson, 'Unravelling Foucault's "Different Spaces"', *History of the Human Sciences*, 19.4 (2006), pp. 75-90.

as a moment of destabilization. Yet they are particularly uncanny (*unheimlich*) in that their relation to the 'home' is more ambiguous.[312] As brands suggest a trans-urban space, repeated with slight variations in 'public' spaces across the country and around the world, they also imply the comfort of home, or rather home-from-home, a stable place where every journey begins and ends, a place that escapes movement – or, like the car, moves with you. Neither entirely homely or urban, service areas present a simplified and sanitized version of everyday life: a home without domesticity; a home in which you are always a guest without responsibility, comfortable without attachment. This may be seen as at once a reflection and an inversion of the whiteness discussed above. Similarly generic, ubiquitous and 'neutral', lounge space, too, disguises limits, not by dematerialization, but by multiplying familiar differences.

If service area 'squares' seem to be outdoor public space, they are also many lounges under one roof. 'Dining' areas are subdivided into 'rooms' of roughly domestic proportions by waist-high barriers, benches, bins and plants. These offer varied seating environments, from formal to informal, solitary to social, introverted to extroverted, for meeting, dining, relaxing, reading or working. Alcoves of sofas, clusters of armchairs, grids of dining chairs and rows of stools, each with a distinct type of table (rectangular, round, square or linear), define different relationships between those seated – so long as no more than a car-full, a family unit, want to sit together. Typically, each configuration coincides with a different floor finish and lighting condition that affect the tone, acoustics and apparent scale of the space: carpets and up-lighters go with sofas, timber boarding and pendant lamps with dining chairs, tiles and spotlights with stools. In Hopwood and Donington, as in the typical house, a range of activities and personal preferences are seemingly accommodated in different but related family-sized spaces *[13]*.

This space of many lounges echoes trends in contemporary marketing of the home: 'One room, many zones. Because variety is the spice of family life', is how the *IKEA 2012* catalogue captions an open-plan living room with diverse seating, eating and working areas.[313] With a current print run of nearly two hundred million copies in 27 languages, advertising products available in 37 countries, the catalogue, and the

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[312] See Freud, pp. 335-76.
[313] *IKEA 2012: Foldable, Stackable, Affordable, Beautiful*, store catalogue (Delft: Inter IKEA Systems, 2011), pp. 28-9; <http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_GB/about_ikea/the_ikea_way/faq/index.html>; <http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_GB/about_ikea/facts_and_figures/ikea_group_stores/index.html> [accessed 16 October 2011].

lifestyles it shows, suggest a globalization of notions of home – of home as a series of personal spaces. Indeed, the company's stated aim to 'democratize' the domestic environment, by, in the words of retail historian Clive Edwards, offering 'classless furnishings […] designed to appeal to all customer profiles', chimes with service areas' allusions to freedom and choice.[314] Resembling the IKEA catalogue home, with its many interconnected rooms of subtly subdivided spaces, service area 'squares' capture something of the 'classless' appeal of the world's largest furniture retailer: different places for different people to feel differently at home *[14]*.

In this reading, the city internalized becomes adjunct to the home. With the service area's central 'public' space also a personalized lounge, the house engulfs the city. This lounge space juxtaposes a variety of homely spatial conditions with fresh and up-to-date products from supermarkets, cafes, newsagents and bookshops. The shops become limitless larder and bookshelf, automated cooker and kettle, arrayed around living-dining-study spaces where multiple desires may be satisfied without the need to go outside. On the condition of a financial transaction, there is no need to travel, to plan, to prepare or to clear up – to work. The service area seemingly offers the comfort and self-determination of the home without its responsibilities; it promises the freedom of choice and anonymity of the city without the inconvenience of distance or the threat of otherness. As micro city and macro house, Hopwood and Donington resist being read as an institution. In this, the service areas recall van Eyck's promotion of 'space in the image of man', of architecture as a 'bunch of places' that is both 'citylike house' and 'houselike city'. But unlike the sequence of 'inbetween places', structures to be differently occupied, that his essays describe, this lounge space in the 'street' comes pre-upholstered, ready-appropriated to suit various different tastes.[315] It seems universal but not standardized, convenient rather than purposeful, familiar yet indeterminate. This experience is not an exception from the norm, not an escape from everyday routine, but its neutralization and universalization – not eating out, but takeaway in a show home, or coffee-to-go in IKEA.

This condition of hybrid public and private signifiers, global brands in wide-span spaces, comfy chairs in front of TVs, is supported by a sensory environment that

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[314] IKEA internal company training manual, quoted in Clive Edwards, *Turning Houses into Homes: A History of the Retailing and Consumption of Domestic Furnishings* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 210; Edwards, p. 210. As Edwards also records: 'the one hundred best-selling lines are approximately the same across the whole business'.
[315] van Eyck, pp. 237-8.

suggests intimacy through the multiplication of different semi-familiar features. Yet, here too, the limitations to this 'home-from-home' may be seen. For this house of many lounges offers little relaxation or privacy. With many partitions but no enclosures, the only internal doors are to toilet cubicles, and those are far from airtight. All 'private' chambers are occupied by brands. If this 'home' includes spaces for bodily relief and programmed play, what it lacks is quiet or intimate places.[316] Apart from a small area for amusements,[317] which seldom involve much physical exertion, most of the 'rest' spaces at Hopwood and Donington are sedentary. Yet the rest they offer is far from sensory or secluded. Retail and fast-food outlets encircle seats, partitions are low and products as well as images often super-sized, so browsing never stops. For Lawrence and Wentworth, the main shop is hybrid of 'newsagents or railway station café' and 'seaside novelty shop' offering 'impulse purchases to titillate a gamut of urges for Britain on the move':[318] from garden furniture to 'pick 'n' mix', giant soft toys to first aid kits.

There is constant background entertainment, something to be mentally, as well as physically, consumed. Operators screen films while broadcasting radio, or 24-news while playing music: from rolling national and international media to conversations at neighbouring tables, there are always multiple sources of distraction, none of which can be fully appreciated. Hard, reverberative surfaces amplify the competing sounds without rendering them unintelligible, creating an atmosphere aurally busy at every hour of the day.[319] Indeed, the spaces seem designed to be comfortable, but only to a certain degree. Soft but upright chairs, short and firm sofas, gentle lamps in an already bright space, hinder sleep as they suggest relaxation. However passively, the visitor is expected to remain attentive. Consistent with the ever-presentness of the building's white space, no one must be allowed to dwell. With free parking limited to two hours

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[316] A few Moto service areas introduced quiet rooms, in the early 2000s, but these were very small, magnolia-painted spaces, suitable for only a couple of people at one time. Resembling a waiting room or office, they appear more claustrophobic than restful. These seem to have been since converted for other uses.

[317] Regulations impose a limit of 100m², see *DfT Circular 01/2008*, p. 17

[318] On service area products and scale exaggeration, see Lawrence and Wentworth, pp. 160-1.

[319] Morrison notes how sound was similarly 'crucial' in early shopping malls: 'terrazzo floors produced a high noise level which gave an impression of life and activity, while piped music aspired to create atmosphere' (p. 262). The competing media at MSAs would, by comparison, seem to create an environment at once more homely and more distracting.

and expensive thereafter, visits are not supposed to last long: signifiers of stability disguise a norm of restless movement.[320]

As city-to-hand and mobile home, place of comfort without rest, Hopwood and Donington seem to extend the enclosure of the car, a travelling personal space where everything is within reach. In 'Inhabiting the Car', Urry describes contemporary road travel as 'dwelling within, a […] semi-privatized […] auto motive capsule':

> Unlike 'public' transport, the car facilitates a domestic mode of dwelling. The car-driver is surrounded by control systems that allow a simulation of the domestic environment, a home-from-home moving flexibly and riskily through strange and dangerous environments. As one respondent […] expressed it: 'You and your car are one thing and that's it and that's your space. Outside it's different. You're in your time-capsule, it's like your living room, your mobile living room'[321]

Such associations are not new: the Ford 49 was advertised as 'a living room on wheels', the VW Camper as a 'Room with a View'.[322] But, for Urry, it was only then, in the 1950s, that motoring began to be seen as more about 'inhabiting-the-car' than 'inhabiting-the-road'. Dominant representations of automobility up until that time had, he argues, tended to concentrate either on the speed of the 'open road' or the unhurried leisure of the 'slow meandering motor tour' – emphasizing freedom of movement, but also the highly sensuous (and perilous) experience of travel barely separated from the smells, sounds and rhythms of engine or environment. In an account that in some ways parallels Lawrence's narrative of service areas' increasing introversion, Urry describes car interiors that are progressively more insulated and highly serviced, the space of automobility as ever more associated with personal comfort, safety, control and entertainment.[323]

The implications of this trend reach beyond the motor vehicle. As 'the predominant global form of "quasi-private" mobility', the car, argues Urry, 'subordinates other "public" mobilities of walking, cycling, travelling by rail and so on' – a subordination that takes place not only in the physical space of the street, but in

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[320] Many sites have a 'lodge' beside the main building, adding a further commercial logic to the limited offer of rest: sleep is possible, but only at extra cost.

[321] John Urry, 'Inhabiting the car', *Sociological Review*, 54, supplement S1, Sociological Review Monograph Series: Against Automobility, ed. by Steffen Böhm and others (2006), 17-31 (pp. 18, 27). The citation is from Michael Bull 'Automobility and the Power of Sound', *Theory, Culture & Society* 21.4-5 (2004), 243-59.

[322] Cited by Urry, in 'Inhabiting', p. 23.

[323] Urry, 'Inhabiting', pp. 25-8. See also, Jean Baudrillard, 'The Ecstasy of Communication', in Foster, *Postmodern Culture*, pp. 126-132 (pp. 127-8).

the norms and aspirations of wider culture.[324] Likewise, the space of the car as mobile-home, private cocoon in a public realm, may be seen as significant within changing notions of 'public' space – indoor as well as outdoor. For Beatriz Colomina, the car – as 'new kind of living room on wheels' – is key to understanding how, in the 'postwar age' in the USA, 'scales had become conflated' so that 'everything […] was domestic', from drive-in cinema, to national park visit: 'the whole highway system [was] one small domestic world'. In a double movement, argues *Cold War Hot Houses*, 'public space was privatized, domestic space was publicized'.

If, as Colomina suggests, this is the period that 'in many ways we still occupy today',[325] I have identified a further movement in the trajectory of this mobile living room, perhaps paralleling what Urry describes as a shift towards 'inhabiting the intelligent car' – whereby the car becomes a more integrated part of other communication networks, both physical and virtual.[326] The public-private space of the service area – lounge space – is still homely, but no longer in the same way 'domestic', and it no longer seems so tightly enclosed. For, unlike services of the 1970s and -80s, Hopwood and Donington's architecture, in its materials and proportions, does not allude to 'suburban houses' – in the manner, for example, of Colomina's national park visitor centres[327] – but to urban spaces where, through spatial qualities like those described in this chapter, but also through various personal media devices, it seems possible to be amongst others, but also feel at home.[328] At the service area, especially, but also at the airport or urban café, there might not be the same degree of personal control as there is in the car; nevertheless, from sofas and partitions, to the background noise that obscures other voices, Hopwood and Donington allude to self-contained spaces where communication with strangers is not expected.

The spatial quality of service area, between home and city, car and café, dwelling and workplace, casual and formal, accommodates a breadth of users and events, from holidaying families to business meetings. It is a form of common ground: seemingly open, public, not owned, and yet reassuringly familiar, service areas have

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[324] Urry, 'Inhabiting', p. 18.

[325] See Beatriz Colomina, 'Cold War Hothouses', in *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture, from Cockpit to Playboy*, ed. by Beatriz Colomina, Annmarie Brennan and Jeannie Kim (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), pp. 10-21 (pp. 12-14).

[326] Urry, 'Inhabiting', pp. 28-9.

[327] Colomina, p. 13; Jeannie Kim, 'Mission', in *Cold War Hothouses*, pp. 168-89.

[328] In 'Junkspace', Koolhaas notes a similar meeting of city and home, but in this case at work: 'Since you can work at home, the office aspires to the domestic; because you still need a life, it simulates the city' (p. 169).

become, for some people, a place for dealing with difficult issues, for separated parents to exchange children or for confronting employees with tough decisions – for making the extraordinary seem ordinary.[329] As leveller of differences, they ostensibly escape the spatial hierarchies and reduce the markers of wealth, power and position that would be present in home, office or on the road. For, as Urry suggests, with each passenger 'strapped into a comfortable if constraining armchair', the car reproduces, in some cases intensifies, certain domestic power structures – such as between adults in the front and children at the back, between driver and navigator (always threatening to become back-seat driver).[330] Not as complete or personalized as the enclosures of the car or house, lounge space offer conditions that seem more neutral. Visitors are made to feel at home in a space that ostensibly offers settings to suit every preference, and choices to satisfy every desire. Differences denied at the scale of the building are reintroduced at the scale of the individual.

The hospitality of the silent host

It is worth exploring further this 'neutrality', this experience of being hosted without host. There is a significant link to Jacques Derrida's discussion of unconditional hospitality in the 'Third Definitive Article' of Immanuel Kant's 'Perpetual Peace' (1795).[331] Derrida draws attention to the relation between 'hospitality' and 'hostility', 'the undesirable guest which it harbours as the self-contradiction in its own body'. In his reading of Kant's text, the welcoming of the other always at the same time confirms the dominant position of the host who determines how far the offer extends.

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[329] See Bryony Coleman, 'Chieveley, My Nemesis', *Guardian*, 2 October 2002, section G2, p. 13; 'Pull over, Fill up and Start Work', *Guardian*, 15 May 2002, section Office Hours, p. 2; Normark, 'Tending to Mobility', pp. 241-52.

[330] Urry, 'Inhabiting', p. 23. On the gendering of cars, more generally, see Urry, p. 25: 'The automobilization of family life not only brought the newest and most expensive car models first to male "heads of families", while women had to settle for second-hand models or smaller cars, but also led to the uneven gendering of time-space. While working, men became enmeshed in the stresses of daily commuter traffic into and out of urban centres, suburban "housewives" had to juggle family time around multiple, often conflicting, schedules of mobility epitomized by "the school run" and mom-as-chauffeur. Once family life is centred within the moving car, social responsibilities tend to push women, who now drive in very significant numbers, towards "safer" cars and "family" models while men often indulge in individualistic fantasies of fast sports car or the impractical "classic car". Cars were originally designed to suit the average male body and have only recently been designed to be adjustable to drivers of various heights and reaches.'

[331] Immanuel Kant, 'Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch', in *Kant's Political Writings*, ed. by Hans Reiss, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 93-130 (pp. 105-8).

While hospitality may be '[…] a right, a duty, an obligation, the *greeting* of the foreign other as a friend', this is always only on condition that:

> the host, [*hôte*] the one who receives, lodges or *gives asylum* remains the *patron*, the master of the household, on the condition that he maintains his own authority *in his own home*, that he looks after himself and sees to and considers all that concerns him and thereby affirms the law of hospitality as the law of the household, *oikonomia*, the law of his household, the law of a place (house, hotel, hospital, hospice, family, city, nation, language, etc.), the law of identity which de-limits the very place of proffered hospitality and maintains authority over it, maintains the truth of authority, remains the place of this maintaining, which is to say, of truth, thus limiting the gift proffered and making of this limitation, namely, the *being-oneself in one's own home*, the condition of the gift and of hospitality.[332]

Here, the greeting of the outsider becomes confirmation of the inside, of a defined place of ownership to which the host is entitled, but the guest is not, unless they too accept the laws of that place, that home. In Derrida's reading, Kant's unconditional hospitality 'self-deconstructs'.

From glazed facades and open shop units to comfy chairs in front of televisions and overspilling product displays, Hopwood and Donington reinforce an impression of unconditional hospitality, of being open to all without limitation. By seeming to exist only at the scale of the object rather than enclosure – in products and furnishings – in that which may be consumed or presents itself for appropriation, the service area conceals the authority, the structure, the place that makes the offer.

This is supported by an irregular and seemingly random arrangement of furniture – not all, but enough to disrupt the consistency of any single pattern. It makes the space appear unplanned, as though there is no single authority responsible for design – no demiurge, no system and no rules. Many product stands are on wheels so that they may be moved into circulation spaces during opening hours and then returned to be shuttered within units. This is, I suggest, not only a ploy to expand retail space beyond government stipulations,[333] but also a signifier of insubstantiality, a sign that the space is open to change. Through the various visual and audio entertainments on offer, the space is already noisy and active; there appears to be no compulsion to modify voice or behaviour. The individual's freedom to choose – between different routes, spaces, products, postures and actions – is seemingly preserved, and, although

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[332] Jacques Derrida, 'Hostipitality', trans. by Barry Stocker and Forbes Morlock, *Angelaki*, 5.3 (December 2000), pp. 3-18 (p. 3-4). Italics original.

[333] Retail space is limited to 500m^2 at any site, see: *DfT Circular 01/2008*, pp. 16-17.

there may be inequalities in size, no single feature or brand is ostensibly given dominance over the others. So, the background condition of pure, neutral, white space seemingly appropriated democratically by different brands, suggests a context that receives all without requiring anything in return. In this illusion of unconditional hospitality, of hospitality without host, it seems that no one is there to impose law or limit, no one more at home than anyone else. If there is no 'host' to make demands, nothing is ostensibly asked of the 'guest' *[15]*.

Yet, there is a host. Not only do building details prescribe experiences; the host space is policed at the threshold. Service area entrances are few and narrow, awkward spaces of constraint in buildings otherwise 'open', 'free' and 'transparent'. Jameson offers one explanation for this, as he muses on the 'lateral and rather backdoor affairs' of entrances to the Bonaventura:

> [A building that] aspires to being a total space, a complete world, a kind of miniature city […] ought not to have entrances at all […]: for it does not wish to be a part of the city but rather its equivalent and replacement or substitute. That is obviously not possible, whence the downplaying of the entrance to its bare minimum.[334]

But though Hopwood and Donington make similar allusions to universal space, their entrances are frontal and porticoed rather than 'backdoor' and 'downplayed'. Not so minimal in expression, they are compressed and drawn out in experience. Neither discreet nor abrupt, these prominent portals suggest a process of control and initiation reminiscent of passage through airport passport control or security screening, except that here it is door-side detectors and overhead cameras that patrol the narrow routes, and free-standing adverts that give instruction. At the entrance, these miniature cities stress their limits, their conditionality at the moment that, as Koolhaas puns, space becomes conditioned, the threat of hostility at the offering of hospitality *[16]*.[335]

The laws of this hospitality become apparent in materials and finishes. Robust, wipe-clean and scratch-resistant whiteness, where it promises openness also refuses marks of human presence. Thickly lacquered tables, chairs and wooden floors often in dark tones, stainless steel handrails and countertops and tiled floors, show little sign of wear. Similarly, there are very few opportunities for appropriation. Seats are no longer fixed, as they were in some 1970s and -80s fit-outs, but are nevertheless arranged so

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[334] Jameson, *Postmodernism*, pp. 39-40.
[335] Koolhaas, 'Junkspace', p. 162.

tightly in partitioned zones or so heavy that they are not easily rearranged. Objects might be moveable, but each clearly has its proper place. In spite of apparent mobility and random arrangement, wheeled product stands are always returned each day to the same positions, often determined by changes in floor surface, with brakes applied. Shops may be closed, but adverts are always there, entertainments always on. If the multiple media suggest community, it is one that cannot be engaged, that acknowledges no response, that continues whether or not there is anyone there to watch or listen. Visitors are addressed as consumers, not dwellers, who may use space but not possess it, take only what is offered and only by giving something – their attention at least – in return. Seemingly outside everyday life – a heterotopia – service areas nevertheless reinforce dominant structures: the module of the family unit, the inducements to sedentarily consume. As in the hospitality that Derrida describes, 'what it gives, offers, holds out, is the greeting which […] fold[s] the foreign other into the internal law of the host.'[336] Here the host is not absent, just silent. And the laws they impose are disguised.

The politics of lounge space: place in motion, place without context

So how does this experience of silent hospitality relate to the conditions I described above, the overlaid signifiers of public and private, the homely city of many lounges? The visitor is, I have suggested, positioned between host and guest, sovereign and subject, a conflation of roles in which freedom is stressed and responsibility concealed. There is ostensibly no compulsion to provide or receive, to determine or conform – but neither is there any agency to compel others to do so. Instead of '*being-oneself in one's own home*', there is being-someone in a home that is at once no-one's and everyone's. As home becomes city and city becomes home, the public is domesticated, the private opened up. In each, there is the reassurance of a common structure, a universal condition countered by internal plurality, offering 'choice' between familiar spaces, objects and brands. This condition lies between uncertainty and prescription, avoiding both the unknown and the predetermined. Like the city, it is common ground, shared by all. But, like the home, it is centred on the individual subject. Here, two notions of stability are linked: one, societal, associated with spread risk and conformity with a norm; the other, individual and familial, with power and ownership.

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[336] Derrida, 'Hostipitality', p. 6.

This shared space is at once seemingly masterless and resistant to being mastered. The only authority appears to be not individual, institutional, local, or national, but global and timeless. In other words, it seems so ubiquitous that it is unplaceable, so universal it must be natural: as in a church, hosting is deferred. As the company's name is elided by neutral space, the brands seem nebulous – ever-present but always only as proxy. Their headquarters and even the conglomerates to which they belong remain unknown, their global networks of production obscured. As service area buildings seemingly remove the multinational company from view, they ally themselves to a global space, a common condition of sedentary consumption.

As Koolhaas notes, 'Junkspace is political'.[337] So is the lounge space of the service area, especially in its concealing of connectivity, of differences in place and time. As Thomas McEvilley argues of the 'white cube' of the gallery: 'a space where the effects of change are deliberately disguised or hidden […] promote[s] unchangingness in the real or non-ritual world […] an appearance of eternality over the status quo […] the endurance of a certain power structure.'[338] The illusion of hospitality without host not only disguises power relations within the building; it conceals beyond the horizon of whiteness and greenscape, in the textureless bedrock of bejewelled caves, the international distribution networks, the other places, cities and homes, the unequal global exchanges on which its seemingly unconditional 'welcome' depends. Within the ostensibly self-contained but universal realm of lounge space, constraint is disguised as choice and choices appear without consequence: agency is apparently neutralized.

While 'inhabiting the car' as Urry puts it, 'enables seam-less journeys from home-away-home', it makes any gaps, 'stationary pauses' outside of a familiar, private cocoon, all the more disturbing: it helps what lies in-between to disappear. Hopwood and Donington, as homely cities and consumer caves seem to patch the few remaining 'structural holes' in the journey, turning impersonal spaces that might be 'sources of inconvenience, danger and uncertainty' into secure and yet seemingly unrestricted environments.[339] Lounge space reassures that the world outside the 'home' is little

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[337] Koolhaas, 'Junkspace', p. 167.
[338] Thomas McEvilley, 'Introduction' in Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 7-12 (p. 9).
[339] Urry, 'Inhabiting', pp. 20-21.

different from the inside. The other becomes invisible as the elsewhere turns into the city and the city, into the home.

Yet, in their extreme optimization and efficiency, the way in which service areas harness promises of self-determination and choice through tropes of home and city always risks self-deconstruction. As David Bachelor notes in discussion of how whiteness figures in *Moby Dick* and *The Heart of Darkness*, whiteness often shows up the artifice and exclusions on which such a promise of purity depends:

> There is an instability in the apparent uniformity of white. Behind virtue lurks terror; beneath purity, annihilation or death. Not death in the sense of a life ended, but a glimpse of death-in-life: the annihilation of every cherished belief and system, every hope and desire, every known point of orientation, every illusion …

The whiteness of Hopwood and Donington, too, 'masks a fear: a fear of contamination and corruption by something that is unknown' – a fear that is always on the point of coming to the surface.[340] The unknown here is material, social and cultural: the complexities of other places, other people and other customs that might challenge the certainties of the liberal humanist self, the values and norms taken to be universal and natural. This is not to suggest that service areas are engaged in a deliberate project of active dissimulation, but that they are part of wider cultural and commercial trends that maintain the status quo, within which white has a privileged position. While white has, in this sense, become a default option, not only for service areas but for all kinds of buildings including offices, homes, shops, schools and airports, I argue that it remains, in spite of its ubiquity and contrary to its apparent chromatic 'neutrality', bound up with notions of technological and democratic progress, of all that is good in Western civilization. White may be commonplace, but it signifies more than that, a significance marked by its heightened presence where that civilization is at its most vulnerable: in institutions, at borders, at travel interchanges.

On the one hand, then, the proliferation of ostensibly identical sites at which everything seems portable, mutable, consumable and reproducible, disguises the identity of the host. On the other, this force of repetition points to the constructedness of such spaces, and the mechanics of the system of which they – and the travellers that visit them – are part. What lounge space conceals in its seemingly unconditional welcome, but cannot help revealing, is that, in this neutralized space, it is people who

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[340] Bachelor, p. 22.

are out of place: out in the 'street' where each brand has its own 'home', kept on the move even when they are seemingly offered rest. Perhaps visiting a service area – lounge space – is uncanny precisely because it threatens to show up the uncomfortable interdependencies and exclusions of globalized life that it tries so hard to efface.

CHAPTER 2

Westmorland: the place of travel

'Rejoicing in being a "one-off"': trading traditions on the 'new way north'

Tebay services are located on the M6,[341] between junctions 38 and 39, as it passes through the picturesque and hilly landscape of Cumbria.[342] Three kilometres south is Lune Gorge, the only low-level western passage between England and Scotland, where the M6 traverses the narrow glacial valley separating the foothills of the Cumbrian Mountains to the west from the Howgill Fells, the western edge of the Pennines, to the east.[343] The adjacent north- and southbound service area sites lie on the southern ascent from the gorge to Shap Fell, the highest point on the motorway at three hundred and twenty metres above sea level, where the carriageways run separately for more than seven kilometres to negotiate, with least environmental impact, what was determined to be the safest and most economically viable route across steep and snow-prone terrain.[344] Few UK service areas are positioned in such an extreme natural context,

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[341] Title from Westmorland Limited, quoted in Lawrence, *Always a Welcome*, p.107. By way of conclusion to the book, Lawrence invited each operator to offer its own vision of the future of MSAs.

[342] Ronald Brunskill describes the Cumbrian landscape as follows: 'The varied topography and consequent scenic attraction of the region is too well known to require much comment. The basic rock formations of the Lake District, laid bare by glaciation, give an Alpine grandeur out of all proportion to their small size. The steep-sided dales gouged out by glaciers provide text-book examples of hanging valleys, coombes, erratics, etc., with long narrow lakes and circular isolated tarns in the centre of the region and small steep-sided hillocks, the drumlins and eskers, scattering on the plain at the periphery.' Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture of the Lake Counties: A Field Handbook* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974).

[343] The historic significance of the route as the only low-level passage to Scotland is evidenced by the existence of a Neolithic trackway, a Roman road, an old local road (now A685), a gas pipeline, and the London to Scotland West Coast main line railway alongside the river. In the words of Dawson: 'A tight squeeze and then its all the way to Scotland.' Dawson, 'Motorway Services'. See also: Brian Hindle, *Roads and Tracks of the Lake District*, rev. edn (Milnthorpe, Cumbria: Cicerone Press, 1998), pp. 31-2. M6 was built to replace the existing trunk road to Scotland, A6, which takes a higher route over Shap Saddle, and is far more vulnerable to snow and problems associated with poor visibility. For this reason, its replacement was considered urgent. For an overview of the routing and construction of the M6, see Harry Yeadon, 'England – North Western', in *The Motorway Achievement*, 3 vols, III: *Building the Network*, ed. by William McCoubrey (London: Thomas Telford, 2009), pp. 251-334 (pp. 271-5). This section of the M6, a missing link between the Lancaster and Penrith bypasses, was opened in 1970.

[344] This is the second highest point on the UK motorway network, the highest being at Windy Hill on M62 at 372m above sea level. For details of route design, see comments by J. Henry, in G. Spearing, M. Porter and others, 'Discussion: Motorways and the Rural Environment (7304)', *ICE Proceedings*, 49.4 (1971), 441-65 (pp. 442-4).

where the dominant scale of the landscape so belittles the motorway, or dramatic

changes in relief are so close to the road and palpable to drivers. The stretch of road

was recently voted 'the prettiest in Britain'.[345] But it is not only unusual physical

surroundings that make Tebay services seem unique *[17]*.

Both Tebay sites – West (northbound), which opened in 1972, and East

(southbound), which followed in 1993[346] – were opened, and are still owned, by

Westmorland, the only remaining 'independent' service area operator on the British

motorway network. The widely repeated description of Westmorland as 'independent',

with the implication that its rivals are not, seems to refer to various aspects of the

company's operation, including its private ownership, its avoidance of brands and

franchises, but also its local 'small-scale' operation.[347] In a market now dominated by

three nationwide brands connected to global financiers,[348] this 'independence' gives

the company a distinct local identity; an outsider status that Westmorland embraces

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[345] See Stephen White, 'Vroom with a View; M6 in Lake District Tops List of Prettiest Roads in Britain', *Mirror*, 28 May 2010, p. 47. Susan Dawson's review of Tebay East in *The Architects' Journal* describes this stretch of M6 through Cumbria as 'well worth a detour.' Dawson, 'Motorway Services with a Touch of Wordsworth', *The Architects' Journal*, 200.20 (24 November 1994), p. 28. Other examples include the M62 near Scammonden, where divided carriageways pass either side of a farm, and the split-level section of the M5 through the Gordano Valley.

[346] The original building of Tebay West was designed by Gilchrist and Stables of Windermere, Tebay East by Unwin Jones Partnership of Carlisle.

[347] For Westmorland as 'independent', see, for example, Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', p. 150. Though the first two senses of 'independence' noted above are in line with OED references to 'self-governing, autonomous' and 'not dependent […] on another for support or supplies', the last, a judgement based on scale or extent seems to exceed dictionary definitions, but chimes with popular notions that an 'independent' shop or café will be small, or of limited outlets. See 'independent, adj. and n.' in *OED*, 2nd end (1989; online version September 2011), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/94325> [accessed 24 October 2011]. I explore the accuracy of this description in terms of the company's own operations through this chapter. Compared to the norm of the motorway system, however, its management structure and business model certainly seem unique. Aside from the three big operators, Moto (31 MSA sites), Welcome Break (24) and Roadchef (20), the only other operators at the time of writing are also substantial, distributed roadside businesses: Extra (five sites) and Euro Garages (one, but in addition to over seventy petrol filling stations). Extra was privately owned prior to going into administration in 2009. Since its entry into the market in 2001, however, it pursued a policy of rapid expansion as a brand host not dissimilar from the main three operators. First Motorway Services, formed after a management buyout of two Granada MSAs in 1995, was the only other company with a claim to independence – in terms of small-scale self-governance rather than local credentials. However, the company sold its last MSA (Magor, M4) to Roadchef in 2011. The figures cited above are derived from the official HA map, corrected for recent acquisitions, and to include MSAs in Scotland and Wales. Moto, Welcome Break and Extra also operate a number of sites on trunk roads, which are not included in these figures as, even where very near to motorways, they are not covered by the same regulations. See Highways Agency, <http://www.highways.gov.uk/aboutus/documents/b080312_Motorway_Services_map_Oct_2009_(2).pdf> [accessed 24 October 2011].

[348] Moto is owned by a consortium of investors and pension funds led by Macquarie Bank, Welcome Break by Appia Investments, a consortium of infrastructure investors, Roadchef by Israeli property company Delek Real Estate, and Extra by M3 Capital Partners, a real estate investment and advisory firm.

and positively promotes as a uniquely authentic relationship to what is already a topographically distinctive place.

In a statement provided by the company for publication in *Always a Welcome*, Westmorland introduces its singular position:

> As a small family business operating at one location, it is not surprising that Westmorland has a rather different point of view to that of the three major corporate motorway service operators. Its policy is to provide a better quality of catering by producing as much as possible in-house, using local produce where possible, with competitive prices. It is individual in its style, celebrating the attractions of Lakeland culture, and rejoicing in being a 'one off' which attracts its own clientele. Unlike its competition, Westmorland has eschewed the 'brand' route, making instead a very individual offer of quality and style.[349]

Grounded in a self-proclaimed identity that is avowedly 'individual' rather than 'corporate', Westmorland pledges to be the antithesis of mainstream roadside provision – not just in its unusual context and unique model of self-ownership, but in every other aspect of its operation, too. A 'not surprising' causal chain links 'a small family business operating at one location', via 'local produce' and 'in-house' production, to an offer of 'individual' style and 'better quality' exclusive to 'its own clientele'. The company's image centres on a conflation of independence and authenticity – being a 'one-off' that is at one with the locality. Unity and autonomy of production – a single, identifiable origin, author, host – promises locally distinctive facilities, goods and services. Thus, Westmorland appears to be in touch with, indeed to possess and to offer, unique properties available only through such a close relationship to place; a claim to which, it is made clear, the '"brand" route' of its competitors allows no access.

As this chapter will investigate, a concern to promote this local identity, this guarantor of the company's 'very individual offer of quality and style', permeates all levels of Westmorland's operation, from facilities and services to marketing and architecture.[350] How this image is constructed may be explored further in Westmorland's publicity. Several specific tropes, which recur throughout the company's imagery, are clearly discernible from Westmorland's homepage:

> We are a small family owned, local company, formed in 1971 by a local farmer and a local baker. From a small service area with 28 staff we have grown into a diverse multi sited operation, employing over 500 people.

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[349] Westmorland limited, quoted in Lawrence, *Always a Welcome*, p.107.
[350] See, for example, <http://www.westmorland.com> [accessed 24 October 2011] and later discussion.

> Our values, however, have always remained consistent. We are still the only motorway services in the country to be built and run by local people and we remain as dedicated to our individuality and quality as we ever have been.[351]

Alongside the mantric repetition of 'local', Westmorland's indigenous credentials are reinforced by references to the company's history, and, more importantly, to its implied pre-history. Three details in particular support Westmorland's claims to be not only 'consistent', but even timelessly, inherently 'dedicated' to local 'individuality and quality': an unbroken lineage of family ownership – in other words, the most 'natural' unity of people in place; founded on the partnership of two staple family trades, 'a local farmer and a local baker' – embodying two skills essential for stable agrarian existence; and with the involvement throughout of the local community, who 'built and run' the service areas.

This assertion of direct connection to a past inseparable from place, represented by a family inheritance that seems inextricably entwined with the history of the area and its people, is crucial to the company's public identity. Westmorland's history is thus projected backwards into a time long before its origins at a company, so that it appears to have already existed before it began. This origin before the motorway, which is strongly emplacing and yet not precisely placeable in time, renders the coming of the road a secondary event in an unbroken chain, denying that it could constitute a new origin or displacement.[352]

The suggestion in these texts of constancy through time, of endurance (family, trade, community etc.) – signifying not only durability but also the authority arising from duration – affirms stability and authenticity in place. Moreover, allusions to properties, abilities and relationships that are inherited, or even inherent, confer a seemingly natural authority on Westmorland that appears somehow innate rather than acquired, proper only to the family and to the community, and thus beyond the reach of others. Thus, the company's 'celebrating' of 'Lakeland culture' seems secondary, an irreducible consequence of a connection portrayed as more archaic, earthy, and yet

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[351] 'Welcome to Westmorland Limited', <http://www.westmorland.com/static/index.htm> [accessed 09/01/08].
[352] In the description of 'Our ethos' on the company website, for example, there is no mention of the motorway or contemporary service area operation, but rather 'a small family business; home grown; down to earth; farmers; in love with Cumbria; […]', giving the impression of an established way of life unchanged by the motorway. See <http://www.westmorland.com/> [accessed 24 October 2011]. I offer architectural readings to support this argument in the next section.

ineffable. For David Lawrence, 'Westmorland is a location not a brand'.[353] In other words, it is presented, and represented by others, as essence rather than image, fact rather than concept, originary not applied, nature instead of culture. A circular wall plaque in the entrance foyer to Tebay West declares, 'We are entirely of this place; part of the Cumbrian lakes and hills; of their past and their future; and of the hospitable folk who live in them.'[354] Thus rooted in place through time and claiming inherent hospitality, Westmorland appears at once open to all and impervious to all unnatural forces of change. Indeed, the condition claimed (if not the manner of its description) is consistent with what Augé would describe as anthropological: a stability and unity of people through shared place, time and identity.

This story presented by Westmorland, which is not without local media support,[355] nevertheless omits important influences from beyond the company's immediate local, natural and familial contexts. The simple narrative may be complicated by a brief historical review, which suggests that the company's unique position as the only independent owner-operator of the only local service area is not entirely self-motivated or self-sustained; rather, its emergence as well as its endurance appears contingent upon particular political, economic, and social currents, interweaving the national and the local, the place and the road. Contrary to the impression of autonomous rural harmony presented on the company website, other historical accounts and texts suggest that some of these 'external' forces took the form of forceful intrusions on the locality and on the family. Without seeking to posit an alternative, more inclusive, or truer origin, but rather to interrogate this narrative of authenticity and challenge its implicit certainties, I will initially trace – but by no means offer an exhaustive account of – the debates, policies, and chains of events that are cited elsewhere as significant in accounts of Westmorland's formation.

In this section, I will first consider how both the M6 and Tebay Services manifest the imposition of a national demand for increased speed of movement on the 'stable' lives of local people in rural England. I will suggest that the obvious tension between the two demands is complicated by economic bonds linking local and national

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[353] Lawrence, *Always a Welcome*, p. 90.
[354] Quoted in Martyn Halsall, 'News Business: Small Proves Beautiful on the Tebay Motorway – Expansion on the Menu', *The Guardian*, 2 January 1990; and partially in Mike Amos, 'Carry On Up the Junction', *The Northern Echo*, 2 May 2000, p. 9
[355] See, for example, 'Rural Champion to Step Down', *This is The Lake District*, 6 August 2004; 'Raising the Bar for Motorway Services', *In-Cumbria*, 3 July 2011 <http://www.in-cumbria.com/raising-the-bar-for-motorway-services-1.853593> [accessed 24 October 2011].

issues, the 'natural' property of the 'family' with external 'unnatural' forces of state. I will suggest that this necessary and originary interdependence complicates Westmorland's implicit claims to independence, to stability, and to self-sufficiency.

Second, I will explore how the acknowledgement of this underlying interrelation between road and locality is as problematic for the government in policy and practice, as it is for Westmorland in the presentation of a particular public image. In so doing, I will contextualise Westmorland's 'unique' position – a local operator on a motorway – as the transgression of a government policy of separation; a policy advocating wherever possible the isolation in spaces of different activities, different speeds, or different 'times' – the road from the landscape, the city from the country, the modern from the traditional – and which contrived to prevent such a close relation between road and locality developing elsewhere.

Third, through a description of the specific circumstances surrounding the undermining of this intended separation, I will trace how the company's 'unique' position was as much given by the fortuitous contingency of external events beyond the family's control as it was a product of their own agency. I will propose that Westmorland's radical transgression of boundaries, presented thus far as originating in an act of local resistance – which was able only to conceal, rather than reverse, an ongoing dependence on external forces – was itself facilitated by chance external events that made this exception to the rule the most logical and efficacious option for national government: the opportunity for 'unique' local expression was itself given by the outside.

Finally, with a view to the main themes in the analysis of the company's contemporary operation to follow, I will explore the significance of Tebay services as mediating, negotiating, but also concealing, certain relations between local and national, modern and traditional, independent and generic, inside and outside. The aim, here, is not to disprove the claim that Westmorland is different from other service areas in a variety of ways, and even less to question the intentions of the family who run it, or the appropriateness of their tactics. Rather, it is to investigate how the particular claim to individuality and independence evident in promotional materials as much as in building details fits into the cultural-architectural context of the roadside, and what this at least in some ways unusual site says about the British motorway service area and travel spaces more generally as fields of spatial culture.

'If you can't beat 'em, join 'em': local opportunity, national imperative

By the mid-1960s, the case for building the M6 through Cumbria to complete the motorway route from London to Scotland was, in principle, accepted by many different interest groups, but the means to mitigate its local consequences were still under discussion.[356] Aside from the motorway's anticipated impact on the environment and on the character of the area – which itself provoked sufficient local concern for a committee of enquiry to be set up with the task of determining the most appropriate route[357] – the M6 was seen by some to threaten the traditional culture of local communities and the distinctive landscape that this supported.[358]

The construction of the M6 signalled the arrival of a modern transport infrastructure that was promoted as harbinger of greater national prosperity: motorways would be more flexible than the railways, being suitable for private as well as commercial vehicles and able to integrate with the existing highway system. For Ernest Marples, Conservative Minister of Transport 1959-64, motorways were 'in keeping with the bold, exciting and scientific age in which we live'. For Prime

[356] See Yeadon, pp. 271; 'Fight To Preserve Lune Valley: Minister Urged Not To Build Motorway', *The Times*, 13 February, 1960, p. 10. As Derek Wall notes of protests during the 1960s and early -70s: 'Motorway opponents aimed to shift the route elsewhere: campaigns that rejected the very principle of motorways, let alone the cult of the car, were at that time virtually unknown.' See Wall, *Earth first! and the Anti-Roads Movement: Radical Environmentalism and Comparative Social Movements* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 24. Surprisingly, perhaps, the route of the M1 through Charnwood Forest and of the M4 around Reading, under discussion around the same time, proved more controversial than that through Cumbria. Moreover, as Wall describes, the most vociferous protests at the beginning of the 1970s concerned urban motorways, especially the 'ringways' planned for London (pp. 24-33). See also Merriman, 'M1', pp. 176-7. More significant opposition to road building in the Lake District was stirred by the upgrading of the A66 through the National Park later in the 1970s. See Hindle, p. 191; 'Lakeland by-pass defended', *The Times*, 2 February 1972, p. 2.
[357] The original M6 proposal for a route along the length of Lune Valley proved controversial locally and was rejected on environmental grounds. Alternative routes were sought – at one time up to thirty variations were considered – using different combinations of high-level viaducts and tunnels. The final course, chosen after thorough analysis of capital costs, operational costs, weather and landscape, is a compromise: the road passes through Lune Gorge and then up over Shap towards Killington, avoiding the northern stretch of the Lune Valley. Although tunnels would have facilitated a more direct route and promised lower maintenance and operational costs, they were avoided due to their high capital cost and the restrictions they imposed on the transport of abnormal loads. See Yeadon, pp. 271-3; Henry, pp. 442-4; Charlesworth, pp. 141-2.
[358] See 'Tourism "Threat" to Lake District', *The Times*, 21 August 1962, p. 10; 'M6 Packs the Lakes with Visitors', *The Times*, 19 April 1965, p. 6; 'Bypass Seen as a Threat to the Lake District', *The Times*, 10 February 1970, p. 12; John Chartres, 'New Road to Change Way of Life', *The Times*, 14 October 1970, p. 4; As Lawrence notes, the economic impact on existing roadside operations and filling stations was a significant consideration in the development of strategies for motorway and MSA provision prior to construction of M1. Financial compensation was considered, as was offering leases to organizations affected. While the former was restricted to those organizations most directly affected due to the potential costs involved, and the latter not adopted as general policy because there would never be sufficient MSA sites to satisfy all claims, one of the first two M1 sites, Newport Pagnell, was nevertheless set aside for an inconvenienced local operator, and awarded to Blue Boar, owner of a series of filling stations on the nearby A5 and A45. See 'A Bit of Town', pp. 138-9.

Minister Harold Macmillan, the Preston Bypass, 'a fine thing in itself', was 'a finer thing as a symbol – as a token of what is to follow'.[359] In the Lake District, the motorway promised a sharp rise in visitors to the already popular south-west of the region, boosting an already thriving tourist industry, but also threatened to overwhelm its infrastructure, and attractions.[360] While eliminating points of extreme congestion in towns and villages, the diversion of traffic away from existing routes, by contrast, risked undermining the profitability of local businesses beyond touristic areas dependent on those passing through. For hill farmers, both tourists and motorists brought inconvenience without direct benefit, while struggling local industries had already found much-needed inward investment to be less mobile than urbanites seeking rural retreat.[361] Following shortly after the closure of Tebay Junction on the West Coast mainline railway in 1962, the coming of the M6 also marked the reduced importance of slower, more localized forms of transport and exchange, then important to the local economy.[362] A project undertaken for an acknowledged national good, planned and delivered by central government with a limited degree of local consultation,[363] would, it was feared by some, do little to alleviate, or would even exacerbate significant changes in local demographics and pressures on land use.

Siting a service area in the vicinity of Tebay was, therefore, seen by bureaucrats as an important way of reducing the impact of the motorway – economically, as an alternative source of local employment, but also politically as a generator of positive publicity that would help to legitimize the road-building

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[359] Both quotes, from, respectively, the opening of the M1 in 1959 and of the Preston Bypass in 1958, are cited in Moran, pp. 20, 27. See also, pp. 23-29. Allusions to science fiction or the space race recur in newspaper coverage of the M1. For the relation between the rise of the road and transfer of passenger and freight traffic away from rail, see Dyos and Aldcroft, pp. 325-8.

[360] See 'Queuing up for Solitude', *The Times*, 29 August 1966, p. 9; 'M6 Packs the Lakes'; 'Tourism "Threat"'.

[361] See 'Farmers Want Fells Fenced', *The Times*, 27 November 1970, p. 3; Chartres, 'New Road'; John Chartres, 'Cumberland: Fears and Hopes in Isolation', *The Times*, 29 November 1967, p. 1.

[362] See David Joy, *A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain*, 15 vols, XIV: *The Lake Counties*, 2nd, rev. edn (Penrhyn, Cornwall: Atlantic Transport, 1990), pp. 31-8.

[363] Inquiries were not allowed to question the need for the road, only its route. Charlesworth describes an increasing concern in the early 1970s that public inquiries were not sufficiently impartial, p. 80. John Tyme, a Senior Lecturer in Environmental Studies at Sheffield Polytechnic, led a prominent campaign against the process, protesting at numerous road inquiries across the country during the 1970s. See Wall, pp. 31-3; Tyme, *Motorways versus Democracy: Public Inquiries into Road Proposals and their Political Significance* (London: Macmillan, 1978). Merriman writes of the M1 that, in spite of a 'rhetoric of democracy', 'it is significant that […] protests where dismissed or settled very quickly'. He goes on to note complaints from farmers along the M1 route of the government's 'dictatorial methods'. See 'M1', p. 172-3.

project.[364] Yet this service area would still be, or so government policy intended, a nationally conceived and directed undertaking, like the motorway, imposed from the outside on the land and on the people of the area.[365] Thus, in providing new local employment it would nevertheless – replicating the example of Tebay Junction on the nationalized railway – again take control of employment, and of the fortunes of the local economy, out of the region.

It is important to note at this point that the village of Tebay's prosperity, and perhaps its very existence, have always been heavily dependent upon external developments. Ruins of a Roman fort and several castles mark the location's past significance as a point of territorial control. Tebay's more recent growth from a farming hamlet to a sizeable village of over seven hundred people, between the middle and end of the nineteenth century, was due almost entirely to the strategic importance given to the location by the arrival of the Lancaster and Carlisle Railway, and the employment – 170 people as late as 1950 – that this industry subsequently sustained.[366] Writing in 1974, well known fell-walker Alfred Wainwright surveyed the scene of a village 'cruelly mutilated':

> A tour of the villages of Wesmorland gives a general impression of quiet wellbeing and prosperity. […] Unhappily, Tebay is an exception. […] The terraced houses overlook a desert of ashes. The railway today has little need of Tebay. After creating here an animated business complex it has left behind an industrial skeleton.[367]

So, not long before the building of the M6, local people had seen how quickly such a seemingly established and stable financial support could be removed by centralized

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[364] Lawrence, *Always*, p. 67.

[365] On the centralized planning of service areas and debates as to the role of government in intervening locally, see Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 112-34, and discussion in the introduction.

[366] For Joy, Tebay is 'among the most famous' railway communities in the UK, see pp. 31-8. The railway was built in 1844-6. It became assimilated into the London and North Western Railway in 1879. Then on the railway, as now on the M6, Tebay marked a place of confrontation between infrastructure and topography, where a new, faster mode of transport nevertheless required the additional power of locally-based auxiliary engines to negotiate the challenging incline of Shap. In 1861, Tebay became a junction with the Stainmore Railway, a cross-Pennine route, running from Tebay to Kirkby Stephen, Barnard Castle and on to Darlington. On the centrality of the railway to the community, see also: 'Tebay Was Built around its Railway back in the Golden Age of the Train', *Westmorland Gazette*, 1 April 2010: 'The station was cold and windswept. […] But it had its necessities, including a book stall and refreshment room. The locomotive shed had around 15 locos […]. Tebay had five rows of houses built by the railway and all were occupied by employees. It also had a number of shops, three of which were Co-op stores. […] The Junction Hotel was only 100 yards from the station and was the main public house used by railwaymen. Tebay also had an institute, which held dances, whist drives and concerts. […] The large house in the centre of South Terrace was a hostel for railwaymen, who had worked a train up from the Wigan area, booked off at Tebay then worked a train back the next day.'

[367] Alfred Wainwright, *Westmorland Heritage* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2004), pp. 425-33 (p. 425).

powers; for them to respond enthusiastically to the arrival of the motorway would mean trusting again in dependence upon the demands of a transitory stream of capital, rather than upon the more immediate, and apparently enduring livelihood afforded by the nurturing of animals and the cultivation of land.[368]

For Barbara and John Dunning – co-founders of Westmorland – in particular, the construction of the motorway involved personal loss and direct intrusion upon a seven-hundred-acre property that had been farmed by the family for at least five generations. The building of the M6 meant a significant depletion of land and the awkward bisection of the remainder, all enforceable, if necessary, by compulsory purchase orders mandated by central government.[369] For their partners, David Snowden and Nick Birkett, owners of Birketts bakery in recently bypassed Penrith, the motorway had the potential to reduce company sales to passing motorists.[370] Taking on the construction and operation of a service area represented, for both families, an opportunity to arrest some of this new capital flow, to interrupt that which would otherwise pass directly through the land it inconveniently reconfigured and to channel it back into the local economy. In a 1996 interview with the *Financial Times*, John Dunning explains, in the guise of a philanthropic highwayman, how '[Westmorland] takes revenue back to the [local] farms and communities, which stabilises the local economy – and the landscape'.[371] However, what can be read as a defiant expression of

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[368] The directness of transition from railway to motorway is evident in the staffing of Westmorland. In 1990, the then General Manager Kenneth Williams claimed 'In the early days most of our staff were ex-railway workers and now we are getting their children working here.' Quoted in Halsall, 'Small Proves Beautiful'.

[369] 'Trunk Roads Act 1946', <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1946/30/contents/enacted>; 'Special Roads Act 1949',
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1949/32/enactedhttp://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1949/32/enacted> [accessed 27 October 2011]. On the scope and application of the Acts, see Charlesworth, pp. 25-8; Lawrence, pp. 123-5.

[370] The Penrith bypass opened two years earlier, in November 1968. The Birketts bakery business was sold to Newcastle-based national chain Greggs in 1997.

[371] Gerald Cadogan, 'Small is Beautiful in Cumbria: Gerald Cadogan Finds a Motorway Service Station which is a Pleasure to Use', *Financial Times* (London Edition), 28 September 1996, p. 12. See also the company's account of its history, which, with references to 'developers' 'with a view to building the M6', glosses over the role of national government and implies greater agency for the family, both in the routing of the road and in the retention of land for a service area: 'Back in the late 1960's, the developers of the M6 motorway approached John and Barbara Dunning, who farm at High Chapel Farm at Tebay, near the summit of Shap, with a view to building the M6 through their land. The Dunning's, instead of opposing the development, worked with the developers to minimise the impact of the M6 motorway through their land at the Lune Gorge. They also kept some of the land on either side of the Motorway and following a successful bid opened a small service area and hence in 1972, Westmorland Limited was formed when two local Cumbrian families, the Dunnings and the Birketts who were Bakers at Penrith came together.' See <http://www.westmorland.com/about-us> [accessed 27 October 2011]. As I discuss below, the land for the service area was in fact first compulsorily purchased by central

local independence and agency in local affairs also signals a more subtle level of dependency. Sarah Dunning reveals this sense of resignation: 'my parents […] decided that if you can't beat 'em, join 'em.'[372] Displacing the image of autonomy and self-sufficiency formed by the text and imagery of the company website, this statement describes a Faustian pact between the local economy and the new national route, whereby the appearance of a 'stable' rural landscape is preserved only through the necessity of engagement with the conduit of rapid inter-city movement that disturbs it.

In a paradoxical relationship that will be explored through the course of this chapter, the stability of place appears to rely on the containment but also, at the same time, the exploitation of that which threatens to displace it. Westmorland's local independence is, it seems, retained only through dependence on the national, the inside preserved and redefined by the outside that it resists and, in this case, serves. Indeed, in order to start the business, the nascent Westmorland forged a partnership with Shell, which contributed funds for construction and undertook to supply fuel at the site.[373] Yet, as already shown, this presence, at the 'origin' of Westmorland's 'local' business, of external as well as internal factors, of an originary displacement inflicted from the outside as much as a natural becoming, is repressed by the company's public image of self-sufficient individuality, of natural harmony within the landscape. Indeed, the defiant tactic of exploiting the road for the benefit of local people, openly voiced by Dunning in the interview, is, it will be shown, naturalized and concealed in its translation into company imagery, which alludes instead to traditional farming practices, whereby the land is cultivated as an immediate source of life-sustaining produce for the locality.

Westmorland thus aspires to present a seamless, unobtrusive, unproblematic integration of old and new side-by-side, a harmonious continuity of values and traditions despite changing circumstances. Yet, as I will now explore, although a hidden dependency and an irreducible displacement undermine this idyllic image, Westmorland's attempt to assimilate service area and landscape is still, given the unsupportive political context, a radical event in itself. Even in denial of the inner

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government, and only then leased back to the former owners following a competitive tendering process – in which the company was not initially preferred – and on condition of the usual rental payments.
[372] Jane Fryer, 'Vroom Service, Please! Welcome to Britain's Best-Kept Holiday Secret … an M6 Service Station', *Daily Mail*, 8 May 2009. See <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1179319/Vroom-service-Welcome-Britains-best-kept-holiday-secret--M6-service-station.html> [Accessed 3 February 2010].
[373] See Lawrence, *Always*, p. 67.

complexities and tensions involved, Tebay marks a significant transgression of a very different strategy of rural preservation – a more absolute policy pursuing progress through separation of national from local spaces – practised at government level.

'Keep your distance': modern separation

The model of ownership that finally emerged at Tebay, bringing a local landowner into a direct working relationship with the motorway, was not one that the Ministry of Transport or its successors favoured.[374] The overriding aims of government policy were, at the time, broadly similar to those of Westmorland: both parties were motivated by a concern to limit the impact of national movement on local stability. However, while Westmorland evidence a tactical, and to some degree covert, practice of engagement, the government, in line with various other interest groups, thought the same stability could be best achieved through a condition of maximal separation.[375]

Within the historical interpretation offered by David Lawrence, Westmorland's operation is the exception within a general narrative that charts an increasing homogeneity and consolidation of motorway services brought about as a direct, although unintended, consequence of government procurement and regulatory policies.[376] Indeed, for the service area sites already awarded, the government had sought and chosen bids from companies whose national scale of operation and breadth of experience seemed capable of responding to the complex new demands of the motorway, and whose fields of business – cinema, leisure, hospitality – appeared appropriately 'modern' and national in scope for them to understand, and profit from, the motorway age. This government interest in the profitability of companies was not motivated only by a concern for the company's commercial viability, but also by a desire to maximize treasury revenue from site leases, which then included a percentage royalty on turnover on top of the basic ground rent – in effect a stealth toll for use of the road.[377] Thus, it was considered more important for service area operators to fit the economic and ideological context of the national roads programme, to embody in

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[374] Title from a common motorway advisory sign, see Directgov, 'Motorway Signs, Signals and Road Markings', <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Knowyourtrafficsigns/DG_192207> [accessed 28 October 2011], [p. 12].

[375] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 60-3, 130-1.

[376] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 129, 165-70.

[377] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 126-8, 135-60.

microcosm its vision of a modern, connected, functional and efficient Britain, than it was for them to reflect local context. Recouping as much of the initial government investment as possible – by exploiting local sites to bolster national funds – was given preference over regional wealth generation. Proposals that addressed the present and future were encouraged over those that looked to the past.

This government policy on service areas echoed a principle, both functional and aesthetic, upon which the whole roads programme was also founded: that the separation of functions was both necessary and desirable wherever feasible, constituting in each case a progressive act with economic, social and cultural benefits.[378] It was believed that localities and motorways would both gain from clear separation – the former preserved, protected and relieved from the assault of speed, the latter designed specifically for unimpeded rapid movement.[379] Indeed, the necessity of motorways was, for these reasons, acknowledged at this time by various urban and rural preservationist groups, who considered them at worst a necessary evil; they would cut through the landscape but, in return, they would liberate rural communities from urban intrusion, motorized congestion and the pressure to modernize, allowing them to continue as though unaffected by the age of the automobile.[380] For landscape architects such as Sylvia Crowe and Brenda Colvin, as well as architectural commentators such as Banham and Nairn, large-scale modern structures, uncluttered by historical details or what the latter termed the 'municipal rustic' of local planners, had the potential to be as beautiful as the landscape they crossed, and, at the same time, to offer new experiences of an otherwise undisturbed rural context.[381] From a

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[378] See, for example, T. Hutton, 'The Design of Motorways', *ICE Proceedings: Engineering Divisions*, 2.5 (1953), 711-37 (pp. 711-12).

[379] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 60-3.

[380] These included the CPRE, The Roads Beautifying Association and Institute of Landscape Architects. Geoffrey Jellicoe, a prominent member of the latter, produced imagery of motorways variously traversing familiar landscapes for the British Road Federation's 1943 *Motorways for Britain* exhibition. Matless, pp. 54-61; Merriman, 'M1', pp. 47-53, 118-36.

[381] See Sylvia Crowe, *Tomorrow's Landscape* (London: Architectural Press, 1956) and *The Landscape of Roads* (London: Architectural Press, 1960); Brenda Colvin, *Land and Landscape* (London: John Murray, 1948); Banham, 'Ubiquopolis', 'New Way North' and 'On the Road and on the Scene', *New Statesman*, 67, 15 May (1964), 769-70; Nairn, *Outrage* and *Counter-Attack*. Merriman traces two very different positions on the landscaping of motorways. Against others, including the MoT's landscape consultants, who advocated the beautification of roads with borders of ornamental flowering shrubs, Crowe, Colvin and most members of the MoT's Landscape Advisory Committee, argued for a smooth transition from motorway to landscape, and for features at an appropriate scale to match the vastness of both human and natural contexts. The latter position, heavily influenced by the theory and practice of motorways in Germany, was, largely, the one adopted by the motorways programme, and increasingly so, as construction progressed – albeit as much on pragmatic grounds of cost, maintenance and safety, as aesthetic. See 'M1', pp. 47-53, 111-160.

pragmatic perspective, too, separation was favoured: to upgrade existing roads was generally more expensive than to build new ones, and the more connections, crossings, or interactions with other human or natural features, the greater the expense and inefficiency of disruption.[382] At a time when elevated roads were widely championed as panacea for the ills of the modern city,[383] the motorway, including service areas, was seen as an autonomous space consistent in itself, by definition isolated from and unaffected by its surroundings. Implicit throughout, is the premise, prevalent at the time, that traditional spaces of the past and those of the modern, techno-scientific world could continue to exist separately side-by-side without conflict or contamination.

By the early 1960s, the dominant approach to the motorway and its landscape context was already being questioned and reconsidered. The strategy of separation had been demonstrated to an extreme in the construction of the first stretches of UK motorway, especially the M1 from Aldenham to Crick.[384] While there was plenty of positive coverage at the time of opening – and postcards of flyovers suggest the motorway was seen as icon of modernity by some – there was also significant criticism of the uncompromising route chosen, carved pragmatically through the landscape and following a straight course reminiscent of Roman roads or railway lines. Fit to topography here meant, for the most part, concealment in cuttings.[385] For Colvin, Crowe, Banham and others, the line of the M1, devised by a team of engineers led by Sir Owen Williams, was too utilitarian, too direct, too focussed on efficiency and economics rather than aesthetics. For them, it was not enough for roads to be modern in appearance, their positive contribution to the landscape and to the driving experience depended on them being, at the same time, closely attuned to topography, on motorways expressing a harmony of nevertheless distinct human and natural

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[382] See F. Rayfield, R. Kidd and K. Summerfield, 'Informal Discussion: Conversion of Highways and Motorways, 15 March 1962', *ICE Proceedings*, 22.2 (1962), 10-11; G. Spearing and M. Porter, 'Motorways and the Rural Environment', *ICE Proceedings*, 47.2 (1970), 107-20 (pp. 107-8).

[383] In 1959, for example, Jellicoe published plans, sponsored by the Glass Age Development committee of the Pilkington Glass Company, for a 'Motopia' of elevated roads with parks and arcades beneath, based on the Middlesex town of Staines. At this time, the first major flyovers were under construction in London and plans for elevated ringway motorways, of which the Westway is one of few fragments to be realized, were well developed. See Moran, pp. 37-42, 201-2.

[384] On the planning and construction of this section of the M1, see Merriman, 'M1', pp. 161-271; Charlesworth, pp. 98-9, 124-6.

[385] See Moran, pp. 23-51 for a summary of reaction to the M1 and other early motorways: 'The simple act of driving on the new road seemed thrillingly exotic' (p. 28). For M1 as icon, see Parr, *Boring Postcards*.

forces.[386] As a result of such outspoken calls for greater sensitivity in design and in response to the particular beauty of the natural context of and the technical challenges posed by the route through Cumbria, a more integrative approach was taken in the planning of the Lancaster to Penrith section of M6 – with results that Crowe would describe as 'magnificent'.[387]

Visions of functional separation thus involved, increasingly, a degree of aesthetic integration. The motorway was no longer conceived as autonomous expression of modern engineering, following its own internal economic, functional and structural principles, independent of context and beautiful in itself; it must be part of the landscape, harmoniously woven into and capable of enhancing the existing natural and cultural fabric, thereby also minimizing the need for costly intervention. While planning of this section of the M6 and Tebay services occurred during this time when the approach to motorway design was being refined, the model for the tender and the criteria for the selection of service area buildings and operators was, by comparison, little changed in its indifference to context. Completed service areas had, like the first motorways, faced strong criticism in the mainstream and architectural press, on functional, qualitative and aesthetic grounds – especially Newport Pagnell and Watford Gap. In their failure to integrate with roadside parking areas or landscape, early service sites were seen, by reviewers such as Raymond Spurrier, as another instance of commonplace 'subtopia', of a visual disorder neither urban nor rural. At the same time, operators were finding the centrally-administered business model to be uneconomic and overly prescriptive.[388] An official report was commissioned from Bev Nutt at the Bartlett School of Architecture in 1967, which identified serious problems with the tendering process, leasing structure and compromised notion of roadside competition. This encouraged bidders to offer, and the Ministry to select, the largest, seemingly

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[386] See Peter Merriman, '"A New Look at the English Landscape": Landscape Architecture, Movement and the Aesthetics of Motorways in Early Postwar Britain', *Cultural Geographies*, 13 (2006), 78-105; Brenda Colvin, 'The London-Birmingham Motorway: A New Look at the English Landscape', *Geographical Magazine*, 32 (1959), 239-46; Crowe, *Landscape of Roads*; Banham, 'Ubiquopolis'. Banham records disillusionment with the 'inhumanity' of Williams, lead consultant on the M1, who had previously been celebrated by modernists for the design of the Boots building outside Nottingham in the 1930s.

[387] See Spearing, Porter and others, pp. 442-4, 62-3; Yeadon, pp. 271-2; Sylvia Crowe, in Spearing, Porter and others, p. 442. The stretch of road between the Lancaster and Penrith bypasses won a Civic Trust Award 'for an outstanding contribution to the appearance of the Westmorland landscape'.

[388] See Raymond Spurrier, 'Road-Style on the Motorway', *The Architectural Review*, 128 (1960), 406-411; Merriman, 'M1', pp. 198-212; Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 141-2, 151, 189-5. Lawrence cites a report in *The Sunday Times* that in 1966 only three of the twelve operational service areas were producing a profit.

most prestigious and expressively modern of schemes, which turned out to be highly inflexible and inefficient in practice. The report's key recommendations – which recur in various other internal and external critiques of the time – to switch from one-off buildings to a Ministry-devised and -financed standard model, and thus to terms that would be more attractive to smaller as well as larger operators, were, however, largely ignored by government.[389] It was not until other, more pressing, external circumstances intervened that the procurement strategy was for a short time disrupted. And it was from the resulting breach, effecting a moment of uncertainty and transition in the provision of service areas according to a project of modernisation, that Tebay services emerged.

No 'grand vision': chance transgression

Westmorland's unique opportunity, transgressing the established strategy of separation between road and region, emerged primarily as a consequence of the location's apparently poor prospects for a good return on investment, from its lack of appeal to external speculation. The site was originally tendered as a large, double-sided service area operation in 1966-7, at a time when the companies already involved – principally from the entertainment or hospitality sectors – were unwilling to bind further capital to a business that was performing worse nationally than they had expected; some already felt over-committed, others were looking to leave the sector.[390] Unable to attract any suitable bidders, the Ministry instead sought operators for smaller, single-sided service areas which would offer fuel and snacks only – with one of these at Tebay on an elevated site to the west of the motorway, to serve northbound traffic only.[391] This strategy was developed closely with, and in order to attract the investment of, oil companies, several of which had been interested in the prospect of operating service areas, but were thus far discouraged from bidding by the onerous leasing agreements involved. These inducements worked for the more lucrative locations further south, but not for Tebay. With the continued lack of interest among established bidders and the pressing need to ensure service area provision in time for road opening, officials

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[389] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 148-9.
[390] Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 150-2.
[391] Killington Lake, approximately ten miles south of Tebay, was to serve southbound traffic. The site was developed by Shell-Mex and B.P. with Galleon Roadchef (later to become one of the 'big three' operators).

accepted the Dunning-Birkett proposal – to do otherwise would have forced the Ministry itself to enter the market to fill the gap.[392] Thus, the Dunning family was granted permission to lease back and trade from what had previously been their own land.

In this way, the region's isolation from the national economy – its past failure to integrate – made it unattractive to external investors and spared it from the full force of outside intrusion; yet this allowed space, instead, for the consummation of a local drive to assimilate. Indeed, it is now clear that Westmorland's originary independence, and indeed its very existence as a company, are contingent upon particular local and national, political and economic, conditions at the time of M6 construction (only a limited number of which have been here briefly outlined). It was bureaucratic expediency, as much as policy, local demand or even familial initiative that brought Tebay service areas into being; by a chance combination of factors, a small degree of local influence was ceded within a nationally managed project.[393] Thus, contrary to government policy, locality was allowed to interact directly with a national network that was otherwise aspiring, through design, construction and restrictions on usage, to a precisely regulated degree of uniformity and autonomy from place.

For Dunning, this concession was unquestionably positive for the area: 'Encouraging the rural economy safeguards our upland landscapes more creatively

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[392] Unwilling to embolden existing operators of larger sites in their attempts to renegotiate unprofitable leases, the Ministry developed a different model of procurement applicable only to smaller sites. The change in strategy took place following intense discussion with oil companies, and involved a relaxation of the requirement to offer more than one brand of fuel at each location, the stipulation that had deterred them from bidding for larger sites. In addition, the MoT permitted joint bids for the first time, so that the oil companies could partner smaller caterers. It was these concession, developed between Ministry and oil companies, that made possible Westmorland's model of service area operation. See Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 152-57.

[393] The local authority was little involved in the road building programme. Charlesworth describes an ongoing dispute between the County Council Association and MoT over the surveying and planning of motorway routes. The established model for trunk road improvement work was for the MoT to use the respective council's County Surveyor as local agent. However, in most of the early motorway schemes, including M1, this role was given to consulting engineers appointed directly by the MoT. Keen to maintain close control, ensure uniform practices, and yet placate local authorities, the MoT would in 1968 agree a compromise solution of regional Road Construction Units, which would liaise with councils, but be more directly accountable to central government. Though councils assisted with the surveying of routes and landowners were consulted, neither were particularly involved in the decision-making processes at strategic or detailed level. Planned before this time, the consultation and planning process for this stretch of the M6 was undertaken by engineers Scott & Wilson Kirkpatrick & Partners. See Charlesworth, pp. 51-9; Yeadon, p. 271. Likewise, most of the construction companies involved were nationally based, in this instance, Christiani Shand, which worked on a number of other national road projects, including the M74 in Scotland and the Heads of the Valleys road in Wales. Although local labour was important in projects, much – as much as fifty percent by some estimates – came from beyond the local area and a significant contribution from abroad. See Merriman, pp. 254-71.

than just resisting change – which induces decay.'[394] Taking the opportunity to engage with changing contexts, Dunning asserts, is the only way to avoid the slow decline and ultimately the death of local culture that would otherwise result from complete separation, from introversion; exclusion is, for him, as potent a danger as assimilation. Openness to the outside, he implies, is the only way to continue living, for to engage with external forces is the only way to influence their effects.[395] Thus, for Dunning, local family ownership of a service area is an act of resistance to two threats that are, contrary to their apparent polarity, interrelated: the violent and disruptive force of external intrusion and the equally destabilising consequences of marginalization. In this more nuanced version of the company's public narrative, Dunning acknowledges the impossibility of an entirely autonomous existence; rather, the challenge is to mediate and control the form, degree and breadth of this exchange. Westmorland's position, which allows the locality to profit directly from a national communication network in defiance both of its imposition and of its intended separation, is, for him, a reassertion of local agency; it is an engagement with the motorway by local people that is, he implies, conducted on their own terms: while local goods may be exchanged for national capital, cultural identity is to be preserved, reserved from transaction. According to Sarah Dunning, who took over the company in 2005,[396] her father 'didn't have any grand vision; it was all about farm diversification': continuity and change, tradition and innovation.[397]

However, drawing on government concerns enshrined in motorway policy, it could be argued to the contrary that: through this breach in the intended separation of the national space of movement from local 'stable' places, the former gains far greater opportunity to infiltrate and inundate the latter. A government policy designed to safeguard rural areas from the risk of motorway development spreading to change the character of the surrounding area is here abandoned; a decision motivated primarily by a desire to preserve the feasibility of the project, rather than a concern to preserve the qualities of the locality. Indeed, it could be claimed that Westmorland, in its enthusiasm to participate, becomes involuntarily implicated in the positive presentation

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[394] Cadogan, 'Small is Beautiful'.

[395] See <http://www.westmorland.com/about-us>.

[396] Sarah Dunning was named 'Young Director of the year of the North West' in 2006. See <http://www.westmorland.com/about-us> [Accessed 20 August 2008].

[397] Sarah Dunning, quoted in Roberta Avery, 'Taking the Direct Route to Some Fine Highway Fare: Local Delicacies Abound at Gourmet Pit Stop on Britain's M6', *The Toronto Star*, 19 July 2007, p. T04.

of this expedient act. The complex issues at stake in the dissolution of this policy of separation are, conveniently for the government, covered up by Westmorland's image of rural harmony; an image which, as has been already suggested and will be further explored, is on closer inspection in many ways illusory.

Thus, while Westmorland may be presented as manifesting an independent, local entrepreneurial spirit that benefits the local population, it can also be viewed as a dependency, disguised as an opportunity, imposed, 'branded' from the outside, according to a chain of events over which local people had little influence and within which they were only a minor concern. Moving beyond this polarized question of the balance between self- and external motivation, an irreducible interdependency is revealed: in order to preserve the individuality of place and the specificity of local trades, Dunning sees the area compelled to open up to and to reorientate towards the service of external demands that are here, more clearly than elsewhere, able to encroach directly beyond the apparently closed margins of the road. With the notion of an essence of tradition and authenticity that can be still maintained as untouchable, Dunning embraces the necessity of responding to new external conditions. For Dunning, there is no possibility of ignoring modernity, and some agency to be gained in choosing how to respond: while some aspects may be exploited, others must be rejected. From this perspective, by seeking to project an image of harmonious integration, Westmorland is significant in its questioning of the government's contrary and preferred message of absolute autonomy – of parallel local and national economies that can function independently of each other; a notion of separation, perhaps equally deceptive, that was at other service sites, at this time, for the most part visually maintained.

'A location not a brand'?: authenticity and expansion

In this position mediating local and national, at a site where the local is presented to, marketed for and consumed by a national traveller – who is at once captive within the motorway network and intruder within the locality – how is the boundary between what is local and national, authentic and inauthentic, inside and outside the traditions of the region, defined and maintained? Given the distinct contexts from which Tebay services and their operator Westmorland both emerged, to what degree have they retained the differences from other service areas, and from other operators, that their

self-promotion as the only authentically local motorway facility would passionately suggest? In terms of Augé's notions of place and non-place, the stakes in such questions are high: for him, as already described, the importance of a discernible, relatively constant image of the other is necessary for the maintenance of the stable histories, identities and relations upon which an authentic 'anthropological' place depends.[398] So, to echo the question posed rhetorically by a plaque screwed to the wall of the toilets in Tebay West, 'can you feel the difference?'[399]

Details of Westmorland's development provide ambiguous evidence. The company clearly plays a crucial role in the local economy, as a local supply chain remains central to the catering operation at Tebay. Since the opening of the business, the services areas have served meals cooked freshly on the premises, with an emphasis on local dishes using local produce where possible – with most of the meat coming from the Dunning farm.[400] Birketts bakery, founding partners in the business, continued to supply the service areas with cakes and breads until 1997 when it was acquired by national chain Greggs.[401] In 2003 a large 'Farm Shop' was opened on both sides of the motorway, offering 'fresh, quality food with local specialities from Cumbria and neighbouring counties'.[402] While the venture extended the range of local produce available to the traveller, it was conceived primarily as a response to local need; a means to aid the recovery of local farmers, many of whom were severely affected by

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[398] Augé, *Non-Places*, pp. 50-5, 77-79, 120.

[399] Cited in Paul Lewis, 'Britain's Finest Roadside Dining Experience', *Guardian*, 8 March 2006, G2 Shortcuts, p. 2.

[400] In 2000, the manager of Westmorland, John France claimed that 'Around 98 percent of our food is manufactured in-house, to local recipes using local ingredients.' Quoted in Rachel Crofts 'Motorway Food is Rubbish, Says Ronay', *Birmingham Post*, 10 April 2000, p. 10. Examples include: Lakeland water, meat from Morecambe. See also, Sarah Dunning, quoted in Cheryl Stonehouse, 'Service Station with a Smile', *Express*, 7 November 2009, p. 24: 'Every bit of beef and lamb we serve in our restaurants or from the farm shops, comes from less than a mile away – most from our farm.'

[401] The sale reportedly resulted in a homogenization of Birketts products. See Julian Whittle, 'Baker Greggs Brings back Axed Coffee Puff after Facebook Campaign', *News & Star*, 2 August 2011, <http://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/baker-greggs-brings-back-axed-coffee-puff-after-facebook-campaign-1.863964> [accessed 28 October 2011]; Harry Pearson, '10 Cracking Bakers in the North of England: Greggs May Be Taking over the High Street, but There Are a Few Plucky Survivors that Can Still Supply a Good Cheese Slice and Coconut Haystack', *Guardian*, 12 August 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/2010/aug/12/top-bakers-north-england> [accessed 28 October 2011].

[402] See <http://www.westmorland.com/static/Farm_Shops.htm> [Accessed 20/02/08]. In Avery, 'Taking the Direct Route', Alexander Evans, the first manager of the farm shops, is quoted as saying: 'We still deal with small suppliers and that means we have a limited amount of their products and often sell out before the next delivery date, but that means that means everything here is guaranteed to be fresh.' In 2008 a meat cutting room and butcher's counter were opened at the southbound site, with an advertising leaflet titled 'Farm to Fork: The Complete Story', introducing the personalities involved at each stage in a fully in-house production process. See <http://www.westmorland.com/files/Butchery_Leaflet.pdf> [accessed 20 August 2008]

the nation-wide outbreak of foot and mouth disease two years earlier.[403] As a direct result, Westmorland was publicly voted 'Best Local Food Retailer' in the BBC Radio Four Food & Farming Awards of the same year.

According to Sarah Dunning, while 'the backbone of the farm shop is our own beef and lamb from the farm […]', 'all local producers are represented […]'. She estimates that half of all visitors are regulars: 'we have some local following now. Our aim was never to be a local shop, but inevitably we get locals coming to buy.'[404] The majority of the workforce is still local, too: local businesses and farmers are employed to carry out maintenance on the sites, and a range of bus services are provided by the company to bring employees to work from surrounding towns and villages, where, unlike the staff of many other service areas, the majority live.[405] In 2010, the *Westmorland Gazette* reported that the village of Tebay to be 'still very much alive', with 'a lot of people' working at the services.[406] In this way, the Dunnings' pledge to use the service area as a means to benefit and distribute wealth within the locality appears still to be borne out in practice, albeit with the family, the 'backbone' of this local economy, the greatest beneficiary, profiting from, as it provides for, locals and non-locals alike.[407]

Aside from this apparent continuity, there have been significant expansions in the business. As the Westmorland website announces: 'Now [the Dunning family] dream has become a multi-sited operation employing over 500 people across five

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[403] See Chris Marrit, 'Service Station Dishes Up Delicacies', *Daily Post (Liverpool)*, 14 July 2003, pp. 8-9. The article reports John Dunning as saying: 'It's a wonderful opportunity to give motorists from all over Britain a taste of our region and a distinctive alternative to the industrialised mass market of today.'

[404] Quoted in David Derbyshire, 'The M6 Services Where All the Jams are Home Made', *The Daily Telegraph*, 7 March 2006, p. 12. John Dunning echoes this view: 'We have the same sort of prices as other outlets and we have a lot of very regular customers'. See Sam Fortescue, 'M6 Services to Champion Farmhouse Breakfast', *Farmers Weekly*, 20 January 2006, p. 1.

[405] In 1993, Halsall reported that 'Westmorland employs 85 permanent staff, mostly living within a 10 to 15 mile radius among farming villages with little unemployment.' See 'Small Proves Beautiful'. The company provides a free minibus service to and from work from Penrith, Shap, Appleby, Orton, Brough, Kirkby Stephen, Tebay and some villages on these routes. See <http://www.westmorland.com/benefits> [accessed 28 October 2011].

[406] See 'Tebay Was Built around its Railway'. See also Martyn Halsall 'Cumbrian Cinderella Plans Whole New Ball: Martyn Halsall charts a town's fight against recession', *Guardian*, 12 July 1993, p. 14: 'Tebay now has more jobs dependent on road haulage and its motorway connections than at the height of its rail-linked prosperity.'

[407] John Dunning is quoted as saying 'We've been aiming to get as much of our product as possible into the services because it shortens the supply chain and means a better return for us.' See Sam Fortescue, 'M6 Services to Champion Farmhouse Breakfast', *Farmers Weekly*, 20 January 2006, p. 1. As part of the company's claim to the verifiable origins and quality of the food on sale, a leaflet for the new butcher's counter boasts: 'We only sell beef and lamb from our farm.' See <http://www.westmorland.com/files/Butchery_Leaflet.pdf> [accessed 20 August 2008]

distinct venues.'[408] Tebay West service area has been expanded twice, first in 1980 before complete redevelopment in 1988, with the capacity of its restaurant enlarged from 60- to 300-seats.[409] A 32-room (since expanded to 53-room) hotel was opened on the same site in 1976, and a caravan park added alongside in 1980.[410] Tebay East serving the opposite carriageway, also with seating for 300, opened in 1993, following the development in 1986 of Junction 38 Services at the junction immediately south to serve commercial vehicles and coach parties. Significantly, while ownership and overall control have stayed within the family, much of this 'dream' was realized with outside help: an experienced manager was hired from a multi-sited competitor to oversee the development of Tebay East, the first 'Farm Shop' manager was formerly a food buyer for Harrods,[411] and the restaurant boasts a chef who used to cook for the Prime Minister at Chequers.[412] Indeed, when Tebay was named 'best motorway service area' (with five out of five stars) in a 2006 study published by *Holiday Which?*, it was judged to be 'as close as the motorway service network comes to the Harrods Food Hall';[413] a comparison that, by invoking not only quality and distinctiveness but also imperial ambition and centralized commercialism, is not as unequivocally positive as the authors perhaps intended it to be.

However, it is the latest addition to the company that is most interesting: named Rheged, which opened in 2000, located near Penrith close to the junction of the M6 and A66.[414] This site offers a Cumbria themed visitor experience that aims to be both

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[408] <http://www.rheged.com/help/index.asp?pageid=102> [accessed 18 February 2008].

[409] See Lawrence, *Always*, p. 67. Additionally, the first dedicated coffee shop on the motorway network was added to Tebay West in 1994. <http://www.westmorland.com/about-us> [accessed 20 August 2008].

[410] <http://www.westmorland.com/about-us> [accessed 20 August 2008]. The hotel was originally called Tebay Mountain Lodge, but renamed The Westmorland Hotel when it was refurbished, enlarged and upgraded in 1997 to offer upper three star accommodation and a licensed restaurant.

[411] Manager Kenneth Williams joined Westmorland in August 1989: 'After a decade working for the major operators. His task is to develop what has remained a small company into a new generation of expansion.' Nevertheless, in the same article, he is also quoted as emphasising the role of a 'very hands-on board'. See Halsall, 'Small Proves Beautiful'. Alexander Evans, formerly of Harrod's Food Halls in London, joined Westmorland in 2003 to manage the new farm shops. See Avery, 'Taking the Direct Route'.

[412] Fryer, 'Vroom Service'.

[413] 'Motorway Service Stations: Turn Offs and Turn Ons', Corporate Press Releases (7 March 2006) <http://www.which.co.uk/press/press_topics/product_news/holiday_which_magazine/motorway_service_stations_571_94950.jsp> [accessed 15 May 2008]. A reference to the shop as 'the Harrod's food hall of the north' also appears in Fryer, 'Vroom Service'. See also, Hunter Davies, 'Services with a Smile; ... and a Farm Shop that Feels Like the Food Hall at Harrods', *Mail on Sunday*, 25 January 2009, p. 32.

[414] After M6, A66 is the most important Trunk road in Cumbria. Between M62, connecting Liverpool to Hull, and M8, connecting Glasgow to Edinburgh, it is the most significant east-west route linking the M6 across the Pennines to the A1, the other main north-south route between London and Scotland.

destination and orientation point for those seeking to explore further the landscape of the area. Named after the Celtic kingdom that was supposedly once located in the region, Rheged is marketed as 'the Lake District's biggest indoor visitor attraction',[415] incorporating a conference centre, exhibition spaces, twelve seemingly distinct 'local' shops (which are, however, all operated by the company), three restaurants, an Imax cinema and children's play areas, in addition to tourist information facilities. Incorporating a substantial filling station, this is not only a leisure, business, shopping and tourist hub, it is a super-sized service area in all but name. With these developments, Westmorland has become a very dominant force in a local economy driven by leisure and tourism:[416] the 'family' has grown.

While we are assured that their 'values have […] always remained consistent', how does this cloning of Westmorland's identity, the proliferation of Westmorland's notion of locality to five 'distinct venues' alter its original identity, its status as a 'one-off'? As Westmorland develops a monopoly on the marketing of locality, becoming a network of sites in its own right, does this alter the perception that it is 'not a brand'? To what extent do apparently external forces continue to influence Westmorland, and with what consequences for their claims to an authentic, natural, emergent relationship to place? Indeed, does this evidence of the company's development challenge the suggestion that, in return for all the local goods – cultural as well as material – experienced and consumed on its sites, only money is received; that in these processes of exchange, the outsiders – governmental and commercial as well as individual – leave no cultural traces of their own?

Westmorland's publicity relies on a relation to place that is presented as being constant, stable and closed, a guarantee of self-sameness; yet this image is undermined by the company's own history of expansion. Even in the opening quotations, alongside assertions of independence and authenticity, the several references to company 'style' and 'competitiveness' suggest properties that are transferable and relative rather than essential, conditioned by external relations rather than emergent from the self. Indeed, the tone of such publicity presents Westmorland as more than regional curiosity or

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[415] <http://www.rheged.com/groups/> [accessed 18 February 2008].

[416] On the economy of the region, see Allen Scott, 'Cultural Economy of Landscape: Development Pathways in the English Lake District', Working paper no. 15/2010, Working Paper New Series, International Centre for Research on the Economics of Culture, Institutions and Creativity, Department of Economics, University of Turin, 2010, <http://www.eblacenter.unito.it/WP/2010/15_WP_Ebla_CSS.pdf> [accessed 10 June 2010].

chance aberration, but as the only true service area, a concrete exemplar of what and how service areas should properly and most desirably be: a model too perfect to remain unique; an image that may be cloned. The next sections will develop and explore these questions through the material evidence of the sites: how are these competing demands and ideals of motorway and locality reconciled within the sites, buildings, spaces, furnishings and symbolism at Tebay East, particularly, but also at the company's other sites?

'Capture the essence': rural architecture on the road

Externally, Tebay services (east and west) resemble converted barns. Both assume ostensibly simple, vernacular forms, and appear composed of a limited number of local materials that are seemingly ubiquitous in surrounding landscapes and buildings: pitched slate roofs on solid Scots pine trusses overhang grey limestone walls. Pitches are shallow, eaves low and walls squat: roofs and open gables dominate. 'Elemental' forms and 'natural' materials give Tebay Services an apparent continuity with the farm buildings visible in surrounding fields *[18-21]*.

The relationship between the architecture of the service area buildings and Westmorland's brand identity appears clear: the two representations converge on an image of local authenticity and stability clearly differentiated from the road and the transient lifestyle it facilitates. For the barn is commonly associated with nostalgic notions of the countryside as timeless rural idyll untouched by modern life. In a 1982 survey of British farm buildings, Ronald Brunskill observes that barns 'seem part of a permanent, never-changing landscape, the countryside of the magazine cover, the television advertisement and the Christmas Calendar.'[417] Barns, he suggests, tend to signify a human presence and a way of life that are not only rooted in place, but also constant through time: the present, they reassure, is an unbroken, unalterable continuation of the past. The company is seemingly bound into this reserve of inertia, fixed in time, fixed in place, a rurality that resists change.

Such images implicitly refer to and draw meaning from an established binary opposition. As Raymond Williams notes, in the context of literary representations: 'A

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[417] Ronald Brunskill, *Traditional Farm Buildings of Britain* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1982), p. 13.

contrast between country and city, as fundamental ways of life, reaches back to classical times.' While city has been associated with 'learning, communication and light', but also 'noise, worldliness and ambition', '[…] the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue.'[418] As the barn associates the service areas with rural life, it symbolically rejects the city; like the promotional literature discussed in the previous chapter, the buildings ostensibly deny the urban forces and flows within which the company is embedded. Indeed, with an image suggesting indifference more than resistance, Westmorland's architecture presents a detachment from the road even more complete, seemingly unaffected by the motorway's existence.

Old before its time: the texture of place

A description by Will Self, written in 2007, suggests that this effect – of a distinction between old and new, country and city – is, at Tebay services, convincing (at least enough for it to inspire his satire):

> Tebay is easily the best motorway services in the British Isles. It has an authentic country kitchen and a farm shop (opened by the heir to the throne in 2004). It is also a family-run business, staffed by local people, and instead of the bland featurelessness of most service centres, Tebay, with its rough-textured stone buildings, seems to predate the M6, rather than being a mere outgrowth of the motorway.[419]

In Self's text it is the stone, especially its 'rough-texture', that gives Tebay services a reassuring sense of having predated M6; its roughness, an apparent trace of weathering and slow natural formation – of processes and durations that precede and exceed the human – differentiates Westmorland from the smooth, 'bland featurelessness' of other service areas, and the motorway itself. Roughness, coarseness, abrasiveness, properties more usually associated with crudeness, primitiveness and a lack of learning or culture are here elevated above the over-civilised refinement of contemporary (urban) culture. According to this inversion of prevalent hierarchies, Tebay is portrayed as still innocent, uncorrupted by humanity's excessive ordering and homogenizing of natural variation; a roughness that resists change, that arrests flow. So, as the barn imagery distinguishes rural from urban, timeless from transient, authentic from artificial,

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[418] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), p. 1.
[419] Self, 'Romantic Services', p. 249.

presence from absence, it also implies, in Self's reading, a privileging of the natural over the manmade – of non-human constants over that which is too fleetingly, too whimsically human. Linking stability in time and space to 'natural', material variation, Self's text alights on a thread that will recur through this analysis.

The 'rough-texture' also grounds the text's references to family ownership and indigenous workforce: the family, their staff and the services they offer are by implication as traditional, local and dependable as the earthy materials that form their buildings. If there is an origin to this timeless stability, Self's text playfully affirms it as natural: the possibility of the buildings – and its occupants – 'being a mere outgrowth of the motorway' is discounted, rendering an emergence from the place, from the soil, from a time immemorial the unwritten alternative. As in the company's texts discussed in the introductory section, particular evidence of Tebay services being always and entirely of the place lends authenticity to the whole operation – yet here it is material and architectural rather than historical detail that supports the textual claim. Each quality attributed to the buildings or to their material components is conflated with, and further substantiates, the authenticity of the 'country kitchen' and the 'farm shop' that they house. Westmorland's architecture is read in Self's caricature as guarantor of the company's identity and values, and used metaphorically in their support.

This is not an isolated case: the company's ostensibly discreet, anonymous architecture figures prominently in popular, as well as in journalistic, writing of the company's reputation. On an internet photo-sharing site, an image of Tebay East is titled 'Medieval Services' with a caption that reads: 'Doesn't really look like a fast-food and shopping stop, does it?'[420] An otherwise scathing study of British service areas published in 2006 by *Holiday Which?* praised Westmorland for its 'attractive wooden building with terrific far-reaching Cumbrian views [… that] make a great first impact.'[421] Clearly, in terms of Westmorland's key claim to a uniquely authentic relationship to place, the 'barn' appears to serve as an effective symbol, sufficient

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[420] See: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/aussiestompy/715954479/> [Accessed: 12 June 2008].
[421] Quoted in multiple sources, including Sean Poulter, 'The Service Areas that Do Everyone a Disservice', *Daily Mail*, 7 March 2006, p. 34.

even, as Self recounts, for Tebay East to be endorsed by Prince Charles, a figure well known for his conservative stance on architecture and rural life.[422]

Yet, with the exception of parts of the Westmorland Hotel, the service area buildings do not predate the motorway. Although most visible materials are indeed older than the road – limestone formed between 363 and 325 million years ago, slate from the early Ordovician period, and timbers reclaimed from disused nineteenth-century warehouses in Liverpool docks (at Tebay West) or Manchester cotton mills (at Tebay East) – their translation into buildings followed it: these particular representations of an unchanging rural landscape were, like the company that built them, composed specifically to serve M6.[423] Chronologically and programmatically, if perhaps not visually, Westmorland's 'barns' were an 'outgrowth' of the road – the 'new way north' connecting the principal urban areas of London and Scotland[424] – and therefore, of a government-driven programme of national modernisation.

This connection is significant. For, as I described in the previous section, motorways represent an attitude to context very different from that implied by Westmorland's buildings. Promoted as an infrastructure of the future, the new roads, and the service areas that would be integral to them, were envisaged, by most politicians, bureaucrats, engineers and even preservationists, as detached from, and categorically not an outgrowth of, past or of place – but rather as autonomous enclaves of the cities they connected.[425] As Lawrence's thesis title, 'A Bit of Town Dumped Down in the Country', suggests, this division was, for the most part, effectively maintained. Indeed, the architecture of almost all service areas completed prior to the development of Tebay West – especially the bridge restaurants of Leicester Forest East (M1, 1966), Keele, Knutsford and Charnock Richard (all M6, 1963), and the towers of

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[422] See, for example, HRH The Prince of Wales, *A Vision of Britain: A Personal View of Architecture* (New York: Doubleday, 1989); 'A speech by HRH The Prince of Wales at the launch of the Junction 38 Meat Processing Partnership Facility, Orton, Cumbria', 6 February 2006, <http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/speechesandarticles/a_speech_by_hrh_the_prince_of_wales_at_the_l aunch_of_the_jun_1.html> [accessed 29 October 2011]. On the Prince's visit, see 'Prince Charles gives support to local products', *Westmorland Gazette*, 27 February 2004, <http://www.thewestmorlandgazette.co.uk/news/464703.Prince_Charles_gives_support_to_local_produ cts/> [accessed 28 October 2011].

[423] On materials used at Tebay, see Dawson, 'Motorway Services with a Touch of Wordsworth'; Halsall, 'Small is Beautiful'; and Andrew Loudon, 'Services with a Smile: How M-way Stopover Found Success on a Plate … and Praise form Egon Ronay', *Daily Mail*, 11 April 2000, p. 27. On the age of local stones, see Alec Clifton-Taylor, 'Introduction: Building Materials', in Nikolaus Pevsner, *Cumberland and Westmorland*, The Buildings of England (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), pp.46-50.

[424] See Banham, 'New Way North'.

[425] See Merriman, 'M1', pp. 47-53, 111-160, and discussion in the previous section. On the preferences of the MoT, see Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', especially pp. 268-9.

Hilton Park (M6, 1965) and Forton (now Lancaster, M6, 1967) – upheld this locally a-contextual approach. Irrespective of government policy, it suited operators' marketing strategies for the buildings to appear as modern and glamorous as the road they served and to use bold forms that, given the prohibition of roadside advertising, were their only direct means to attract the attention of drivers. Exposed concrete, prominent cantilevers, flat roofs, bright cladding and patent glazing made these buildings appear futuristic. Tight against the carriageways, seeming to integrate infrastructure and architecture, they alluded to the emerging formal language of the airport – another densely occupied but self-contained piece of city in the country.[426]

At Tebay this distinction is clearly breached and redefined – architecturally and aesthetically, as I have already suggested it to be economically and programmatically. Here, the motorway's two fifteen-metre-wide strips of uniform asphalt are served by buildings of local stone, wood and slate, constructed in an ostensibly traditional manner: an icon of modernity, said to herald an era of greater mobility for people and more efficient exchange of goods, is juxtaposed with the idyllic, 'Christmas Calendar' image of the 'barn', signifying to the contrary a timeless agrarian existence sustained directly and entirely from the land. Tebay services are thus significant in their evident transgression and re-inscription of the boundary not only between road and rural context, but also between city and country, national and regional: in redefining this border, Westmorland appears to annex the service area from the road, from the city, and to repossess it for the locality – through its architecture as much as through its company ethos, facilities and services. In doing so, the company materializes directly the wager or tension, in the politics of the motorway project between a rural way of life and its potential nemesis or saviour. The following sections explore this association of an architecture signifying stability and independence and an infrastructure furthering

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[426] This is also the title of chapter 6, which traces a typological design history of the service area. See Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 171-86. These MSAs were developed and first operated by, respectively, Ross Group, Motorway Services, Top Rank Motorsports, Motorway Services and Top Rank, the last two. Although Forton was completed in 1967, it was not opened until 1970 due to delays in motorway construction. Other sites completed in this period, such as Granda's Toddington (M1, 1964) and Mecca Leisure's Trowell (M1, 1967), Woodall (M1, 1968) tended to involve double-height buildings tight against, and often with views over, the motorway and closely integrated with the connecting bridge. An exception is Top Rank's Aust (M4, 1964), which, unusually at the time, was accessed via a junction and located away from the motorway where it could look out over the River Severn. It received considerable praise at the time, for example from Banham, in 'Disservice Areas'. The architecture, although timber clad, was a distinctly modern, flat-roofed form. When the M4 was rerouted to link up with the second Severn crossing and this stretch of road became the lesser used M48, the original building of the MSA, now named Severn View, was sold for use as offices and smaller facilities developed in a separate building that used to house the transport café.

the pace of change and exchange in contemporary life. Here, one is given the architecture of the other, but with what effects for both?

Type and tradition: vernacular in vogue

The originality and local distinctiveness of Westmorland's architecture seems less assured when the architectural history of the service area is considered more fully. Lawrence's account suggests that Westmorland's architectural approach is less unique than its model of ownership and operation. He traces how, in service areas designed during the late 1960s and early 1970s, a trend emerged towards a more contextual aesthetic (and aesthetic only) – a trend that is officially sanctioned, if not instituted.[427] In this narrative, the commissioning of Tebay West represents a key moment when Ministry of Transport tender documents stipulate, for the first time, the importance of a visible response to rural context: the established call for proposals 'modern in concept and design' is here qualified by advocacy of 'significant use of local materials' and recognition of traditional architectural forms.[428] The change of prescription is slight, and Lawrence notes that official specifications, updated in 1972, remained vague in their requirement of 'an architectural design which suits the location, has architectural merit and is designed specifically for the locality'.[429] Yet evidence of a concurrent shift away from expressive 'modern' forms – what Lawrence terms the 'railway station' and 'bridge' types – is compelling. Several service areas built within a few years of Tebay West exhibit seemingly similar material and formal responses to rural contexts: pitched roofs with low eaves, projecting substantially in some cases, and walls faced with brick or, even, stone.[430] So, while Tebay West – completed in 1972 – might be one of the

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[427] See David Lawrence, Ph.D, chapter 6, especially p. 220. This culminates by the mid-1980s in what Lawrence describes as 'neo-vernacular'; a term he borrows from Sutherland Lyall's *The State of British Architecture* (London: The Architectural Press, 1980), pp. 70-94.

[428] MoT, *Additional Information Applicable to the Tebay (West) Site in Particular*, tender document, 30 May (London: Ministry of Transport,1968), paragraphs 30-31, cited in Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', p. 210. It is important to note that local authorities had at this time no influence on motorway or service area siting or design, so local planning departments and local plans had no jurisdiction. This was the case until deregulation.

[429] MoT, 'Motorway Service Area Branch memorandum', August 1972, cited in Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', p. 211.

[430] These include: Burton West (M6, 1970), Michaelwood (M5, 1971), Leigh Delamere (M4, 1972), Killington (M6, 1972), Woolley Edge (M1, 1972), Birch (M62, 1972), Membury, (M4, 1972), Hartshead Moor (M62, 1973), Gordano (M4, 1973), Fleet (M3, 1973), and Burtonwood (M62, 1974). See Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town Dumped Down in the Country', pp. 211-215.

first sites to adopt these local, rural motifs, this was at a time when exterior vernacular references were becoming part of the dominant style of service area architecture.

For Lawrence, this phase of service area construction is portrayed as a high point of integration between traditional and modern architecture. He describes increasingly flexible and functional interiors given local expression in exterior details, especially roofs, abstracted from vernacular buildings. For him, the service area of this period is on the way both to becoming a 'discrete type' – a logical roadside form – and to finding an appropriate relation to specific context. Indeed, Lawrence's analysis here chimes with Frampton's notion of 'Critical Regionalism' (discussed in the introduction), of a positive intersection of what he terms 'universal civilization' and 'world culture' – the latter being, confusing, his problematic term to encompass all 'local' cultures. In Lawrence's narrative, however, this type of service area, which he terms 'pavilion', soon degenerates by the mid-1970s into the 'barn', as a revival of 'neo-vernacular' details becomes the norm for many different building types in the so-called 'postmodern' architecture of the 1980s. In his reading of the 'barn', rural references become pastiche, a pattern-book cloak of appropriated vernacular details that are no longer in dialogue with modernity, but instead there to hide it. This style of service area construction came to an end in the mid-1990s, with a movement towards airport-style 'sheds' of the kind discussed in the previous chapter. Tebay East, as well as the major extensions to Tebay West, were thus designed in a very different socio-cultural and architectural climate from the company's first service area building: at a time when the vernacular was not only in vogue, but, had become embedded in local planning regulations – which became highly influential in service area design following deregulation. Rather than an intrinsically different approach to building borne of the place, the service areas might instead be seen as a more extreme dressing in local materials of what has become a generic roadside form. Westmorland's main phases of service area construction thus come at the beginning and end of a nationwide – indeed to some extent international – surge of interest in traditional architecture.[431]

Nonetheless, Westmorland's traditional approach to building seems not to have been, primarily at least, a response to governmental or local planning constraints, or to other official or popular pressure, but a desire of the owner-developers. The architects

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[431] David Lawrence considers local authority planners and environmental groups to have an increasingly significant influence towards the mid-1980s. Killington Lake (M6, rebuilt 1985), Strensham (M4) and Clacket Lane (M25, 1993) are cited as key examples. Lawrence, *Always*, pp. 84-5.

of Tebay West were 'instructed' by the Dunnings to 'capture the essence of a hill farm in traditional materials'.[432] Yet, the terms here already point towards a conflict: if 'capture' suggests exteriority from the object to be represented – the studied replication of a form, in this case through the art of 'architecture' – 'essence' implies the pure, unrepresentable being of the object itself, something realized only by unmediated, intuitive 'building'.[433] The question then is, in the architecture of Westmorland, what is this 'essence' to be?

Limiting place: motorway disowned

Despite an ostensibly 'local', 'authentic' appearance, Westmorland's architecture is (as I have documented), to some extent fake: a representation of a traditional building, rather than the 'real' thing; not as old as it appears. Not only might the motivation for a rural 'style' come from the outside – architectural fad rather than familial tradition – a mediating process of 'capture' is involved in its production. No longer an 'authentic' building, in the sense of a unity of material and represented origin, the 'authenticity' of the reproduction is now in doubt: instead of exact imitation, there appears a contingent process of gathering and receiving. The assumption, countenanced so far, that Tebay Services fit seamlessly into local architectural, climatic and topographic contexts will now be tested. In this, and the next two subsections, I look to descriptions of rural architecture common to the region to explore how the 'essence of a hill farm' is at Tebay 'captured'?

    I focus, first, on Tebay East, the more recent service area. Although much adapted internally and thrice extended, the majority of the building was, unlike that of Tebay West, constructed in a single phase.[434] Might its 'essence' thus be more 'pure'?

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[432] Quoted in Lawrence, *Always*, p. 67.

[433] Examples of distinctions between 'architecture' and 'building' range from Pevsner's, discussed in the introduction, to Kenneth Frampton's *Studies in Tectonic Culture.* A pragmatic description of the difference in terms of architectural history may be found in Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p.15. In defining the buildings that are to be included in his study, Brunskill makes the following distinction: 'They are "vernacular" – the products of local craftsmen meeting simple functional requirements according to traditional plans and procedures and with the aid of local building material and constructional method methods, rather than "polite" – the efforts of professional designers, meeting the more elaborate needs of a formal way of life with the aid of internationally accepted rules and procedures, advanced constructional techniques, and materials chosen for aesthetic effect rather than local availability.' For a discussion of the role of the terms in architectural discourse, see Wigley, *Architecture of Deconstruction*, chapter 1: 'The Translation of Deconstruction', pp. 1-34.

[434] The farm shop was added in 2003, and other significant extensions in 2006 and 2009. <http://westmorland.com/about-us>.

The buildings' roadside curtilage might seem an obvious place to begin to question Tebay East's 'authenticity', for here the infrastructures and ancillary amenities of the service area look set to disrupt the rural scene: the bright canopy and standardized buildings of the petrol station; the 12,500m^2 of sprawling grey, asphalted parking areas; the typical lamp posts, bins, signs, road markings and every colour of vehicle scattered across the site. Yet far from undermining the company's historical narrative of local constancy, independence and resistance, these features seem to reinforce it by drawing more sharply the distinction between building and motorway on which those claims depend. For while there appears some attempt to minimize disharmony between site and surroundings – mounds, long grass, bushes and trees screening parking areas – there is a stronger opposing tendency to differentiate modern roadscape from rural landscape: flowering bulbs compromise the naturalness of verges; site boundaries are timber fences not dry stone walls; reconstituted stone curbs and concrete bollards delimit sharply a generally orthogonal vehicular realm; and pavers that lead up to the building are a more regular, refined stone than that used for walls. Despite a few roughened edges, the forecourt appears to be part of the smooth, seamless, national space of the motorway, disconnected from the rural surroundings and alien to Westmorland's seemingly timeless buildings. The only exceptions are overflow parking and picnic areas, where an avoidance of roadside features makes for a convincing integration with agricultural context. Located away, visually as well as physically, from the main parking areas, these spaces are less regular in shape, unlit, unsigned, surfaced only in rough stone chippings and kerb-less to the surrounding long grass. Either way, a clear distinction is maintained: where vehicular realms cannot be effectively concealed in place, they are marked as exterior to it *[22]*.

This sharp demarcation of new from old, generic from authentic, national from local, is furthered by an unusual site arrangement, which, rather than encircling the main building with vehicular routes, keeps all roadside paraphernalia on one side – the front.[435] Contrary to most other service area sites, this space is accessed smoothly

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[435] There are a few occurrences of similar arrangements on the UK motorway network. While most appear in some way concerned with an experience of proximity to place, none, I would argue, claim local authenticity, or ostensibly resist the road, to the extremes I describe at Westmorland. This may be seen from two examples in very different contexts: Killington Lake, M6 – also in Cumbria, only 17 kilometres south of, and originally the companion southbound site to, Tebay (West) – is one of the first instances of the layout, while Donington Park (explored in the last chapter), is one of the most recent. The first, already mentioned in its rebuilt form as one of David Lawrence's typical 'barns', combines a 'fake' traditional architecture with uninterrupted views over a seemingly 'natural' lakeside scene

without deviation from the slipway, maintains the open, linear character of the road and contains very little company branding. More like a vast lay-by than superstore car park, it relocates the sharp distinction between highway and lot described in *Learning From Las Vegas*: ownership of this intermediate realm is here assigned, spatially and semiotically, to what Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour term the 'shared order' of the road, rather than the 'individual order' of the site, which seems to begin instead just in front of the building. As the company's material claim to authenticity is concentrated in the buildings and their relation to landscape, property lines are seemingly redrawn so that everything that cannot be made to fit is disowned. Indeed, as I explore further in the next section, this facilitates a merging of Westmorland's 'individual order' into what might be called the 'natural' order of the landscape, to such an extent that the existence of a mediating ownership – that of the service areas company – between the 'shared' (or personal realm of the car) and the 'natural' is, for the most part, seemingly effaced.[436]

Out of place: Tebay East, the bank and the plain

If the threshold of place, the boundary that the company pledges to maintain, is now clearly set, what about the buildings themselves, the ostensibly simple traditional forms that should, or so Self's description suggests, be so closely emplaced in local context and starkly in contrast with this invasive realm of vehicles through which they are reached? Although both will be significant points of reference in this study, I focus here on agricultural rather than domestic elements of the 'hill farm', for it is to the

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(actually a reservoir, but unnoticeably so). With fewer 'local' exterior details than Tebay and a generic commercial interior, Killington's is a weak contextuality, which preserves the appearance of an 'authentic' landscape – ostensibly less altered than Westmorland's – but makes no serious claim to an 'authentic' architecture or historical relation to place. It may open onto the lake, but the building, like the parking areas clearly belongs to the road. Donington Park makes no reference to vernacular architecture, while its interior is oriented towards an unexceptional piece of countryside transformed into an undulating landscape with lake – what I called in Chapter 1 'greenscape'. Here, proximity to 'nature' comes without any particular claim to authenticity or contextuality.

[436] Venturi, Scott Brown, Izenour, p. 20. The situation described in *Learning From Las Vegas* is more simple: 'The zone *of* the highway is a shared order. The zone *off* the highway is an individual order.' The 'civic' shared order of the road maintains legibility and continuity, allowing it to accommodate the juxtaposition of individual site uses, layouts and signage found along the Las Vegas strip. At most UK service areas a similar relationship may be seen, albeit in a more controlled and isolated condition: the parking areas, often awkward to access, difficult to navigate, and littered with signs (although not on the scale of Las Vegas), are clearly different from the smooth, unbranded space of the motorway. However, at both northbound and southbound Tebay sites, the clarity, openness and generous scale of parking areas seemingly sustain the order of the motorway into the site: rather than turning into a vortex of circular routes and signage, the driver may pull straight into a parking space adjacent to the road.

former in particular that the majority of external service area details – narrow windows, large central entrance, big roof – appear to refer. How close, then, is Westmorland's relation to the Lakeland barn, this ground on which the company's claim to local authenticity appears heavily to depend?

Brunskill's account of Lakeland vernaculars emphasizes the regional significance of one agricultural building type above others: the bank barn *[23]*. Not only is it still 'the predominant type of farm building in most parts of the Lake Counties' – including the area in which Tebay is located – in its 'true' form, it is 'in England [...] almost peculiar to the Lake Counties'.[437] These barns are noteworthy for their unique sectional adaptation to the steep gradients of this hilly region: a two storey building follows the contours of an inclined site, so that a squat ground floor, cut into the slope of the hill, provides covered animal stalls and even footings for a double-height threshing barn above. This constructionally efficient arrangement – animals and crops together on a minimal area of levelled ground, under a simple pitched roof – also facilitates level access to both floors.[438] Indeed, the building type seems so well adapted to hill farming that Brunskill expresses surprise it is not found in other upland areas of Britain, where topography, climate and agricultural method are similar: more than a regional quirk, the bank barn is, for him, a marker of unrivalled local sensitivity to place.[439]

Such distinctiveness and the visible presence of bank barns on slopes surrounding the Tebay sites appears to make the building a strong signifier of place, and – given its common incorporation into farmsteads – an obvious reference for the 'essence' of Westmorland's 'hill farm'.[440] Indeed, as the bank barn represents a 'peculiar' perfection, it also seems to typify local building practices more generally. Very few early regional vernacular forms, agricultural or domestic, differ in their basic features: shallow, long plan with pitched-roof, often incorporating some form of two

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[437] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 84-6. See also *Traditional Farm Buildings*, p. 114: 'The main concentration lies in Cumbria, especially in the Lake District, Pennine Cumbria and the West Cumberland Plain. In these districts bank barns abound so that practically every farm has one and few conventional or flat barns are to be seen.'

[438] 'From a field or track at the upper level a short ramp allowed access for carts into the barn; the lower level opened into the farmyard where the horses and cattle could be exercised and watered and into which their dung could be led.' Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 83-84. 'The bank barn was economical in the first construction since one roof and one set of foundations was saved over the two or more buildings otherwise required', *Traditional Farm Buildings*, p. 114.

[439] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p. 86; *Traditional Farm Buildings*, p. 113.

[440] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 75-8

storey arrangement.[441] But while there may be clear similarities in principal building elements and surface materials – rough stone walls, timber trusses and pitched slate roofs – neither Tebay East or West share many of the bank barn's defining formal qualities and relationships. By looking first at siting, two related movements beyond the vernacular become apparent: an intrusion of the elsewhere and an exaggeration of the here.

Both service areas, single storey and built on fully-levelled sites, suggest an approach to massing and to context very different from that of the bank barn; one that begins with an extensive area of cleared ground, its eccentricities eliminated to produce a smooth, neutral base for expansive construction. While both Tebay East and West occupy land that is by local standards not particularly steep, it is striking that, contrary to the company's claimed authenticity, the single-storey buildings do not develop the locally distinctive practices exemplified by the bank barn – of using a sloping lie to conveniently stack spaces and functions. Instead, Westmorland's tactics appear to have more in common with the generic 'pavilion', 'barn' or 'shed' types of service area identified by Lawrence, with the broad, squat building that is now the norm for out-of-town shopping centres or business parks, with the 'big, low space' of the Strip identified in *Learning from Las Vegas*.[442]

What are the consequences of this divergence? I am not arguing here that a lack of response to uneven context is on its own enough to make the buildings appear topographically inappropriate, locally incongruous or architecturally alien. For most visitors, the rejection of 'natural' 'roughness' in massing would be more than concealed by other indicators of authenticity that I discuss later. Rather, this is, I suggest, the first sign of a displacement of local material culture by another, more recognizable image of tradition seemingly more rooted elsewhere. For the buildings' broad flat footprint not only contradicts the bank barn; it goes against the vernacular practices of a culture so marked by prevailing rough, sloping conditions that traces of adaptation to incline may be seen even on areas of level ground. Bank barns are also found on the flat part of the Solway Plain, raised, in the absence of gradient, on

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[441] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 50-86.

[442] See Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 211-14, 220-5; Venturi, Scott Brown, Izenour, p. 50. The 'big, low space' is '[…] the archetype for all public interior spaces whose heights are diminished for reasons of budget and air conditioning.' Moreover, '[…] merchandising techniques discourage second floors.' (p. 9).

artificial earth mounds.[443] Instead of a humble close responsiveness to landscape – of the kind much eulogized and mythologized by some architectural theorists and historians[444] – bank barns show the stubborn idiomatic dominance of the slope: unevenness as norm, gradient as useful, elevation as desirable. So, what is most striking at Tebay is, I would argue, not the act of site remodelling itself – a charge of desecrating the sanctity of place, or, as Frampton puts it, of 'a technocratic gesture which aspires to absolute placelessness'[445] – but that a company so keen to express its local authenticity fashions the opposing condition: a mini-plain halfway up a hill. In terms of massing, Westmorland's sprawling, single-storey 'farm' buildings thus seem not 'of this place', but rather as though they could only belong 'authentically' in lowland landscapes; an 'essence' of *hill* farm that paradoxically presumes, indeed requires, readily available flat land: a hill farm as it might be imagined by a flatlander, as seemingly displaced as a bank barn on the plain.

Westmorland does, however, acknowledge the physical and cultural dominance of the slope in other ways. For, as the company's buildings are given an even site, the unevenness of their immediate setting is exaggerated, seemingly to compensate. Manmade mounds and ponds flank Tebay Services, engineered to achieve particular visitor experiences of the place – concealed aspects to buildings and framed prospects of landscape – and so to present the buildings as a perfect fit. So, while local variation – existing roughness – is allowed little influence on the massing and siting of buildings, a more extreme but manufactured roughness is reintroduced directly alongside to project an image of tight emplacement. Here an ornamental irregularity supplements a process that seems otherwise to require and produce the smooth: the manufactured mini-plain on a hillside is hidden at the bottom of a manufactured mini-valley.

So, there appears to be both an overwriting and an imitating of local landscape context; an imitation that exceeds the 'original' condition, ostensibly – and only ostensibly – naturalizing the intrusion of an alien form with imagery that is hyper-, but, at the same time, extra-local. For the result far from erases all traces of incongruity. Despite the exaggerated expression of emplacement, the relation between building and

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[443] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p. 84.
[444] See, for example, Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture Without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture*, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1964), pp. 6-9; Frampton, 'Towards a Critical Regionalism', pp. 26-8; and Norberg-Schulz, pp. 17-18.
[445] Frampton, 'Towards a Critical Regionalism', p. 26.

context constructed at Westmorland's sites remains significantly different from that in Brunskill's vernacular examples: the dense gathering of landscape features around the building exchanges an image of isolated exposure for one of tight enclosure, a fitting within instead of fitting on top. Why might this be the case? What drives these interrelated movements, this supplementing of place that is seemingly at once an exaggeration of the here and a gathering from elsewhere?

While other explorations might focus on economic, constructional and programatic drivers of difference – and these are certainly part of the story – I argue that cultural context is highly significant here and that this departure from local vernacular practice might be, for Westmorland, not just necessary but desirable. For the image that results is, I suggest, more than a disguise of 'responsiveness' clumsily produced in reverse, more than a version of the hill farm stretched to absurdity. Rather, it seemingly tends towards a different, just as identifiable, representation of place, towards the Lake District of regional branding. On a site lacking 'natural' sheer inclines or pools, a stone strewn mini-'fell' and 'lake' flank the 'traditional' 'hill farm': the Lake District in microcosm *[24]*. Thus, the sites appear reconfigured to fit a typical 'Christmas Calendar' image of the region: steep ground reflected across water; a discreet human presence between lake and hill. In their site landscaping, the service areas appear closer to capturing the 'essence' not of local architecture, but the conventional image of the whole region: 'of the Cumbrian lakes and hills'.

Prominent hips: local and national vernaculars

Westmorland's notion of 'essence' now seems to be less specific, more expansive, than the company's references to the 'hill' farm would initially suggest. This representation of 'localness' appears to refer beyond the material 'reality' of place, to be located within a wider economy of cultural imagery: a coming down from the remoteness of the mountain to settle in the more populous plain. As other signifiers of place, perhaps more widely known and easily identifiable, contradict those of the specific context, this problematizes the possibility of circumscribing the local as distinct from the non-local.

So far, the boundary of place appears stretched, but ostensibly re-inscribed, closed around an essence of the region and its traditional buildings, rather than the specific site or 'hill farm'. Yet Westmorland's architecture, I suggest, reaches beyond even this boundary, too. For such a limit struggles to account entirely for the

differences described above: for the flattening of site, for exposure becoming enclosure, for a building no longer perched on the landscape, but enveloped within it, for a normalizing tendency that rejects or diminishes many of the region's most defining differences. By looking now at the exterior modelling, forms and proportions of Westmorland's buildings, I explore other ways in which the company's gathering of imagery seems to exceed the Lake District, and how, in the process, the buildings transgress other common features of local material context and traditional building practice.

To return to Brunskill's description, bank barns tend, despite their length and embedded ground floor, to appear tall: a shallow roof pitch means that walls generally make up the majority of long elevations, while the narrow plan and gabled roof accentuate the height of end walls.[446] This emphasis is clearly reversed at both service areas, where an already horizontal massing is exaggerated by forms and details that consistently stress length over height. More than any other feature, this is due to the buildings' complex cross-hip roof forms, which eliminate all gable walls and shift emphasis to the unbroken line of the eaves. This not only marks a departure from the bank barn, but, as Brunskill's historical survey makes clear, from the geometry of almost all vernacular building types common to the region:

> As slates and flags were the predominant building material used in the Lake
> Counties it is hardly surprising that nearly all roofs were gabled and few had
> dormers or valleys, since neither material lends itself to these variations from
> the simplicity of a basic roof shape.[447]

Even the expansion of properties tended not to compromise a pragmatic simplicity of roof form more robust against the threats of water ingress or wind damage. Extension of existing roof planes or the addition of separate buildings were the most common means.[448] So, the geometry constructionally appropriate and historically 'authentic' to the roofing material is at Tebay Services rejected in favour of a more elaborate chamfered form – traditionally more common on thatched or tiled buildings of the

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[446] See Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 82-6.

[447] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p. 115. *The Oxford Companion to Architecture* notes the same restrictions, with a view to contemporary, as well as traditional usage: '[With s]tone or slate [...] angles are harder to form, and the roof structure must be strong and regular.' Anthony Quiney, 'Roofs', in *The Oxford Companion to Architecture*, II, ed. by Patrick Goode (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 785.

[448] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 59-62, 79. I explore this in more detail later in the chapter.

Midlands, east and south-east of England[449] – that further softens the buildings'
silhouette and expresses the pitched roof on all sides. As the service areas seem to
replicate the ubiquitous sprawl of contemporary commercial roadside architecture, they
also contradict a regional trait of undisguised verticality, of dominant walls not roofs.

Brunskill does note local historical precedent for the roof type, but it has
contrary associations and effects: 'The few hipped roofs responded to the fashion of
the early nineteenth century in which the roof had to be minimised in the design of the
building.'[450] An imported mark of style, culture, urbanity and refinement – of
'architecture', rather than mere 'building', according to Pevsner's distinction[451] – this
hidden hip represents, contrary to Westmorland's publicized intent, the history of a
sign of distinction from context, of what, at the time, signified a transcending of
natural forces and local differences. Tebay East's very different use of the same form –
to reduce the apparent size not of the roof, but of the whole building – might ostensibly
signify the reverse. Yet, the company's architecture cannot escape, indeed compounds,
the mark of exteriority, of distinction: the un-contextual roof, no longer hidden, engulfs
the building to produce a form – similar to the big-roofed barns of generally more
wealthy, arable areas of southern England and northern continental Europe[452] – as alien
to the locality as the nineteenth century ostensibly roof-less house *[25]*. Indeed, as I
explore further below, it reproduces a form now common nationally to out of town
supermarkets and business parks and municipal offices. Tellingly, as Morrison notes,
this tactic of hiding big modern sheds under big vernacular roofs has, in retail at least,
become known as the 'Essex barn' after the 1978 ASDA store that supposedly
pioneered the approach.[453]

The projecting eaves of Tebay East correspond to a common feature of the
vernacular architecture found in some areas of Britain, where they keep heavy rain
away from walls. Yet they are rarely found in the Lake Counties due to their
vulnerability to strong winds. As another incongruous detail is added, perhaps to
minimize further the apparent height of the walls, the excessive acknowledgement of
one force of nature denies another.[454] Thus, an attempt to capture the 'essence' of

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[449] Brunskill, *Traditional Farm Buildings*, pp. 39, 135-7.
[450] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p. 115.
[451] Pevsner, *An Outline*, p. 15.
[452] See Brunskill, *Traditional Farm Buildings*, pp. 34-47
[453] Morrison, pp. 279-80.
[454] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 115-8.

place, to fit perfectly into context, seems to involve details that, paradoxically, deny –
in detail and by historical association – a regionally specific mix of powerful natural
forces and the tradition of building in balanced response to them. Similarly, a form that
would be simple to construct in local materials and to maintain with traditional
techniques is replaced by one that seems more compact, more unassuming, more
humble; a humbleness seemingly defined visually as a deference to context, rather than
thought pragmatically in terms of labour, cost and longevity.

These departures from the vernacular are not introduced as evidence of
architectural oversight or error. Nor does it matter to what degree this complexity of
form was intended by the design team, or was rather the result of a compromise
between various factors including – but not limited to – company ethos, architectural
preferences, functional requirements, regional and local planning restrictions and
economic and commercial considerations.[455] For this is not a study of authorial
intention, or architectural rigour, but of how buildings that feature in claims to
contextuality take place within those contexts. What is significant, in this respect, is the
implication that such 'errors', instead of undermining the company's local identity,
might reinforce it, perhaps more effectively than would accurate reconstructions of
local barns. Taken together, the details described give extra expression to the pitched
roofs, minimizing apparent building volume while maximizing roof surface area.
Throughout most of northern Europe (and elsewhere), the intricately textured pitched
roof is the primary signifier of tradition and regional specificity, of a 'natural',
vernacular way of building that resists the orthogonal lines and smooth concealed roofs
of imported, urban architectures be they Classical or Modern.[456] By this logic, the more

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[455] All of these factors are part of the material and cultural contexts considered here and related to the
culturally defined image of rurality that I trace in this chapter: planning restrictions codify a popular
desire for decorum and stability in the built environment, generalizing local difference into acceptable
proportions and styles; economic, commercial and related programmatic influences weigh up the value
and stability of the vernacular image against other cultural expectations and culturally accepted
priorities. Together, all share authorship of the building (although not in equal measure).
[456] That the pitched roof signifies a rejection of Modern architecture is demonstrated by its use in
Venturi's Vanna Venturi House, a polemical protest against the forms and ideologies of the
'International Style': 'Its outer layer […] symbolises via a silhouette and ornament an iconic house, with
its sloping rather than flat roof [...]' Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, *Architecture as Signs and
Systems: For a Mannerist Time* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 41. In *House,
Forms and Culture* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969), Amos Rapoport notes the cultural
value of the pitched roof: 'In one study, the importance of images – i.e., symbols – for house form is
stressed, and the pitched roof is said to be symbolic of shelter while the flat roof is not, and is therefore
unacceptable on symbolic grounds. Another study of this subject shows the importance of these aspects
in the choice of house form in England, and also shows that the pitched, tile roof is a symbol of security.
It is considered, and even shown in a building-society advertisement, as an umbrella, and the houses

numerous the pitches and dominant the roofs, the more authentically local and 'of this place' the building will appear to be.[457] At the same time, the more the building appears recognizably of the land, the more it becomes symbol not only of regional, but also of national identity, of a national cultural embeddedness. 'In English, "country" is both a nation and a part of a "land";' notes Williams, '"the country" can be the whole society or its rural area.'[458] This linguistic connection resonates in the imagery of architecture and landscape, too: 'authentic' countryside is symbol of nation.

So, rather than revealing mistakes, these points of difference seem to manifest the incorporation and exaggeration of nationally and internationally recognizable signifiers of tradition and rurality alongside – but also at the expense of – others that are more regionally specific. Cultural currency – an identifiable brand – would seem here, as in the discussion of Westmorland's site landscaping, to displace local material accuracy. Indeed, the company's composite architecture extends the reach of Westmorland's symbolic language, responding not only to stereotypical regional imagery, but also to common national and international signifiers of localness and rurality. This suggests what might be termed an (inter)national vernacular, a sign of locality and rootedness that is everywhere understood.

Posterbarn: Westmorland and the 'Strip'

The implication that Westmorland's buildings may be read more convincingly as symbols of 'authentic' 'local' architecture than as authentic part of a local architectural culture suggests comparison with the roadside condition described in *Learning from Las Vegas*. On the Strip: 'Symbol dominates space. Architecture is not enough. […] The sign is more important than the architecture.' Rather than the type and arrangement of buildings, it is the 'sculptural forms or pictorial silhouettes' and striking imagery of numerous large signs 'inflected' towards the road that are seen to

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directly reflect this view. […] even children who have always lived in tall London apartment blocks draw houses in this way' (p. 134).

[457] A popular belief in the numerousness of roof pitches as a measure of tradition, domesticity and belonging is suggested by appeals for restraint in Stephen Mouton's and Susan Henderson's *Traditional Building Patterns: Design and Detail Rules of Thumb* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), a book addressed to both architects and homebuilders. Alongside images captioned 'too many gables' and 'too many hips', the text states: 'The root of nearly all traditional massing is simplicity. Go back to the buildings that are the foundation of almost any style, and you will find a simple volume, or an assembly of simple volumes' (p. 60). While I would not endorse this generalization, the stress on 'simplicity' indicates a tendency to associated the traditional with the reverse.

[458] Williams, p. 1.

define the Las Vegas streetscape and make it intelligible.[459] In order to carry meaning in such an environment, buildings are said to follow the same logic, becoming 'an architecture of bold communication rather than one of subtle expression.'[460] Significantly, *Learning from Las Vegas* associates this increased scale and intensity of symbolism with the phenomenon of car travel, with the need to communicate clear messages to fast-moving observers in sufficient time for them to be able to stop: '[the driver] relies on signs for guidance – enormous signs in vast spaces at high speeds'.[461] The Strip thus marks, the text argues, a significant development in what is termed 'the architecture of [commercial] persuasion'. In contrast to the Middle Eastern bazaar or medieval town, where 'communication works through proximity' and persuasion depends mainly on the sight, smell and touch of the products themselves, on the Strip, 'the supermarket windows contain no merchandise' for it is, instead, 'the big sign [that] leaps to connect the driver to the store'.[462]

The context of Westmorland Services seems very different. The landscape of signs described on the Strip is much more striking and dense than that experienced on any part of the UK motorway network, with its limited access points, strict planning laws, tightly regulated visual environment and predominantly rural surroundings;[463] yet, it is still the case that the driver must and is in the habit of depending on familiar, easily identifiable symbols on large signs to navigate at speed through roadscapes otherwise undifferentiated and landscapes often unfamiliar.[464] Indeed, as *Learning from Las Vegas* points out, the driver is used to trusting signs even when they seem to contradict other modes of perception: 'When the crossroads becomes a cloverleaf, one must turn right to turn left.'[465] Westmorland's buildings may be located away from the

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[459] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 13.
[460] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 9. The 'inflection' to the road has implications for the orientation of sites, as well as signs: 'The side elevation of the complex is more important, because it is seen by approaching traffic from a greater distance and for a longer time than the facade' (p. 35).
[461] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 9.
[462] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 13.
[463] See the last section of the introduction to this thesis for discussion of the control of motorway surroundings.
[464] This is evidenced in the attention to the legibility of UK road signs. See Moran, pp. 62-73, DfT, *Traffic Signs Manual*.
[465] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, *Learning From Las Vegas*, p. 9. While cloverleaf layouts are rare on the UK road network, a comparable experience occurs at the most common motorway or dual-carriageway junction type, where the driver exits to the *left* along a slipway, turns *left* again onto a roundabout, follows this clockwise until they turn off, again to the *left*, to finally go right – a disorienting experience, especially at large junctions of several roads, reliant on signs to confirm which roundabout exit to take. Similar experiences occur with such regularity that navigating such junctions may become habitual and it could be argued that, as at the crossroads described in *Learning from Las*

road – the first 'big sign' of their presence beyond the standard blue and white signs of the motorway is, as I describe in the next section, a clustering of 'picturesque' landscape features – but the occupants of the car, who may have turned off the motorway for fuel only, still have to be persuaded to stop once the main buildings come into view. While it is difficult to make sense of Tebay East's big multi-hipped roofs in terms of local materials, traditional architectural forms, or vernacular building techniques, as 'big sign' of 'Lakeland hill farm' they seem coherent: rather than the 'subtle expression' of a local building, Westmorland's architecture effects a bolder image of localness – a more striking, sculptural silhouette – to communicate, *Learning from Las Vegas* would suggest, its identity more quickly and unmistakably. In this symbolic exaggeration, the company seems far more marked by the road than its publicity acknowledges, its architecture 'inflected' in imagery as in orientation, like the signs of the Strip, towards the high-speed traveller – most likely from elsewhere, with limited first-hand knowledge of local culture and traditions – and their idea of the Lake District.

It is, however, not only the novel relation between architecture and automobile that is seen to drive the intensification of symbolism on the Strip; it is also the relations between sites, the need for each 'to keep up with the competition next door'. Through mutual efforts to be distinctive and more persuasive than neighbouring sites, 'the evolution in Las Vegas is consistently toward more and bigger symbolism'.[466] The UK motorway network might, I argue, be read as a stretched out Strip. Service areas are much further apart than the casinos of Las Vegas, but nevertheless compete with each other in the same cross-regional market, because the speed of motorway travel brings them closer together in time, while regulation prohibits the marketing of off-road alternatives in-between.[467] Westmorland's lack of reference to bank barns (and related local vernacular forms), interpreted above as part of a movement towards a different, more recognizable rural archetype – a diminutive building between lake and hill – may also, I suggest, be understood as response to the context of service areas that the company positions itself against.

Vegas, the sign no longer contradicts expectations, but merely confirms what was expected. This is, however, not the case at complex multi-level junctions found at motorway interchanges, which vary considerably in layout and often require the driver to trust signs that contradict their sense of orientation.
[466] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 106.
[467] See: *DfT Circular 01/2008*; *DfT Circular 02/2007*.

At the time of Tebay West's construction, wide, low and deep-plan were not yet the norm for UK service areas. As noted above, an expressively vertical, multi-level form, recalling airport or railway architecture, was more common and at several sites such strategies exploited uneven ground.[468] At Washington Birtley, A1(M) (1970), for example, existing level changes facilitate a sectional organisation of access and programme similar to that of the bank barn.[469] This correspondence between dominant roadside and traditional agricultural forms may be slight, but it is perhaps enough to complicate Westmorland's relation to the bank barn and the 'essence' of local place it seems to suggest: despite striking differences of scale, construction and detail, the silhouette of the most locally 'authentic' massing might, even with its pitched roof, be seen as too similar to the elevated icons of modernity prominent on existing stretches of motorway, the most conspicuous of which – Forton and Hilton Park – had opened only recently further south on the M6 *[26]*. By stressing breadth rather than height, grounding over elevation, the first building at Tebay West – a simple, low building with pitched-roof – is distanced not only from other service area buildings, but also from the urban architectures and modern infrastructures to which the forms of those buildings seem related.

Tebay East, constructed in 1993, might be seen as similarly determined, but by a context now changed. The towers and bridges of service areas further south remain dominant landmarks and the most commonly encountered form of service area on the stretch of M6 between Birmingham and the Lake District – even if, due to extensions, reorganizations and refits, their elevated restaurants are no longer as significant in their experience.[470] Yet, the southbound site (and extensions to Tebay West) differ significantly in detail from the company's first building and seem, I suggest, to

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[468] David Lawrence points to a number of reasons for this elevation of programme: the necessity of incorporating a footbridge from one side of the carriageway to the other (due to the MoT's preference for locating service areas on in-line sites away from junctions); the tightness of sites; the desire to express a distinct identity despite the ban on advertising or signage giving advance notice of the site's ownership; a towering form as symbol of modernity. See 'A Bit of Town', pp. 185-6, 267-85.

[469] At Washington Birtley (completed in 1970, near Newcastle), a three storey building on the southbound site has four different entrances, each with an angle of approach at ninety degrees to the other: a front and back entrance to the first floor, the main public level; a basement entrance for lorry drivers adjacent to the HGV parking area; and an entrance by foot bridge on the second floor. See Lawrence, *Always*, pp. 56-9.

[470] The elevated restaurants of Forton and Hilton Park are now closed for reasons of commercial viability and fire safety. Though the bridges are still in use, significant sections of the facade are now closed, restricting views of the road below, while interior design strategies and franchise arrangements, like those discussed in the previous chapter, tend to make the spaces feel more familiar and conventionally-proportioned. On modifications to these building, see Lawrence, 'A Bit of Town', pp. 261-4, 283-5.

respond to changes in prevailing approaches to service area design and architecture in general. A further intensification and de-localization of vernacular symbolism – more hips, fewer gables and lower projecting eaves – may be read, I suggest, as an effort to keep up with, indeed to keep ahead, of new competition. For the majority of service areas built in the north west (and elsewhere) in intervening years, such as Killington Lake (rebuilt 1985) and Gretna Green (1992), are less overtly 'modern' and seemingly more responsive to local architectural precedents *[27]*; while references to local materials and vernacular forms – mostly tiled pitched roofs – have become prevalent in suburban and rural roadside buildings, such as supermarkets, retail and office parks.[471] In this changed context, it would seem no longer sufficient for Westmorland's buildings to be just convincingly 'local' and 'rural'; they must be more local and more rural than all of these other low-eaved, pitched-roof sites to prove that they are not just another 'Essex barn'. As on the Strip: 'the imagery is heated up by the need to compete in the surroundings' – albeit surroundings more widely spread. An intensified lowering, chamfering, spreading and sinking of the buildings' form here offer a surer representation of the company's key selling point: 'difference'.

So, as Westmorland's buildings seem shaped by dominant cultural imagery of the place – the (inter-)national 'Christmas Calendar' ideal of the Lake District, a city-dwellers' idyll of rural life – they also appear, like the signs of Las Vegas, to be bound to the national roadside competition from which the company would hope to be positively differentiated. Seemingly formed in the image of what others – outsiders – expect the place to be and not to be, Westmorland appears, in this reading, more responsive to changing external contexts and currencies than it does expressive of a constant, local, intrinsic 'essence'. Indeed, the buildings appear to be part of an (inter-)national symbolic economy that exceeds and includes notions of place, in which places (or buildings or details) are not defined in terms of intrinsic qualities, but given value in relation to other places, (buildings and details). In a Derridean reading, this bind to otherness, an otherness that seemingly marks centre and limit, shows Westmorland's 'essence' of place as differance: differing from other places it is not, and deferring to other places that are similar.[472] The service areas' identity, and the origin in which it is

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[471] See Sam Jacobs, '2000 Years of Non Stop Nostalgia. Or How Half Timbering Made Me Whole Again', Strange Harvest, <http://strangeharvest.com/wp11/?p=215> [accessed 31 October 2011]
[472] Jacques Derrida, 'Differance', in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. by Alan Bass (Brighton: Harvester Press), pp. 1-27 (pp. 7-8).

claimed, seem not present or whole as such, but multiply differed and deferred, inscribed in and only by a chain of others. The effects of this differance of place, of placing, its 'play' or 'movement', and attempts to control it, are the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

Marking difference, communicating place: buildings without significance

How can this interrelatedness of places be reconciled with Westmorland's assertions of difference, of independence and local resistance? In the reading above, I suggested that Tebay's architecture might be comparable to that of the Strip described in *Learning from Las Vegas*, to what Venturi Scott Brown and Izenour term an 'impure architecture of communication'.[473] There are, however, differences between the two; in order to appreciate their significance, it is useful to consider how 'purity' figures in the book.

    Learning from Las Vegas is not only an analysis of the Strip; it is also a critique of mid-twentieth century architectural theory and practice.[474] When roadside architecture is branded 'symbol in space, rather than form in space', it is positioned, polemically, as antithesis of 'orthodox Modern architecture' and its claims to achieve pure coincidence of form, function and meaning.[475] 'Ugly and ordinary' Strip buildings

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[473] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 18.

[474] The difficultly in placing *Learning from Las Vegas* in relation to notions of modernity and incipient postmodernities is summarised in Aron Vinegar and Michael J. Golec, 'Introduction: Instruction as Provocation' in *Relearning from Las Vegas*, ed. by Aron Vinegar and Michael J. Golec (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), pp. 1-4. Vinegar and Golec's essay emphasises 'the rich sense of ambivalence' in *Learning from Las Vegas*, which not only makes it resistant to such categorization, but is key to understanding its role in '[making …] divisions between modernism and postmodernism possible in the first place.' As *Learning from Las Vegas* exceeds the orthodoxy of modernity, it does not '[deliver] an uncomplicated codification or ideology of postmodernism […]' (p. 2). Rather, it is part of 'a turning away that is still tethered to the position that is being turned away from.' (p. 3). Passages of *Learning from Las Vegas* that describe the Strip through models of architectural history or terminology of Modern composition (e.g. pp. 13, 52-53 and 72), are, in such a reading, not merely playful, but a process of integration within the existing canon. Indeed, the text seems to acknowledge a position at once inside and outside of modernity: the critique of a generalized 'Modern architecture' is in places qualified to 'orthodox' (p. 3) 'present-day' (p. 53) or 'current' (p. 162). Modern architecture and its failings are often discussed in the past tense, allowing the possibility for a different, realigned modernity to be emergent. This implication of continuity is consistent with the suggestion below of an enduring functionalist logic.

[475] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 13. The direct challenge to Modern architecture, reiterated and elaborated throughout the text, is concisely stated in opening sections, pp. 3-9. 'Architects are out of the habit of looking non-judgementally at the environment, because orthodox Modern architecture is progressive, if not revolutionary, utopian and puristic; it is dissatisfied with *existing* conditions' (p. 3). What is understood in *Learning from Las Vegas* as 'orthodox Modern' is paraphrased as follows: 'meaning was to be communicated, not through allusion to previously known forms, but through the

– the explicitly signed – are counterposed with 'heroic and original' modern architecture – the supposedly unsigned – to draw parallels between the two, but also to redefine and stress distinctions.[476]

On the one hand, *Learning from Las Vegas* argues that the functional purity attributed to modern architecture is, and can only ever be, illusory. For even the most seemingly abstract or 'essential' of 'functional' forms are, the authors demonstrate, not only symbolic, but related to existing symbolic languages – in the case of modern architecture, to imagery of 'Cubist-industrialist-process'.[477] Irrespective of claims to rationality, autonomy or universality, all architecture is, the text argues, necessarily referential in production as experience, bound up with and inseparable from a context of wider cultural – not just architectural – meanings. Citing Alan Colquhoun, *Learning from Las Vegas* affirms architecture to be 'part of a "system of communications within society"'.[478] Here the book seems to draw on a notion of language similar to that set

inherent, physiognomic characteristics of form. The creation of architectural form was to be a logical process, free from images of past experience, determined solely by program and structure, with an occasional assist […] from intuition.' (p. 8)

[476] 'Heroic and original' and 'ugly and ordinary' are introduced on pp. 90-93 of *Learning From Las Vegas*, through comparison of Paul Rudolph's Crawford Manor with Guild House, designed by the authors (in association with Cope and Lippincott). The paired terms draw on the categorization on preceding pages of roadside buildings as, respectively, 'ducks' and 'decorated sheds' (which I discuss in more detail later in this section): 'The duck is the special building that *is* a symbol; the decorated shed is the conventional shelter that *applies* symbols.' (p. 87). Yet the two pairs are not synonyms, and their difference indicates more than a change in context from Strip to contemporary practice: whereas both 'duck' and 'decorated shed' are seen to openly use ordinary, easily-recognizable imagery, this distinguishes 'ugly and ordinary' from 'heroic and original'. I discuss this difference in source of symbolism and means of communication in terms of what I see as an implicit positing of purity of communication at the roadside.

[477] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 137. See also, pp. 3, 114-5, 131-139 and 162-3. 'Early Modern architects appropriated an existing and conventional industrial vocabulary without much adaptation. Le Corbusier loved grain elevators and steamships; the Bauhaus looked like a factory; Mies refined the details of American steel factories for concrete buildings. Modern architects work through analogy, symbol, and image – although they have gone to lengths to disclaim almost all determinants of their forms except structural necessity and the program.' (p. 3). Functionalism is seen as a myth that legitimates ornament of a different scale: 'The progressive, technological, vernacular, process-oriented, superficially socially concerned, heroic and original content of Modern architecture […] did not flow inevitably from the solving of functional problems, but arose from Modern architects' unexplicated iconographic preferences and was manifest through a language – several languages – of form […]. When Modern architects righteously abandoned ornament on buildings, they unconsciously designed buildings that *were* ornament.' (pp. 162-3). As non-structural ornamental details are seemingly eliminated from building elements, these elements become themselves ornamental, sculpted to compose a three-dimensional plastic form.

[478] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 131. The reliance on culture is made more strongly in reference to Ernst Gombrich's 'Meditations on a Hobby Horse'. The authors' own statements are, however, more equivocal on the location of meaning, tending, as on p. 87, to place emphasis more on similarities in pre-linguistic personal experience and common physical and psychological make-up than on cultural conventions or linguistic structures: 'We [assert …] that architecture depends in its perception and creation on past experience and emotional association […]' This implicit location of meaning in the individual's empirical engagement with the world seems related to the impression, at some points in the

out in Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, commonly cited in structuralist and post-structuralist texts contemporary with *Learning from Las Vegas*: 'Language is not a function of the speaker; it is a [social] product that is passively assimilated by the individual […] who can never create nor modify it by himself'.[479] It follows that buildings, like all things, are never sensed entirely afresh, but always in terms of the already encountered, and, like meanings in any language, commonly understood only to the extent that those terms of reference are already shared. Thus, for Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, the Strip's 'architecture of bold communication' is not an entirely new phenomenon, but rather contemporary 'example par excellence' of an irreducible impurity of architecture, a cultural bind common to buildings of all styles and eras.[480] The distinction between high modern and commercial roadside architecture is seemingly dissolved.

The last section's reading of Tebay Services' sites and external forms would seem to pose a similar challenge to the possibility of architectural purity – in this case a natural purity that predates and endures a state of cultural disjunction rather than a rational humanist purity that would transcend it. Allusions to integrity and independence seem, as in *Learning from Las Vegas*'s reading of modern architecture, to be contradicted by evidence of interrelatedness and contingency. In spite of company claims linking architecture and 'essence', Westmorland's buildings likewise show that there is no possibility of building without representation, no materialization of 'essence' unmediated by culture, no pure (language of) architecture (or place) independent of all others.

Such an impossibility of escaping cultural context, of any thought or act autonomous of language and history, is one possible reading of the assertion '*there is nothing outside of the text*' in Derrida's *Of Grammatology*,[481] where 'text' is interpreted in the broad sense set out in the 'Afterword' to *Limited Inc.*:

> The concept of text I propose is limited neither to the graphic, nor to the book, nor even to discourse, and even less to the semantic, representational, symbolic,

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text, that meaning are fixed and, like the things on which they were modelled, may be mastered – as I explore further below. Beyond this ambivalence, it is nevertheless made clear that certain associations between form and meaning are shared, that these are inseparable from the conception and perception of architecture, and thus that architecture never functions autonomously.
[479] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* [1919], trans. by Wade Baskin (London: Fontana, 1974), p. 14.
[480] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 3. See also pp. 104-15.
[481] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 158 (italics original). The French '*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*' might also be translated '*there is no outside-text*'.

ideal, or ideological sphere. What I call 'text' implies all the structures called 'real', 'economic', 'historical', socio-institutional, in short: all possible referents.[482]

Indeed, the same passage offers a reformulation 'which says exactly the same thing': 'there is nothing outside context', a context said to be 'unlimited'.[483] Thus at Westmorland's buildings, as in *Learning from Las Vegas*, engagement with culture, with meanings and structures that are already there, seems not only inevitable, the terms and extents of that engagement appear beyond the absolute control of architect, builder or owner. They are dependent, rather, on how and with whom the object communicates. Context cannot be limited. The culture of the road cannot be excluded. Architecture is cultural sign as much as it is 'functional', 'natural' or 'authentic' structure. Westmorland's claim to absolute difference – to be 'entirely of this place' – would then seem, architecturally at least, to be just as contestable as those of the modern buildings in *Learning from Las Vegas*.

It is important to note that what is here considered the 'impurity' of cultural representation does not necessarily contradict Westmorland's stated position in the same way as it does that of 1960s modern architecture. The comparison risks taking the company's reference to the 'essence of a Lakeland hill farm' too literally to indicate a specifically architectural essentialism, supposedly sought (and mislaid) in the internal logic, formal consistency or constructional rigour of a particular building type; yet the evidence for such an interpretation is inconclusive. Indeed, it is important not to overlook differences in tactics of resistance. As the company purports to reject the contemporary conditions of the roadside, it nevertheless seems to resonate with travellers expecting recognizable brands. The local 'essence' it confidently claims to 'capture' does not seem to be purely material or even natural, but openly cultural and popular, too: 'of the Cumbrian lakes and hills', but also 'of the hospitable folk who live in them'. How might this notion of 'essence' then be understood and what is the inessential that it purports to strip away? *Learning from Las Vegas*'s notion of symbolism in architecture offers another reading.

As so far described, *Learning from Las Vegas* would appear to reject all possibility of purity. On the other hand, while all architectures may be, in modern terms, 'impure', the book makes clear that modern and roadside impurities are not the

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[482] Derrida, *Limited Inc.*, p 148.
[483] Derrida, *Limited Inc.*, p 136.

same; indeed, some passages seem to restore for the latter – and for 'ugly and ordinary' architecture in general – a notion of purity located in their authoritative use of seemingly stable signs.

'I AM A MONUMENT': from functionalist form to functional signs

How does this other purity emerge? While engagement with 'existing conditions' is taken to be inevitable, differences in the *manner* of this engagement remain significant in *Learning from Las Vegas*. In contrast to the symbolism of modern architecture – 'implicit', 'abstract', 'empty', 'exclusive' and 'didactic' – that of roadside buildings is 'explicit', 'ordinary', 'rich', 'inclusive', and 'everyday'.[484] Las Vegas signs are said to 'persuade and inform',[485] to 'communicat[e] a complexity of meanings through hundreds of associations in few seconds from far away'.[486] Instead of subtle aesthetic allusions for architectural elites, the Strip communicates bold commonplace messages comprehensible to all. The assertion, here, is that roadside architecture is more effective as symbol (as well as space).

This preference for the roadside is, the text claims, not 'moralistic', not concerned with 'a lack of correspondence between substance and image *per se*': 'We criticise [modern architecture] not for "dishonesty", but for irrelevance today.'[487] Yet in this charge there remains a clear political and ethical value judgement of what is 'appropriate' within existing economic and socio-cultural conditions, an argument that comes back to 'correspondence':

> This is not the time and ours is not the environment for heroic communication through pure architecture. Each medium has its day, and the rhetorical environmental statements of our time […] will come from media more purely symbolic […]. The iconography and mixed media of roadside commercial architecture will point the way, if we will look.
>
> Housing for the elderly on the Oak Street Connector, if it had to be a monument, would have been more economical, socially responsible and amenable as a conventional apartment building […] with a big sign on top blinking I AM A MONUMENT. Decoration is cheaper.[488]

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[484] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, pp. 3, 52-53, 100-103.
[485] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 52.
[486] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 13.
[487] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 101.
[488] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 130-1. See also, p. 155: 'When there is little money to spend on architecture [… s]ources for modest buildings and images with social purpose will come, not from the industrial past, but from the everyday city around us.' On p. 161, this economy of means is linked to

A utilitarian and scientific logic, similar, I suggest, to that critiqued as illusory in modern architecture's structural and programmatic functionalism, is here applied to architectural symbolism and to communication in general. Established cultural conventions exceeding the discourse of architecture are seen to communicate efficiently – 'purely' – in a way that spatial, structural and material preoccupations internal to it do not.[489] So, as the text finds the notion of a pure, inherently meaningful architectural object to be untenable, it seems to find in the language and imagery of popular culture the possibility of pure communication, of inherently meaningful signs, words, symbols, styles and details. Paralleling the repudiation of pure forms outside existing culture, there is the implicit reassertion of pure forms within that culture: a building will be seen as a monument just because a sign spells it out.

Bound up with this concern for intelligibility is the position and agency of the architect, owner or occupier, and, in particular, their power over meaning. Unlike high modern architecture, which, in an effort to escape existing symbols, ends up 'connoting' popular meanings contradictory to those intended, Strip buildings are seen to 'denote' the set of 'more or less concrete' meanings they were designed to convey.[490] This is, as I explain further later in this section, not to suggest that the text

economy of communication: 'Meeting the architectural implications and the critical social issues of our era will require that we drop our involuted, architectural expressionism and […] find formal languages suited to our times. […] To find our symbolism, we must go to the suburban edges of the existing city that […] represent the aspirations of almost all Americans, including most low-income urban dwellers and most of the silent white majority.' The focus here has moved to suburban architecture (specifically of Levittown), but the argument is regularly interrelated with the preceding analysis of the Strip and the critique of Modern architecture.

[489] It is important to note that the argument in favour of Strip architecture may be read in terms of other theoretical and disciplinary debates. In particular, the logic of functional communication traced here is interwoven with an aesthetic argument that in architecture, as in pop art, there is greater richness of meaning in multiple associations, in ambiguity and juxtaposition, than in singularity and purity – in a proliferation of meanings rather than their concentration: 'Allusion and comment, on the past or present or on our great commonplaces or old cliches, and the inclusion of the everyday in the environment, sacred and profane – these are what is lacking in present-day Modern architecture.' (p. 53). By contrast, it is argued, an approach that is 'symbolically and functionally conventional […] promotes an architecture of meaning, broader and richer if less dramatic than the architecture of expression.' (p. 129) Even here, however, I argue that there are traces of a functionalist argument, a judgement based on impact, on outcome, on whether the right message, in all its complexity, reaches its intended audience. A tension between two interrelated tendencies, one to celebrate and the other to codify complexity, to open and fix meanings, is described by Ritu Bhatt (with reference to the growing interest in building types within architectural discourse at the time): *Learning from Las Vegas* reveals an '[…] unresolved ambiguity between a belief in underlying architectural typologies and associations that are constant (that repeat themselves from the past) and the […] search for the Strip's dynamic aesthetic that is open to infinite interpretations.' Ritu Bhatt, 'Aesthetic or Anaesthetic: A Nelson Goodman Reading of the Las Vegas Strip', in *Relearning from Las Vegas*, pp. 19-30 (p. 26).

[490] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 129: 'Heroic and original (H&O) architecture derives dramatic expression from the cognitive meanings of its "original" elements: It gives off abstract meanings – or rather expressions – recognisable in the physiognomic character of the architectural elements. Ugly and

denies ambiguity to symbols, but that it in several places implies that their meanings, however multiple and contradictory, may be accurately decoded, predicted and controlled.[491] The roadside of *Learning from Las Vegas* seems to show how an existing symbolic language, though it cannot exclusively be owned, may be mastered: a sovereignty within, rather than outside culture, gained by submission to it. By embracing symbolism to such an extreme – and so purging architecture of all pretensions to cultural exteriority – the Strip appears, in the authors' analysis, to constitute a limit case of so-called architectural impurity in which a different purity is achieved, a purity of symbol rather than matter or space, a purity that restores at the level of the sign the 'correspondence between substance and image' seen as lacking in expressive structures of modern architecture. So, *Learning from Las Vegas* does not just celebrate impurity; by figuring the Strip as mirror of modernity – inverse and yet the same – it renders 'impurity' pure. In this way, the text reverses the hierarchies instilled by Modern architecture – of matter and culture, inside and outside – without abandoning fully its functionalist principles – and, significantly, its claims to universality and authority.

Is this a more convincing way to locate Westmorland's 'essence of a Lakeland hill farm'?: an assemblage of symbols associated with desired meanings and experiences, a pure sign of a local building from which all inefficient or ambiguous details have been removed or substituted, pure in communication rather than materialization, all sign, no substance? The apparent reconfiguring of site and buildings according to popular images of place might suggest that Westmorland's 'essence' – and its apparently successful communication – depends on just such a conformity with dominant cultural imagery at the expense of the constructional or formal consistency of the architectural object, or of the specific architectural language of place. To the contrary, however, the three-dimensional materiality of Westmorland's 'signs' and the structural logic of much of its 'symbolism' show that, if Tebay Services are all sign, they are all substance, too.

Read through *Learning from Las Vegas*, Westmorland's buildings seem to express a material functionalism comparable to that claimed by so-called 'Modern'

Ordinary (U&O) architecture, on the other hand, includes denotive meanings as well, derived from its familiar elements; that is, it suggests more or less concrete meanings via association and past experience.' See also the discussion of denotation and connotation in architecture, pp. 100-1.

[491] This is made most explicit in the discussion of 'High-Design Architecture', Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, pp. 161-2.

architecture, but one that is communicated with the effectiveness attributed to the 'Strip'. The predominance of unfinished local or reused materials – rough stones, thick slates, deep timber trusses – and ostensibly simple, rational forms and constructions – 'dry' walls, pitched roofs, projecting eaves – alludes convincingly to architectural integrity, specificity, primitivity, and necessity, to an intuitive, intrinsic process of local production, free of representation, free of external influence. Every element is seemingly functional, every surface a natural manifestation of material depth. Yet this material and constructional purity – 'architectural', in the modern terminology traced above – lies explicitly within, rather than external to, existing, nationally recognizable cultural forms and symbols. Westmorland's 'local' vernacular, like the 'commercial vernacular' of *Learning from Las Vegas* seems to be ordinary and familiar to diverse visitors, to epitomize a nationally popular ideal of what the most 'local' and 'functional' of buildings would look like. It reproduces and intensifies known forms and details in such a way that they not only retain their existing associations ('integrity', 'specificity', 'primitivity', and 'necessity'), but seem, together, to become bolder and broader in appeal. This gathering of local materials into more identifiable – but ostensibly no less 'traditional', materially 'authentic' – form seems, like the collages of the Strip, to communicate its stated identity more effectively, to strengthen its hand in the roadside game of persuasion. Unlike the Modern or Strip buildings critiqued in *Learning from Las Vegas*, Tebay East and West do not claim significance; they do, however, harness the force of the signifier: of 'localness', of 'natural essence', of 'constructional integrity' and therefore of that which apparently escapes signification.

Sign and structure, 'duck' and 'shed'

In Westmorland's buildings, I have suggested, all elements seem recognizably 'local', 'essential' and 'authentic', even those gathered from elsewhere. There appear to be no ornaments, no signs; the buildings seem inherently meaningful and therefore outside the roadside realm of 'commercial persuasion'. This illusion depends not only on the apparent 'integrity' and 'localness' of gathered details; its effectiveness in this particular context depends on the relation between the shed and the barn, on how the

same form – understood here as columned structure, simply clad[492] – is seen as typical of commercial roadside as well as traditional rural landscapes. Whether agricultural or industrial, the shed is non-sign.

Significant here is how *Learning from Las Vegas* remains rooted in a wider discourse of rational, self-evident functionalism, in an assumption of a logical link between form and purpose, and not only in its discussion of signs. In its challenge to modern architecture, the text's attack is not on functionalism as such, but the flawed rationale of symbolic exclusion by which it is pursued; rather than too functional, the modern buildings appear, as symbols but also as structures, not functional enough. What the authors identify as a conflation of functionalist rhetoric with a particular aesthetic is problematic because '*unacknowledged*'. The distortion of rational structure, whether conscious or not, appears as a consequence of symbolic repression.[493] According to *Learning from Las Vegas*, modern architecture is not only deceptive, it is also inefficient. So, while the book asserts in its reading of modern examples that all buildings are symbolic even when seemingly unadorned, its argument hinges, even here and especially in its analysis of the Strip, on an assumption that symbolism might be distinguished from structure, that one is marked as an excessiveness of, or to, the other and that there could be no logical overlap.

It follows – in an inversion that, I suggest, underlies the book's argument – that, by making symbolism explicit, integral yet absolutely separate to the building, a truly functional structure may be achieved. The possibility of the unsigned structure is reinstated as it is denied. This logic of separation seems to work both ways: in the roadside condition traced above, purity in meaning seems to coincide with purity in (lack of material) purpose. In this way, the greater the distinction between structure and sign, the more each may be true to their different roles, one as simple shelter, the other as cultural communicator, one as apartment block, the other as 'I AM A MONUMENT'. Thus, the reframed notion of functionalism advanced in *Learning*

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[492] See OED: 'shed, *n.2*: 1. a. A slight structure built for shelter or storage, or for use as a workshop, either attached as a lean-to to a permanent building or separate; often with open front or sides. […] 1. b. A similar structure, but large and strongly built; often consisting of a roof supported on columns. […] 2. a. *poet*. A hut, cottage, poor dwelling. 2. b. *gen*. A structure that affords shelter or covering; the hiding-place, lair or nest of an animal. 3. A covering; cf. SHADE *n.* 11 […].' Here, I refer principally to entry 1.b, but also the threads of simplicity and of covering (shade is also referenced as etymological source) running through the definitions.
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/177741?rskey=cbHQIF&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid> [Accessed, 10 June 2011].
[493] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, pp. 130-1.

from Las Vegas depends on embracing an inseparable connection to culture, on renouncing architectural autonomy, and at the same time effecting an absolute division within each building, between the parts that are cultural and those that are not.

This ideal of pure distinction within the fabric of the building is seemingly realized in the 'decorated shed', the book's definitive roadside building type and apotheosis of functionalism, 'where systems of space and structure are directly at the service of program, and ornament is applied independent of them'.[494] In this exemplary condition, signs are nothing more than surface additions to a structure that is their antithesis: constructionally efficient, symbolically expressionless. If the 'decorated shed' is a 'conventional shelter that *applies* symbols', the shed without symbols would seem to be the exception to the rule that 'buildings are also signs'.[495] The 'decorated shed' is contrasted with the 'duck' building (and 'dead ducks' of modern architecture), so named 'in honour of the duck-shaped drive-in, "The Long Island duckling"'. In this 'building-becoming-sculpture', an inhabited version of the freestanding sign, 'space, structure, and program are submerged and distorted by an overall symbolic form.'[496] Yet, even this, especially in its roadside form, seems to reinforce the principle that signs are always identifiable and structures mute: not only is the 'duck' identified by its divergence from common structural types, by a form that is not shed-like; the substance, the material and construction, that make up the symbolic form appear, like the structure of the decorated shed, to remain hidden and irrelevant to a meaning derived from form and surface finish alone. In this way, the text affirms an absolute separation, as material as it is conceptual, between an outer symbolism, a communicable surface, that is non-structural, and an inner structure, an invisible depth, that is meaningless: structure is where symbol is not.

Signs in the shed: hidden flashing, dry walls

This characterization of the roadside is, I suggest, far from unique to the text. Here I read Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour's theorizing of Las Vegas as part of a wider drawing of Strip urbanism within established discourses and, in particular, within a broadly modernist framework of thought still dominant in architecture and in culture

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[494] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 87.
[495] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 52, 87.
[496] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 87.

more generally. The absolute division between building and sign represented by the 'decorated shed', radical then in its riposte to established architectural theory, has become commonplace assumption about roadside buildings, seemingly echoed in the popular term 'big box', with its connotations of utility, uniformity, ubiquity and insignificance: a generic, functional container identified by its label alone.[497] In his cultural history of roads, Joe Moran describes the unnoticed omnipresence of the 'big shed':

> Look out of the car window: what do you see? Big sheds. […] For most of their history, they have been left off maps, ignored by the general public, invisible in their ubiquity.[498]

Indeed, it is this latent assumption of meaninglessness, widely-shared by motorway users as much as architects, affording the shed structure invisibility and neutrality beneath signs, that seemingly allows other recent service area buildings and their operators, like those discussed in the last chapter, to dematerialize behind brands and into natural surroundings, to be an absent host. At Westmorland, the illusion appears reversed, and it is the sign that disappears unseen into the structure; compared to the explicit signs on sheds elsewhere, the undecorated barns of Tebay East and West appear mute. In the discussion of *Learning from Las Vegas* above, there is no intention to belittle the critical achievement of the work in its attack on institutionalized modernist 'aura'.[499] However, in order to be able to assess the way motorway service areas are meaningful today, it is important to move beyond the functionalist distinction

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[497] See, for example, Julia Christensen, *Big Box Reuse* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), which defines such structures as 'the large, freestanding, warehouse-like buildings that have become prominent in the built landscape since the mid-twentieth century' and goes on to note as common features 'their directly corporate associations and aesthetically bland hulk'. Significantly, the introduction goes on to suggest that, though the physical structures endure changes in use, 'the buildings exude an ephemeral quality, imparted by the frequency with which corporations vacate the structures'. This implies that the big box is seemingly reborn with each new tenant and ceases to exist when they leave: the signs make the building. So, while it may be, as Christensen points out, that 'the deadweight of an empty big box building does not simply go away', this description also suggests that it would fade from view, become part of a neutral background when unsigned. (pp. 1-2). See also 'big box' in OED: 'Chiefly *N. Amer.* A large chain store resembling a warehouse, usually located near a major road in a suburban or rural area, and often selling goods at relatively low prices.' In this definition, 'big box' refers to the type of store as well as the building, but again this is distinguished by its ubiquity as 'chain' and by its 'low prices' for what are presumably generic goods.

[498] Moran, pp. 147-52 (p. 148). See also, Martin Pawley, 'Where the Big Sheds Are' and 'Stansted and the Triumph of Big Sheds', in *The Strange Death of Architectural Criticism: Martin Pawley, Collected Writings*, ed. by David Jenkins (London: Black Dog, 2007), pp. 226, 260-1.

[499] See Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of the Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (New York: Random House, 2002).

that facilitated *Learning from Las Vegas*'s criticism at the time, and to look for meaning where the sign is hiding in the shed.

It is important, then, to look more closely at where lines are drawn between sign and structure in the built language of the service area. As discussed above, Tebay East and West differentiate clearly between road and building and a similar distinction between permanent and temporary, structure and sign is apparent in the buildings themselves. An evident detachment of surface signage and absence of applied finishes allows more substantial symbolic elements, in their ostensible material solidity, natural texture and constructional integration, to be taken as nothing but structure. At Tebay East, for example, the few signs seem to be lightweight, impermanent and informal compared to those at other service areas: free-standing, handwritten blackboards advertise menus; images that market the region are framed as prints; the only external branding – a recent addition – is the company logo printed on the glass of the entrance gable, seemingly floating, unattached, between timbers. Through much of the buildings, surface fittings seem just as clearly separate from structure: beam mounted spot- and emergency lights in dining and entrance areas are the only additions to exposed trusses and purlins.

By contrast, elements that symbolize locality and rurality are expressively (and in many cases functionally) part of the construction, effecting a coincidence of structure and symbol, of traditional and contemporary, in enough places, especially where elements are first encountered or likely to be considered at length, to disguise one as the other throughout. Details that stress the apparent purity of construction help to confer purposefulness on the whole, and this is particularly the case at junctions, where material depth might be unmasked as mere surface addition, as imperfectly functional sign.

On the roof, for example, a seemingly authentic system of staggering and layering rectangular slates must be broken sharply at every hip and valley junction – those un-lappable angles avoided in older local farm buildings. It is along these lines that the logic of imported form meets that of local material, and where the contradiction between the two threatens to become manifest. Here, the appearance, in metal flashing, of another, more industrialized layer of weatherproofing risks undermining the impression of 'primitive' simplicity, of pure functionality, of signlessness: a technical supplement that would betray a symbolic supplement. The two service areas show very different responses to this telling junction. On the several

extensions to Tebay West, wide strips of hip flashing stand out boldly and brightly from the slates they overlap. To some extent, this clear difference seemingly marks the metal weatherproofing as secondary – a more recent retrofit that, like the detached fittings described within Tebay East, implicitly preserves the simplicity and autonomy of the original structure. Compared to reconstituted stone tiles, commonly used for slate hips on contemporary roofs and employed for the ridges of both service area buildings, the use of metal flashing on the hips at Tebay West avoids, at these more visible junctions, solutions traditionally associated with clay-tiled roofs. For to show that slates may be 'artificially' formed is to diminish the material's apparent authenticity and primitivity. Indeed, it is to dissolve its distinctive, naturally strong, un-reproducible mineral structure into the malleable substance of clay, which, seemingly lacking essential form or inherent structure, always bears a clear mark of manufacture.[500]

Yet this impression of constructional 'authenticity' is not without ambiguity. As flashing maintains the specificity of slate as 'natural' material, it also effects an abrupt separation between roof planes. Emphasizing the join, it weakens the continuity of the roof. The lines of flashing seem to be all that binds together what might be a series of decorative panels. Though this has long been a typical detail for slate roofs across Britain, it is, as Brunskill notes, absent on earlier, simpler roofs – such as those common in the Lake District – where hips or valleys are avoided and the ridge is negotiated by interlocking 'wrestler slates'.[501] In Hermann Muthesisus's influential 1905 account of *The English House*, he alights on material inconsistency as a key reason why 'the English slate roof cannot stand comparison with the tiled roof': 'the metal strips used for the ridge, hips and valleys introduce[e] an alien element that destroys the sense of uniformity.'[502] The mixing of found and formed materials that compromises the image of 'natural', 'authentic' shelter, also breaks the unity favoured by Muthesius *[20]*.

Tebay East, by comparison, seems, more successfully, to satisfy notions of 'primitive', 'functional' simplicity. Here, there is no flashing visible on the hips; nor are there seemingly any other 'unnatural' additions. The contradiction of form and

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[500] On associations of stone, see David Dernie, *New Stone Architecture*, (London: Lawrence King, 2003), pp. 8-35.

[501] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 113-5.

[502] Hermann Muthesius's *The English House*, ed. by Dennis Sharp, 3 vols (London: Frances Lincoln, 2007), II: Layout and Construction, p. 204.

material is ostensibly concealed in an absence of detail: the slate surface appears to continue seamlessly from one plane of the complex roof form to another. Closer inspection reveals continuous narrow gaps following the lines of hips and valleys. On the one hand, these lacunae defy the layered logic of traditional slate: to be weatherproof, they still depend on flashing, which is here, for the most part, concealed beneath; and the oblique cutting of slates introduces lines of 'unnatural' precision. On the other, these joins are easily overlooked. Across the rest of the roof, there is close adherence to a traditional detail that expressively accommodates natural irregularity in a seemingly efficient manner: stones of varying sizes are laid uncut in courses that diminish from eaves to ridge.[503] The roof seems effectively to repress the necessity of a contemporary, technical supplement.[504] Indeed, the tight abutting of slates, particularly at the more numerous hips, means that, far from undermining the materials' functionality, the multi-faceted roof form tends to give the surfaces a greater solidity and three-dimensionality, allowing them to wrap around corners, to embrace the roof, giving it a monolithic quality that traditional gable ends undermine. At Tebay East, the slate roof is seemingly made even more functional, more continuous, more solid *[28]*.

By repressing technical supplements, Westmorland's walls, too, seem to become stronger signifiers of pure construction. Again, Tebay East offers a more extreme example than Tebay West. The stone used is the 'light grey Carboniferous limestone' that Alec Clifton-Taylor identifies as the most local to Tebay, and the most extensive of 'three kinds of stone, and three only' that predominate in the 'decidedly "grey" county' of Westmorland:[505]

> This [limestone] covers the whole of the NE portion of the county […] Ravenstonedale, a grey village in a leafy hollow [ten kilometres east of Tebay Services], is typical. This stone could be used where some degree of dressing was required, as for quoins and lintels; but most walls are of rubblestone and constructed of rather small pieces – sturdy walls with a good deal of mortar.[506]

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[503] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 113-5. Curiously, Hermann Muthesius's *The English House*, II: Layout and Construction, ed. by Dennis Sharp, 3 vols (London: Frances Lincoln, 2007), first published *Das englishe Haus* (Berlin: Wasmuth, 1904), this detail is said to be purely aesthetic: 'In covering the roof, the tiles are graded according to size for appearance' sake, starting at the eaves and working towards the ridge.' (p. 204).

[504] In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida introduces, through the work of Rousseau, 'the supplement' as part of the same chain as differance, *pharmakon*, and 'writing', marking an irreducible impurity. See pp. 153-9.

[505] Clifton-Taylor, 'Building Materials', pp. 48-50.

[506] Clifton-Taylor, p. 50.

Fitting this description, the walls of Tebay East are, to quote Susan Dawson's review of the building, 'roughly coursed'.[507] Larger stones, dressed approximately square, are concentrated around openings and at corners as quoins; everywhere else, stones of irregular shape and size are interlocked in tight formation, apparently arranged according to best fit alone.

Yet, the walls of Tebay East reveal no 'good deal of mortar'. Clifton-Taylor's description of regional walling techniques indicates why this may be the case:

> Nowhere in England, perhaps, can dry walling, walls, that is, in which the stones are laid without mortar, be seen to better advantage. This method of construction is normal in Cumberland and Westmorland for boundary walls, but also widely used for barns, as also for some of the humbler cottages; it was, and indeed still is, a traditional skill. Every wall is a complicated jigsaw of stones of the most divergent shapes, sizes, and maybe colours too. On the older walls it is not unusual to see large stones projecting at intervals from the plane surface; these are what the builders call 'throughs' – stones large enough to extend through the thickness of the wall, helping to give it strength.[508]

The most local of stones is seemingly given the most 'traditional' construction technique. There are even several courses of 'throughs' clearly visible in the walls of Tebay East. Together with the large size of some stones, the recessing of openings and the stone columns visible in the round to the front and on the south side of the building, the cantilevering 'throughs' suggest that the walls are stone all the way through to the plaster within. Not only does the building conceal the layered construction that is necessary to meet contemporary building regulation standards; it seemingly proves in the deep gaps between stones that, except for the internal finish, there are no other materials involved. Tall, narrow windows – consistent with those common to barns across the region[509] – obey the structural limitations of what appear to be stone lintels. The walls of Tebay East seem to embody an order and a structure emergent from the 'natural' qualities of the material and the skill of the craftsman, rather than rational or technological determination. As on the roof, all elements are seemingly solid, found, unfinished and un-manufacturable. Unlike Tebay West – where the mix of regional stones is more varied, there is plenty of mortar and no 'throughs' – this 'humbler' building is thus distinguished from those common to the well-mortared villages cited by Clifton-Taylor, the majority of which, in their current form, date from the late

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[507] Dawson, 'Motorway Services with a Touch of Wordsworth'.
[508] Clifton-Taylor, p. 47.
[509] See Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p. 85.

eighteenth century onwards, when lime mortar became more generally available.[510] 'Dry' construction makes Tebay East, the later building, seem older, more 'natural', 'authentic' and 'traditional' than Tebay West – and, indeed, from local towns.

This 'authenticity' is, of course, an elaborate deception. The walls are not constructed dry, but with heavily recessed pointing; the 'throughs', which fortify the apparent integrity and depth of the walls, are merely a surface detail with no structural role. The wall is not self-supporting, but tied back to another layer of structure. While this might be suspected by someone with experience of contemporary construction, the fact is skilfully concealed from most visitors: the wet, mortar supplement is repressed – or recessed. But it is not only in this contemporary form that the 'dry' stone wall suggests an ambiguous relation between structure and sign. Contradicting the certainty of Clifton-Taylor, Brunskill casts doubt on the claim that dry stone walls were ever used for barns or 'humbler cottages':

> There developed a technique in the later nineteenth century of providing a mortar strip set back from the outer face of the wall to preserve an illusion of dry walling. However, it is hard to decide to what extent dry walling is an ancient technique in building houses and other structures in the Lake Counties, notwithstanding its universal use in field walls, and to what extent the older examples result from the loss of clay or earthen bedding material.[511]

The combination of most local stone and most traditional walling technique is less 'authentic' than it appears. Rather, this constructional hyperbole might merely reproduce what was already an imitation, a sign of 'authenticity': this aspect of Westmorland's 'essence' may be a Victorian illusion, a fantasy of pure construction that was never 'traditionally' practised in this way or at this scale. In the history of 'dry' stone walling, this seemingly most 'authentic', 'natural' and 'pure' of constructions, the boundary between structure and sign is elusive, the two intertwined. The 'dry' stone wall is both tradition and artifice.

An ambiguity of structure and sign is even more apparent inside the buildings. In Tebay East, for example, heavy exposed timber trusses, in a convincingly traditional king-post arrangement, seem to support the roof in both the entrance hall at the front and the dining area at the back, setting up a geometry that asserts a single continuous roof structure through the building *[29]*. Yet, in the large servery that separates the two spaces, this structural integrity is contradicted: a low ceiling, beneath notional tie beam

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[510] See Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p. 110.
[511] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p. 112.

level, is breached by a vast, canvas-lined conical void that diminishes towards a central roof light. The timber trusses are here clearly missing, their absence dramatically unveiled, but no alternative support is visible. Does the traditional structure distort to accommodate the contemporary feature?; or does this localized challenge to the roof's integrity mean that the whole heavy edifice is apparently 'fake', or at least that large parts of it are elsewhere structurally unnecessary and thus entirely symbolic? As 'old' disguises 'new', as 'new' disguises 'old', the buildings' contradictory features are too interwoven to identify with any consistency what is structure and what is ornament.

Embedding signs, writing place

The distinction between sign and structure, traced in *Learning from Las Vegas*, but common in architectural discourse and beyond, cannot account for the ambiguities described at Westmorland, for roofs and walls that seem to be nothing more than 'functional' elements to be at the same time 'ornamental' signifying surfaces. In the descriptions above, extremes of constructional logic and absurdity are juxtaposed: simple plan with complex roof, lapping tiles with leaky hips; massive structure without support. These ambiguities are covered up by the assumed functionality of shed or barn form. In this way, the buildings appear to conflate *Learning from Las Vegas*'s two seemingly independent categories. As ducks that take the undecorated shed – or rather barn – as their form, they are at once both and neither: not ducks because they look as ordinary as a shed, but not sheds because, like a duck, they seemingly have no applied decoration.

The barn, like the 'big shed', goes unseen; it appears to be all 'essential', all constructional; unlike the 'big shed', Westmorland's barns also claim local significance. The contamination of inside by outside traced above – of authentic by generic, of local by national, of ownership by the disowned, and now of structure by sign, of 'essence' by a necessary supplement – might be compared to Derrida's deconstruction, in 'Plato's Pharmacy', *Of Grammatology* and elsewhere, of the distinction between speech and writing in the tradition of Western metaphysics. According to Derrida, this distinction, what he calls a binary opposition, privileges speech, as pure, natural, unmediated self-present expression, over writing, as external

inscription, supplement, technology, artifice.[512] In the case of Westmorland, it is the true expression – the *logos* – of place, not of a rational self, that is seemingly at issue.

In the context of a discussion of the Socratic dialogue *Phaedrus*, Derrida, in 'Plato's Pharmacy', uses the notion of *pharmakon* to explore the functioning of this binary opposition between speech and writing in the West. Derrida comments on how *pharmakon* can mean 'remedy' and 'recipe' as well as 'poison' and 'drug'.[513] He argues not only that the meaning is ambiguous, but that this ambiguity is significant. As *Phaedrus* ostensibly marks writing as dangerous, as poison, an impurity to be avoided in favour of the purity of speech, Derrida finds writing to be inevitably part of its apparent opposite, speech – a speech which, in *Phaedrus*, is marked as expression of a true knowledge 'written on the soul'. The definition of this 'good writing', like the aporia harboured within the term *pharmakon*, shows up an interweaving of opposites inseparable, it is argued, not only from Platonism, but from the structuring of Western thought:

> According to a pattern that will dominate all of Western philosophy, good writing (natural, living, knowledgeable, intelligible, internal, speaking) is opposed to bad writing (a moribund, ignorant, external, mute artifice for the senses). And the good one can be designated only through the metaphor of the bad one. Metaphoricity is the logic of contamination and the contamination of logic. Bad writing is for good a model of linguistic designation and a simulacrum of essence.[514]

As Plato's dialogue works to establish an absolute difference between two modes of expression, to definitively mark the lesser form as not only undesirable and corrupting, but inessential and thus unnecessary, *Phaedrus*, in Derrida's reading, cannot help but show up their irreducible interrelatedness, that each was always already within the other.

Though the focus here is on material rather than literary works, both are inseparable from the same processes of structuring and definition. As argued before, this is what Derrida means by '*there is nothing outside of the text*'. It is in this sense, then, that Westmorland's buildings seem similarly bound to what the company claims them absolutely not to be; its identity of difference defined in opposition to a generalized text of placeless repetition, on which it nevertheless seems to draw. On the

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[512] Derrida, 'Plato's Pharmacy', in *Dissemination*, trans. by Barbara Johnson (London: Athlone Press, 1981), p. 74.
[513] *Dissemination*, p. 71.
[514] *Dissemination*, p. 149.

one hand, the company claims, through its architecture, to speak the pure nature of place, or rather to 'capture' the 'essence' of place. On the other, as my discussion so far suggests, the buildings point towards the ways in which they are inevitably part of a process of (re-)writing place.

Below, I explore further the implications of this chain of displacement – 'writing, the *pharmakon*, the going or leading astray'[515] – to argue that, thus interpreted, Westmorland's buildings are not placeless, or any less placed, but embroiled in a complex contestation of place. In one sense, the condition might seem similar to that of 'non-places', the 'excess of place' described by Augé, where the here seems too similar to elsewhere, and each place becomes unrecognizable, unmemorable and borderless by multiple allusions to places elsewhere. In another, the implication in Derrida's argument that place is always plural, always constituted by the (non-places) it is not, switches attention to the significance of those relations between different places, how they determine different degrees of emplacement.

The desert of signs: original meanings

The cultural assumption that communication is transparent, that things really are what they seem, appears to ensure that the 'impurity' of Westmorland's gathering remains concealed, unnoticed by travellers.[516] Despite significant divergences from local vernacular buildings, visitor accounts tend to interpret Tebay East and West as authentic, a modernization of the essentially local: 'Both the north and south sides of the motorway services are very modern buildings and traditional farm architecture.'[517] This blog entry is typical in finding no contradiction between the buildings and their surroundings, between contemporary construction and traditional details. Are the buildings then perfect simulacra of authenticity, of locality, signs that seem unsigned, signs that go unseen?

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[515] *Dissemination*, p. 71.

[516] Friedrich Nietzsche emphasizes a tendency of human consciousness, inseparable from logic, to recognize the similar as the same: 'How did logic come into existence in man's head? Certainly out of illogic, whose realm originally must have been immense. Innumerable beings who made inferences in a way different from ours perished; for all that, their ways might have been truer. Those, for example, who did not know how to find often enough what is "equal" as regards both nourishment and hostile animals – those, in other words, who subsumed things too slowly and cautiously – were favoured with a lesser probability of survival than those who guessed immediately upon encountering similar instances that they must be equal. The dominant tendency, however, to treat as equal what is merely similar – an illogical tendency, for nothing is really equal – is what first created any basis for logic.' Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann, s.111.

[517] See: <http://www.edsphotoblog.com/?p=273#more-273> [Accessed: 12 June 2008].

There is another important aspect that distinguishes Westmorland's condition from those considered in *Learning from Las Vegas*. Where Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour stress the detachment between seemingly universal sign and local context, Westmorland presents a close, ostensibly undifferentiated, relation between building and place. The distinctions maintained by *Learning from Las Vegas* are, I argue, key to the book's implicit confidence in the predictable meanings of Strip signs, to the assumption of pure, functional communication I traced above. Westmorland's buildings not only complicate, but show such distinctions to be untenable, meanings never assured.

In describing relations to context, *Learning from Las Vegas* focusses on conditions of clear juxtaposition between human artifice and inhuman nature, on how bold architecture is culturally meaningful in a material environment that is, like the functional shed behind the Strip signs, assumed to be unmarked, unsigned, unreadable. The 'virgin' vastness of Las Vegas's desert setting could hardly be more extreme as an apparently neutral, uncomplicated backdrop for symbolic expression:

> The little low buildings, gray-brown like the desert, separate and recede from the street […], their false fronts disengaged and turned perpendicular to the highway as big, high signs. If you take the signs away, there is no place.[518]

Symbolically, as spatially, Las Vegas is figured as oasis: an intensity of meaning within a context semantically desolate. While the extreme desert environment is, in some passages, associated with aspects of the Strip's 'emerging order', with recurring arrangements, forms and qualities of sites, buildings and symbols; its only acknowledged effect on the *meanings* of signs and imagery is to intensify associations that come from and point to elsewhere.[519]

This fits a narrative of escapism, of psychological displacement to somewhere exotic – ostensibly culturally other and yet easily recognizable – that *Learning from Las Vegas* not only identifies, but seems uncritically to affirm as unqualified success.

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[518] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 18.

[519] With reference to Henri Bergson's notion that 'disorder' is 'an order we cannot see', the text describes a 'difficult', 'complex', 'emerging' order on the Strip (p. 52). This order is elsewhere related to the desert in terms of building design, land use, and the scale and positioning of symbols. A common introversion of building form – towards an 'interior oasis' – is seen in part as response to environmental extremes of heat and dust. (pp. 34, 49). There is an implied relation between the condition of the isolated 'desert town', dependent on passing trade, and the need for intensified tactics of commercial persuasion. More explicitly, the 'expansive setting' of the Mojave desert is said to '[…] focus and clarify [Las Vegas's] imagery.' (p. 17-18). As I suggest above (and below), however, references to the intensification of meaning in *Learning from Las Vegas* may be read as an exaggeration or recombination of the existing without wider or lasting significance for symbols that are ultimately fixed.

In common with 'others of the world's "pleasure zones"' – such as 'Marienbad, the Alhambra, Xanadu, and Disneyland' – the imagery of Las Vegas is characterized by:

> lightness, the quality of being an oasis in a perhaps hostile context, heightened symbolism, and the ability to engulf the visitor in a new role: for three days one may imagine oneself a centurion at Caesar's Palace, a ranger at the Frontier, or a jetsetter at the Riviera rather than the salesperson from Des Moines, Iowa, or an architect from Haddonfield, New Jersey.[520]

Seemingly independent of local material, architectural and human realities, the imagery of sites, signs and buildings seems to compose concentrated fantasies of other places. As imageries of elsewhere define the city as a whole, the many thematic variations mark each lot as absolutely different from the others. Spatially inward, symbolically elsewhere, each casino becomes an oasis within an oasis, each a different trajectory of escape: 'It is hard to think of each […] as anything but unique, and this is as it should be, because good advertising technique requires differentiation of the product.'[521] Consistent with the text's logic of 'commercial persuasion', readings of buildings and places tend to emphasise an overt standing out from others and from context: bold differences within place produced by distinct symbols of elsewhere. So, while physical proximity and local competition – material-commercial interrelations – are seen to drive the intensification of form and imagery amongst neighbouring sites, each nevertheless seems *semantically* to function as an independent whole distinct from surrounding context. Without pretence to historical accuracy or verisimilitude – only to pure clarity of symbolic association – each site seems bound to a different known otherness, and to that otherness alone.

If this otherness is openly symbolic, it nevertheless alludes to somewhere seemingly more real. When material context is invoked in *Learning from Las Vegas,* it is as distant, emplaced reserve of meaning, an absolute symbolic ground. The description of Caesar's Palace, for example, reads each of the building's symbolic elements as a quotation with a clear, identifiable origin:

> The front colonnade is San Pietro-Bernini in plan but Yamasaki in vocabulary and scale; the blue and gold mosaic work is Early Christian tomb of Galla

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[520] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 53.

[521] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 34. This statement, describing an initial impression prior to analysis, introduces a series of sections that challenge the apparent uniqueness to identify recurrent formations and orders. However, as already noted above, this challenge discusses signs as an assemblage of existing references and meanings that are part of the arrangement of each site, rather than as images that (together with all other features of the Strip) interrelate in the production of meaning.

Placidia. […] Beyond and above is a slab in Gio Ponti Pirelli-Baroque, and beyond that, in turn, a low wing in Neo-classical Motel Moderne. […] Gian de Bologna's *Rape of the Sabine Women* and statutes of Venus and David, with slight anatomical exaggerations, grace the area around the porte cochere. Almost bisecting a Venus is an Avis, a sign identifying No. 2's offices on the premises.[522]

While the particular juxtapositions of high and low sources in this passage are, of course, flippant and hyperbolic,[523] it nevertheless shows a tendency, traceable through the book, to focus on origin over instance, arrangement over interplay, singularities over multiplicities and so to preserve a fixed hierarchy of original to copy.[524] *Learning from Las Vegas* thus maintains structures of meaning that are, to borrow terms from Deleuze and Félix Guattari, 'arborescent' rather than 'rhizomatic':[525] unshakeably and traceably rooted. This close attention to the provenance of symbols rather than to their interrelation in usage, not only implies that the latter is of little consequence to meanings on the Strip; it suggests that the close semantic bond only operates in one direction, that each material repetition, buffered by distance, has no affect on the material-symbolic origin invoked. By stressing the semantic independence of each site, building, object or detail – from those adjacent to it and from wider urban and topographic conditions – the text appears to preserve the purity not only of symbolic associations, but of symbolic sources immune from the 'manipulation' and 'crass commercialism', the explicit exaggeration and juxtaposition, of the Strip.[526] Copy is bound to origin, yet the origin remains untouched.

Architectural symbols, then, tend in *Learning from Las Vegas* to be seen as part of a stable system. From the 'old monumentality' of religious architecture, to the Pop

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[522] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, *Learning From Las Vegas*, p. 51.

[523] I read this passage, like any other in the book, more as textual provocation to Modern orthodoxies – as an argument that invokes the Strip – than as precise, objective account of material conditions.

[524] While the origins cited are in some cases multiple, these seem to add up to meanings that are a logical product of all precedents, a congruence or overlay of what the originals are taken to represent. Indeed is not that the multiplicity of signs goes unmentioned, but that the discussion overlooks the complexity and implications of their semantic interrelations. On the one hand, they are figured as a spatial-aesthetic 'order' or 'combination form' of seemingly discrete parts; arrangements that, however visually rich and interesting, seem to have little significance for the *meaning* of each part. On the other, they seem to constitute a fully-formed semantic whole, a symbol, as discrete and historically-grounded as those that compose it, of an original hybrid form: 'The agglomeration of Caesar's Palace and of the Strip as a whole approaches the spirit if not the style of the late Roman Forum.' Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, *Learning From Las Vegas*, pp. 50-3 (p. 51).

[525] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 'Introduction: Rhizome', pp. 3-25.

[526] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 162.

Art 'soup can in the art gallery',[527] to the Renaissance palace allusions of 'ugly and ordinary' Guild House,[528] the thread of seemingly universal symbols autonomous from (local) context, yet ultimately grounded far away, is inseparable from the implicit positing of pure communication that I traced above. Whenever the possibility of entertaining (and perhaps meaningful) symbolic juxtapositions is discussed, the implications of re-contextualization seem limited to the specific instance, be it gallery or roadside, leaving the language itself unaffected, a constant palette for limited appropriation.[529]

The relation between building and context at Tebay Services is clearly very different – and this, I will argue, not only destabilizes the bind between image and its supposed origin, it might destabilize the 'origin' itself. As Westmorland relies on differentiation from the motorway and from the seemingly placeless qualities of other service areas and roadside commercial spaces, it also depends, unlike any of the examples described in the book, on identification with the locality, with a context close enough for comparison. The escape it promises is seemingly into place rather than away from it, and this requires the company's image to be, ostensibly at least, one of local material and symbolic conformity, seamlessness rather than juxtaposition: copy and original must seem inseparable. Yet, as readings of Westmorland's external imagery and the critique of modern architecture in *Learning from Las Vegas* suggest, the company must communicate this local conformity in a common language of symbols, in a language that, to be understood by the national traveller, cannot be the sole property of the place, cannot be purely that of local historic buildings.

This need for Westmorland's buildings to *seem* topographically as well as culturally grounded – pure in relation to place, rather than just pure as buildings – complicates the notion of communication in *Learning from Las Vegas*. For the separation between place and language, context and culture, original and copy which

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[527] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 72.

[528] Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, pp. 92-3; 100-1. 'Through the location of the white areas and stripes on the facade, we have tried *connotatively* to suggest floor levels associated with palaces and thereby palace-like scale and monumentality.' (p. 101).

[529] In making the case for engagement with popular symbolic languages, the text encourages play with the composition of symbols as a creative act, Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, p. 162: 'Just as Lichtenstein has borrowed the techniques and images of comics to convey satire, sorrow, and irony, rather than violent high adventure, so may the architect's high reader suggest sorrow, irony, love, the human condition, happiness, or merely the purpose within, rather than the necessity to buy soap or the possibility of an orgy. On the other hand, the interpretation and evaluation of symbolic content in architecture is an ambiguous process. The didactic symbolism of Chartres may represent to some the subtleties of medieval theology and to others the depths of medieval superstition and manipulation.'

are crucial to the argument of *Learning from Las Vegas* must be transgressed. Instead of a series of juxtaposed and evidently displaced quotations, copies seemingly isolated from context, Tebay East and West recast gathered 'rural' forms in the materials, tones and landscapes of 'local' place. Embedded as material elements rather than surface signs, each part seems integral to the whole. In this ostensibly harmonious scene, the heterogeneity of multiple 'sources' is assimilated, concealed and naturalized in place. For visitors encountering the Lake District for the first time, this image may define their impression of the wider region and of what is local to it, marking the sprawling multi-hipped big-roof barn as the authentic building tradition of place and the tall, gabled forms, typified by the bank barn, as aberrant. Walls with a 'good deal of mortar' appear less 'authentic' than those laid 'dry'. At the level of the building, the conflation of symbol and structure might seem to conceal the paradox of a local authenticity communicated nationally. The gathering of recognizably 'rural' forms and heightened 'local' details appears naturalized in the 'signless' structure of this undecorated shed. Considered in context, however, the wider implications of this intermixing unfold. A copy of ambiguous and ultimately untraceable origins seemingly displaces the 'original' and renders it a poor copy.

The 'Landrover's' changing cultural association – from efficient means of off-road transport to so-called 'Chelsea tractor', menacing urban status symbol – points to how a proliferation of similarly-dressed service areas and retail parks alongside intra-urban transport conduits complicates the barn's unequivocal identification as rural, agricultural, essential.[530] As one journalist writes of the gabled porticoes and traditional materials: 'The main entrance on either side is pretty ordinary, more like a modern Tesco'.[531] In *Learning from Las Vegas*, Roman columns always refer to Rome, to grandeur and/or decadence, to the temple and/or the circus. Big overhanging roofs, it would follow, should always, wherever they occur, mean barn or farm, local and rural, the antithesis of the urban. Yet, it now also means supermarket, the generic space of global food sales rather than local place of food production. In this re-presenting of

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[530] A draft entry to OED traces the term 'Chelsea tractor' as appearing in newspapers from 1995: '*n. Brit. colloq.* (freq. depreciative or humorous) a four-wheel-drive or off-road vehicle which is used predominantly in urban areas.'
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/31248?redirectedFrom=chelsea%20tractor#eid110666637> [Accessed 18 June 2011]. See also, Alliance Against Urban 4x4s <http://www.stopurban4x4s.org.uk/> [Accessed 18 June 2011] and Need Tempko, 'Chelsea choked by its tractors', *The Observer*, 20 August 2006, p. 3. See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/2006/aug/20/transportintheuk.travelsenvironmentalimpact> [Accessed 18 June 2011].
[531] See Davies, 'Services with a Smile'.

architecture and place, *Learning from Las Vegas*'s implicit logic of inherently meaningful symbols falls down, for here explicit, direct quotation and inconsequential recombination is no longer a convincing model; the 'original' meanings of gathered forms intermix with meanings given by their new context, the new 'origin' – the 'shedland' of the motorway[532] – into which they are embedded. Not only might Tebay East and West thus be seen as part of a chain of rural-themed buildings rather than 'authentic' outgrowth of place, the place of the Lake District might be rewritten in their image.

Simulations

How might this displacing of origin and meaning be interpreted? Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulations* focuses on comparable conditions in which image and reality are seemingly conflated. While the Casinos of Las Vegas may, in Baudrillard's terminology, be said to 'imitate' originals and 'Modern' architecture (with reasonable success) to 'dissimulate' its cultural associations, Tebay Services seem to constitute what he refers to as 'simulacra of the third order', 'a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal':

> It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real, that is to say of an operation of deterring every real process via its operational double, a programmatic, metastable, perfectly descriptive machine that offers all the signs of the real and short-circuits all its vicissitudes. […] A hyperreal henceforth sheltered from the imaginary, and from any distinction between the real and the imaginary, leaving room only for the orbital recurrence of models and for the simulated generation of differences.[533]

In 'hyperreality', there is more at stake than the abstraction of 'reality' through representation; the heterogeneity of the 'real' is seemingly eclipsed by that representation, remade in the image of its homogenous, 'metastable' code: it is not only that 'reality' is hidden, but that the hiding is hidden, too. The significance of this, according to Baudrillard's text is that while 'pretending, or dissimulating, leaves the principle of reality intact: the difference is always clear, it is simply masked […]

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[532] See Pawley, 'Where the Big Sheds Are': 'Like strips of shredded truck tire, you can find Shedland anywhere there is a motorway.'
[533] Baudrillard, *Simulacra*, pp. 1-2.

simulation threatens the difference between the "true" and the "false", the "real" and the "imaginary".'[534]

For Baudrillard, such conditions of simulated stability and unseen mediation throw all apparent certainties into doubt, mark all perceived truths as subject to manipulation. Here, I want to look beyond Baudrillard's assertion that this 'third order' is a relatively novel condition, not original, not natural, thus theoretically avoidable. I have critiqued this kind of position with reference to Derrida's discussion of 'speed' where I develop the critical framework for this thesis in the introduction; I explore this further, via Westmorland's relation to Romanticism, in the next section. Indeed, Brunskill's questioning of the authenticity of the dry stone wall points to a process of rewriting place that far predates any notion of postmodernity. What I want to focus on, instead, is the role *Simulacra* ascribes to architecture and the wider physical environment in shaping and being shaped by the 'simulation' of meanings – and on how that simulation is described.

Baudrillard casts the material environment as part of a system of meanings that maintains stabilities within culture, artificial stabilities with political significance. It gives architecture an instrumental position in producing and reproducing a 'hyperreal' *status quo* that conceals 'reality'. The replication of established symbols is thus presented, unequivocally, as part of a system of hegemonic capitalist control, a sustaining and concealing of unequal power relations by upholding as real certain fetishized illusions. This position might be contrasted with that of *Learning from Las Vegas*, where the repetition of existing cultural forms is seen positively – as socially inclusive and psychologically reassuring – but not unambiguously so: neutral in *theory* but always open to 'manipulation' in *practice*, the politics of symbols depend on how and by whom they are used. So, differences that are, in Baudrillard's polemic, said to be precisely 'simulated' by structures of power to hide uncertain or unpalatable realities, would, in *Las Vegas*, be read as individual expression (or 'basely commercial' persuasion) forged from a palette of symbolic originals. *Simulacra* thus seems to offer a different way to interpret Westmorland's national-local hybrids.

Read through *Learning from Las Vegas*, Tebay East and West might be seen as local inflections of a common language, independent pitches in a national market of roadside persuasion, a pocket of automotive escapism that has no effect on a local

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[534] Baudrillard, *Simulacra*, p. 2

context seen as separate from the road. Conflating sign and structure, sign and landscape, Westmorland's service areas would seem to out-communicate other sites to the mutual benefit of local seducer and outsider willingly seduced. Read as *Simulacra*, by contrast, this local power would be illusory and relations in 'reality' would be reversed. The sites' apparent difference from the mainstream would then be seen as 'generated' to conceal and, by displacing the 'real', to normalize increasing centralized control and local homogenization. As in *Learning from Las Vegas*, where each repeated symbol draws from the same associations, in *Simulacra*, each image is seen to contribute to the same illusion of reality.

Westmorland's service areas, I argue, defy both readings; their meanings slip ambiguously, in architecture as text, between positions of local sovereignty and national subjugation. While building forms might be bound up with and indelibly marked by the road, their inflection to locality looks like a decisive act of appropriation that goes well beyond surface dressing. The meanings produced by Westmorland's architecture destablilize relations between notions of the local and the national. This shows up a trope common to both *Las Vegas* and *Simulations*: whether the power represented is authorial or systemic, each affirms a predictable politics of symbolism, a control over communication that would seem to be absolute. As both afford architecture significance within culture, they tend, in different ways, to cast the structures of that culture as monolithic and closed to local agency. Where Baudrillard interprets changes of meaning as simple erasure, as loss of a more authentic origin, *Learning from Las Vegas* implies, at some points in the text, that such origins remain constant. Thus, neither text seems able to accommodate a condition in which who is captured and who the capturer, who is deceived and by whom, appears undeterminable, unfixed and continuously contested.

As the service areas claim local material and human surroundings as origin of their forms and meanings, that place and culture are drawn into – and seemingly re-drawn within – a wider economy of 'communication', of more widely recognized symbols already associated – although not as tightly or singularly as the study of the Strip implies – with 'origins' elsewhere. On the one hand, Westmorland's silhouette might connect the site – and with it the place – to similar buildings elsewhere: to supermarkets, suburban business parks and out-of-town retail centres. Place and locality thus become gathered beneath the commercial-lowland-southern big roof, as a network of related destinations to be consumed from one of a series of infrastructural

nodes emanating from the capital. The roofs and entrance portico to Tebay East, for example, are strikingly similar to those of Clacket Lane (M25, 2002), a building supposedly inspired by the remains of a Roman villa found on the site. For Ron Denny and others, writing in *The Motorway Achievement*, Clacket Lane's big-roofed barn has a 'distinctly Roman aspect', and an entrance 'clearly informed by the archaeology' *[30]*.[535] The authors encourage the Department of Transport to spread this model:

> to promote […] displays about the historical landscape and archaeology traversed by motorways. Strings of historical sites with notable Roman interest are apparent along the A1(M) and the M2, M6 and M8 to provide opportunities.[536]

Localness risks becoming a national chain – one in which Westmorland is not at the centre, but peripheral outpost of a 'Roman' network centred on London. This suggests a vernacular of empire, rather than of 'local', 'independent', hill farming, one in which national operators may take a leading role. Tebay East and West might then be seen as contributing to – rather than resisting – a redrawing of the geometries of place, a breaking of (local) relations in order to strengthen other (national) associations. It is now not just an isolated image of architecture that is purified and intensified, edited and supplemented to further interregional commerce, but an image that extends beyond site limits, that captures, modifies and effaces others' properties: here context is not mute, it is spoken for; symbolic 'origins', no longer safely detached as they appear in *Learning from Las Vegas*, may be contested, displaced and overwritten.

On the other hand, the southern villa is claimed for the north, tradition from Tesco, the barn from 'Essex'. Westmorland appropriates the national vernacular to make the Lake District the image of countryside associated with the country of Britain in general. And, as discussed in the opening section of this chapter, it does so in a way that brings economic benefits to local communities and, especially to local producers, on a scale that other service area operators do not match. As Homi Bhabha notes in a discussion of power and the production of meanings in the relation between cultural centres and peripheries:

> Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the

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[535] Ron Denny and others, 'Administration', in *The Motorway Achievement*, 3 vols, I: *The British Motorway System:Visualisation, Policy and Administration*, ed. by Peter Baldwin (London: Thomas Telford, 2004) pp. 721-776 (pp. 764-5).
[536] Denny and others, p. 767.

reflection of *pre-given* ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorise cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. The 'right' to signify from the periphery of authorised power and privilege does not depend on the persistence of tradition; it is resourced by the power of tradition to be reinscribed through the conditions of contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are 'in the minority'. The recognition that tradition bestows is a partial form of identification. In restaging the past it introduces other, incommensurable cultural temporalities into the invention of tradition. This process estranges any immediate access to an originary identity or a 'received' tradition. The borderline engagements of cultural difference may as often be consensual as conflictual; they may confound our definitions of tradition and modernity; realign the customary boundaries between the private and the public, high and low; and challenge normative expectations of development and progress.[537]

It is in this sense that I see Westmorland not as a non-place, but as a cultural space of contest that is as material as it is meaningful, even if those meanings are both ambiguous and never finally fixed. This is not to say that they are arbitrary; I will now turn to look more closely at the relations between Westmorland and representations of the Lake District.

Westmorland past and present: Tebay and regional representations

The previous two sections trace how Tebay Services in various ways exceed an 'authentic' relation to local material context. Instead, Westmorland's buildings seem positioned within a cultural system of signs, a system that is relatively stable, but not closed. In this section, I look at the building as part of widely-circulated cultural myths of the region, and at how these place Westmorland in time as well as in space.

'An earlier, more romantic era': (re)presenting the past
Brunskill's 'Christmas Calendar' barn, discussed above, draws attention to the cultural significance of rural imagery in general terms – and to themes of nostalgia, stasis and the myth of independence. My focus, here, is on how the location of the Lake District gives these meanings particular charge. I begin by returning to Self's article on Westmorland, which explores the company's relation to a specific image of the past

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[537] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 2

and the values it signifies. Towards the middle of Self's 'PsychoGeography', Tebay Services seem to become a mirror through which the future appears as a reflection of a particular past:

> I find myself transported back to an earlier, more romantic era. Perhaps the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, on one of his legendary stomps across the Lake District, chanced upon Tebay Services, all huddled beneath its high gables. […]
>
> If only I could stay in Tebay for all of 2007. But why stop at a single year? If I reside at Tebay for long enough, the M6 will fall into desuetude and become grassed over, a second pre-industrial age will dawn and instead of glib satires, lyrical ballads will flow from my pen.[538]

In this satirical image of Tebay, the M6 becomes an ephemeral phenomenon. While the road might be abandoned by its human protectors and reclaimed by nature, Westmorland's buildings seem so closely attuned to natural context that their survival requires no human support; their appropriateness to place and natural order seems timeless. This resilience of Tebay's 'rough' stone architecture is projected forward, as though evidence of past endurance might guarantee survival, beyond the transience and uncertainty of the present, into a stable future: resistance through time as well as space. The buildings thus seem to promise not the movement 'back' that Self's text initially appears to describe, but the rediscovery of an essence of the past still and always present: not presence in the past, but the past made present. This effacing of historical and temporal specificity produces what Roland Barthes terms the 'very principle' of his notion of myth – the system of signs that constitutes 'what-goes-without-saying' in society: 'it transforms history into nature'.[539] As rural imagery naturalizes the service area buildings, it places them beyond time, beyond culture, beyond question.

Yet it is important to note that Self's text refers as much to the stability of the viewing subject as it does to that of the material object: Tebay's architecture seems able to 'transport' the sedentary visitor out of, rather than through, time to pure, unchanging place, to a transcendental ideal of place. In the smooth transition from description to reverie, Self's narrative plays on a promise he finds implicit in Westmorland's imagery: that the buildings are in touch with a golden age of natural, innocent humanity and act as a portal through which it may be reencountered. Indeed, with Self's text evoking a quasi-religious language of salvation, the buildings seem to

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[538] Self, 'Romantic Services', p. 249.
[539] Barthes, pp. 11, 129.

offer access to an elevated, timeless state of existence: inner as well as outer harmony restored; the psyche, like the scene, at rest. By staying 'long enough', all human artifice will disappear from memory as it fades from view. So, the essence of place seemingly points to the essence of a true, inalienable humanity. In 'The Great Family of Man', Barthes draws attention to how the naturalization of a more 'primitive' existence becomes 'the solid rock of a universal human nature': 'Th[e] myth of the human "condition" rests on a very old mystification, which always consists in placing Nature at the bottom of History.'[540] The notion of natural essence is, for Barthes, inseparable from claims to universalism. Self's text might suggest that Westmorland claims a truer, more authentic universality in order to resist the dominant idiom of the road; yet, an alternative reading is also possible.

At the same time as he indulges this fantasy, Self distances himself from it. The reverie ends abruptly:

> No dice: 'That willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith' is gone. Instead, I load up the family, ejaculate 40-odd litres of low-sulphur unleaded into the black womb of the Fiat, and head north.[541]

Self's text satirises the desire for an existence more authentic, more stable – whether it be mourning for an unrecoverable loss or hope of an eventual return – and the ostensibly timeless Tebay East 'all huddled beneath its high gables', at once humble and haughty, is implicated in his parody. For the text's playful tone conceals a paradox of subjectivity that is significant for this study. In the fantasy described, the travelling subject appears passively embedded in context, transformed by the stillness of the scene into a vessel for the 'lyrical ballads' that 'flow' from his pen. Yet this loss of self-identity appears only seductive, rather than disturbing. For, as the conditional tense makes clear, the loss is only ever hypothetical, the fantasy circumscribed by another, more pervasive subject position, one that is constant and in control. In idyllic past as well as degenerate present, the free traveller-narrator continues to 'stomp' through the landscape, gazing with detachment over a submissive scene apparently there for his benefit and pleasure alone; a scene that makes no demands and offers no resistance. Rather than finding himself displaced to another historical reality, this

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[540] Barthes, p. 101.
[541] Self, 'Romantic Services', p. 249. The quotation is from Coleridge's *Biographia Literary* (1817).

subject feels at home, master of a particular, imaginary past assembled for him in the present.

So, as Self's text explores the fantasies of stability associated with Tebay's buildings, it also points to the significance of their limits and the contested power relations these suggest. While the architecture described appears to transform experience, the subject's dominant position remains unchanged and unchallenged by the encounter with a past shaped by the present – a past that is not other. Moreover, the material conditions veiled by the fantasy are, nevertheless, inescapable. The return is only ever to the 'pre-industrial', with the threat of human corruption and, at the same time, the promise of human dominion seemingly always there. Thus, in Self's reading, Tebay Services offer safe access to a familiar, uncomplicated, contained state of stability, whereby harmony is ostensibly regained without sacrificing authority or autonomy. This parody clearly suggests nostalgia, but not only that: the appearance of past as parallel, living present, highlights the desire for a stable, restorative, utopia – a reserve of natural humanity in eternal return. It lies beyond, but not in place of, the speed and technology of contemporary existence; one that visitors appear able to enter on their own terms, albeit briefly, and remain detached, untouched. As Catherine Belsey puts it, in the context of 'living history' museums: 'legend eliminates the difference of the past: even the most heroic of golden worlds exist in a kind of synchronic present as a model.'[542]

What is again at stake here, as in the discussion of the company's representation of its history and its relation to locality, is Westmorland's claim to authenticity, autonomy and independence – and thus its ability to maintain its own stable course, to remain in place. The rural imagery that announces difference in time seems not only to entice the outsider, but to define place according to the outsider's gaze – to both assert and surrender ownership at the same time. The paradoxical bind between the particular and the universal explored in the previous chapter recurs: the imagery of generic localness now inhabits an eternal past; a conquest of time as well as space. The particular significance of Self's text for the argument that I explore below is that the bind seen here between present and past, inside and outside, authenticity and imitation does not only engage the politics of travel, place and history, it concerns the

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[542] Catherine Belsey, 'Reading Cultural History', in *Reading the Past*, ed. by Tamsin Spargo (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 103-117 (p. 106).

role of architecture in the maintenance of a particular, dominant subjectivity at a moment when that subject's integrity and authority (as an outsider forced to leave the car, their surrogate home) is seemingly under threat. Self's text suggests that the past rurality implied by Westmorland's imagery reflects and serves the desires of the present, travelling, urban subject, at the same time as it marks resistance to them.

Before considering this further, however, there is another important connection to consider. If Tebay services seem to offer, in Self's text, privileged and unproblematic access to the myth of a stable rural idyll, past and yet present, it is clear that in doing so they draw on established cultural tropes referenced to a particular historical period. For, as the text infers, the writing of these desires has a long and particular association with the landscape of the region: the 'lyrical ballads' to which Self satirically aspires are those of 'Romantic' 'Lake' poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge – and it is this connection, this suggestion of not only a material and formal essence in 'rough-textured stone' and 'high gables', but a precisely located cultural-historical essence, that I will now examine.[543] Indeed this association with 'romanticism' is significant, I will argue, not only because it reinforces the company's identity, but also because it demonstrates further the ambiguities and instabilities of the rural imagery on which Westmorland seems, in Self's reading, to rely.

Wordsworth and Westmorland

Links between Wordsworth and the 'Lake Counties' are literary, biographical, cultural and commercial. They are also well-established: for over a hundred years, Westmorland has been, by some authors, rebranded as 'Wordsworthshire'.[544] The

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[543] 'Romantic' is a problematic and much debated term, referring variously to groups of persons, time periods, a particular genre, style, theme or philosophical approach – the inclusions and exclusions being in each case hotly contested. See Arthur Lovejoy, 'On the Discrimination of Romanticisms', in *Romanticism: Points of View*, ed. by Robert Gleckner and Gerald Enscoe (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp. 68-80 (p. 68, 80): 'For one of the few things certain about romanticism is that the name of it offers one of the most complicated, fascinating, and instructive of all problems in semantics'; 'any attempt at a *general* appraisal even of a single chronologically determinate romanticism – still more of "romanticism" as a whole – is a fatuity.' Here I use the term to refer loosely to the poets and artists active in England around 1780-1830 commonly grouped under the term in popular culture.
[544] This conflation of place and poet was reportedly coined by the American diplomat and romantic poet James Lowell in *Among My Books: Second Collection* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1876), p. 240, and taken up by others, in the UK as well as US, including: 'Wordsworthshire', *New York Times*, 26 October 1901; Thomas Higginson, 'Wordsworthshire', in *Part of A Man's Life* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1905); and Eric Robertson, *Wordsworthshire: An Introduction to a Poet's County* (London: Chatto &

landscape of the area is a recurrent theme in Wordsworth's poetry and prose, the muse for many of his most famous pastoral works and the subject of his *Guide through the District of the Lakes* of 1835.[545] Born in Cockermouth in north-west Cumbria and schooled in Hawkshead near Lake Windermere, Wordsworth grew up in the county and, following studies at Cambridge, returned to live in the region for the rest of his life.[546] Several locations associated with the poet are now popular tourist destinations, and the importance of this connection to the economy of the area is evident in the recurrence of his name or quotations in local and regional publicity.[547] Renamed 'Wordsworth House', his childhood home is owned by the National Trust and has been restored as a living history museum of the poet's early years. Its mission statement – 'Bringing the past back to life' – promises an intimate contact with the poet's life, similar to that imagined in Self's text.[548] Dove Cottage at Grasmere, which was Wordsworth's home from 1799 to 1808, is now part of a museum and study centre.[549] Nearby Rydal Mount, where the poet lived from 1813 until his death in 1850, is still owned by the Wordsworth family and also open as a museum. The latter two sites, centrally located in the Lake District National Park, are less than twenty-five kilometres west of Tebay and can be reached from M6 via junctions just south of Westmorland's service area sites. These locations attract many visitors, drawn by the promise that places associated with the poet's life will bring them closer to the man himself. As in religious pilgrimages, contact with material traces offers a means to transcend the barrier of death; the particular history and landscape of a place promises proximity to the eternal – 'Romantic' – values that I explore below.[550]

Windus, 1911). It remains in use as a synonym for the Lake District, for example on Wikipedia, see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wordsworthshire> [accessed 31 October 2011].

[545] William Wordsworth, *Guide through the District of the Lakes* (Kendal: Hudson and Nicholson, 1835)

[546] On the life of William Wordsworth (1770-1850), see: Stephen Gill, *Wordsworth:A Life*, rev. edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[547] See Shelagh Squire, 'Wordsworth and Lake District Tourism: Romantic Reshaping of Landscape', *The Canadian geographer*, 32.3 (1988), 237-247, pp. 242-3: 'The importance of Wordsworth in popularising the Lake District, and indeed in synthesising [the] transformation of literary place into tourist place, should not be underestimated.'

[548] See <http://www.wordsworthhouse.org.uk/aboutthehousegarden.html> [Accessed 30 June 2010]

[549] Dove Cottage, Wordsworth's home for nine years, is located near Grasmere on A591 through the centre of the Lake District. It is now The Wordsworth Museum and Art Gallery, managed by the Wordsworth Trust. A popular tourist attraction, it is visited by more than seventy thousand people per year. See <http://www.wordsworth.org.uk/history/index.asp?pageid=36> [accessed 31 October 2011].

[550] See Squire, p. 237: 'The popularity of romantic literature has […] fostered tourism; hordes of visitors, anxious to recreate the emotional experiences in place described by a literary idol, still descend on areas immortalized in poetry or prose.' See also, Margaret Drabble, *A Writer's Britain: Landscape in Literature* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), p. 147: '[Wordsworth has] made each place he

The cultural force and economic potential of this relationship is clearly recognized by Westmorland, as passages of Wordsworth's poetry are quoted on the walls of Tebay West.[551] Self's text is not the only one to draw attention to this association: Susan Dawson's 1993 review of Tebay East for *The Architects' Journal* is titled 'Motorway Services with a Touch of Wordsworth'.[552] This association, integral to Westmorland's identity, will appear, initially at least, to give tighter definition to the notions of place, past and rural life that the company projects. But this is not the poet's only significance for this study. In the readings that follow, I trace two different but irreducibly connected Wordsworths, which problematize the relations not only between company and text, but also between company and context: first, the poet as uncomplicated traditionalist, defender of all that is 'natural' – or, as Barthes would critique, all that 'goes-without-saying' – in rural life, whose poetic imagery appears easily edited, aestheticized and commodified as regional brand; second, the ambiguous and radical Wordsworth emphasized by some critics, whose texts, considered in their literary and historical contexts, destabilize the very certainties they appear to support. Themes of harmony, affinity, balance, necessity, cyclicality and dispersion explored as empirical reality in the first reading will become, in the latter, an impossible ideal: timeless and yet forever lost. Through this discussion, I demonstrate how Wordsworth's rural and architectural imagery is inseparable from the ideas and (ambiguous) ideals of his texts; meanings that – I argue in the sections that follow – Westmorland in its similar imagery cannot help but engage and repeat (without exactly reproducing) in all their ambiguity, even as the company appears to exclude one Wordsworth from a nuanced version of the other, to place the ideal beyond doubt.

In a note to Sonnet XVII, Wordsworth describes a view over the Duddon Valley near Coniston (about 40 kilometres southwest of Tebay):

> A few homesteads are interspersed, in some places peeping out from among the rocks like hermitages, whose site has been chosen for the benefit of sunshine as well as shelter; in other instances, the dwelling-house, barn, and byre [cow-house], compose together a cruciform structure, which, with its embowering trees, and the ivy clothing part of the walls and roof like a fleece, call to mind the remains of an ancient abbey. Time, in most cases, and nature every where,

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mentions a place of pilgrimage, and he has probably added more names than any other writer to a literary map of England'.

[551] The quotes have been in place at least since 1990, as Halsall records in 'Small Proves Beautiful'. I discuss the specific quotations in more detail at the end of the next subsection.

[552] Dawson, 'Motorway Services with a Touch of Wordsworth'.

have given a sanctity to the humble works of man, that are scattered over this peaceful retirement. Hence a harmony of tone and colour, a perfection and consummation of beauty, which would have been marred had aim or purpose interfered with the course of convenience, utility, or necessity. This unvitiated region stands in no need of the veil of twilight to soften or disguise its features.[553]

The valley Wordsworth describes shows 'man' in harmony with the world 'he' inhabits. The excerpt stresses the naturalness of the scene and, in particular, the naturalness of human formations modestly 'peeping out' within it: like 'hermitages' – at once rudimentary and remote – they seemingly emerge from within, rather than impose upon, their rocky contexts. Yet such simplicity is, the description implies, no indication of hardship or deficiency. The 'embowering trees' and 'fleece'-like 'ivy clothing' suggest that to be open to a benevolent nature, to respect and to defer to it, is to be embraced and provided for by it, to be treated as nature's own. Thus perfectly attuned to context, the buildings receive the 'benefits of sunshine as well as shelter' – optimum exposure and enclosure in one place, a harmony of the seemingly opposed. Indeed, nature and time are named in the note as the only sanctifying processes, divine forces that sanction, absolve and elevate the most reverent of mortal endeavours; while any specifically human 'aim or purpose' – seemingly unthinkable here – would constitute a force of disturbance capable of shattering the bond of unmotivated intimacy, sympathy and 'convenience'.[554] By nature and intuition, rather than rational calculation, everything, everywhere – human as non-human – appears in its proper place, free from any such excesses of civilization: the very materialization of stable necessity, and no more. In Wordsworth's text, the qualities of buildings and their

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[553] 'Note 9' (to 'Sonnet XVII'), *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by Henry Reed (Philadelphia: Troutman & Hayes, 1851) pp. 378-80 (p. 379).

[554] On Wordsworth's privileging of 'impulse' over 'meddling intellect', see William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'The Tables Turned; an Evening Scene on the Same Subject', in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) (Abingdon, Oxon.: Routledge, 2005), pp. 149-50 (lines 21-28):

> One impulse from a vernal wood
> May teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good,
> Than all the sages can.
>
> Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
> Our meddling intellect
> Misshapes the beauteous forms of things –
> We murder to dissect

Later references to the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), are also taken from the Routledge combined edition.

positions in the scene are key to signifying a passive, 'humble' – indeed barely distinguishable – human existence, a unity of, and in, place.

This image of harmony is not just spatial, but irreducibly temporal – or rather atemporal – too. The parsimonious adaptation of buildings to context suggests the unvarying repetition of meteorological, biological and mineral patterns, on which a life of unreserved subsistence agriculture can directly and immediately depend. To remain in precise symbiosis with these natural constants, all human processes, too, must follow closed loops. In such an economy of balance, there can be neither lack nor excess; needs are always satisfied such that any surplus is temporary, and necessary only to sustain the same cycle into the following season. While there are oblique references to natural extremes or imbalances – such as ruins and the necessity of shelter – that might undermine the text's impression of stability, these are, by elegance of composition, dissociated from the potentially disruptive processes they imply. Here, ruins are stripped of temporality, of the time that contributed to their dilapidation, rendering them static objects of contemplation. In this way, the landscape appears absolved of all risk of displacement, rupture, uncertainty, violence and suffering, not only those attributable to humans. Death, it seems here, has no place in this landscape of eternal peace, where nature always tends and never destroys.

Thus, the scene is rendered static, a 'retirement' in which all changes are cyclical and everything always returns; a 'still life' seemingly fixed, like the calendar image and Self's golden age, in perpetuity – an essence of place beyond history. Andrew Bennett and Nick Royle draw attention to Wordsworth's arresting of time:

> Wordsworth famously declares in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) that poetry 'takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility', suggesting that it involves at once a stilling and a revision or regathering of what has been moving. The phrase 'spots of time' [*The Prelude*, II, 257-78] likewise suggests something paradoxical, a strange fixing of time in place, *as* place.[555]

Recalling the naturalizing of history discussed by Barthes, the present becomes transcendental; an absolute stability that at the same time, paradoxically, suppresses the very movement of time whose visible traces – geological formations, patterns of

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[555] Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, 3rd edn (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2004), p. 144; Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads 1798 and 1800*, ed. by Michael Gamer and Dahlia Porter (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2008); Wordsworth, *The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind: An Autobiographical Poem* (London: Edward Moxon, 1850).

growth, weathering, life – confer sanctity and authenticity on the objects of the scene. Architecture is here part of a stilling of time, a moment stretched to infinity.

Read in this way, with its themes of simplicity and affinity, stability, balance and cyclical return, Wordsworth's valley – a mythical place in the guise of material reality – constitutes an ideal of a fixed 'nature' that is not only aesthetic, but irreducibly ethical and metaphysical. 'Aim or purpose' may be excluded from the scene, but there is, it seems, a moral to the text.[556] Far from passive object of human will or unruly subject to be tamed, this nature, pure and constant, is sovereign source not only of all beauty and order, but of true humanity, too; an original state to which the reader is implicitly willed to return. As the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802) states: '[The poet] considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities in nature.'[557]

With terms that recall Self's reference to 'roughness' – the 'interspersed' and 'scattered' – a consistency of irregularity is the overriding quality of the scene; an evenness of variation that needs no 'veil' to 'soften or disguise' 'features' too eccentric *or* too repetitious. So, the scene's 'perfection and consummation of beauty' seems to depend not on absolute conformity, but on a balance of difference and similarity, of difference within similarity, whereby every part is subtly distinct yet determined by the whole. Taking the 'works of man' as representative of the society that produces and is produced by them, the tropes of dispersion and difference suggest a necessary spacing between people; a degree of isolation, solitude and independence from each other that maintains human openness to nature and so preserves the natural balance of the land. A paring back, a *simplification* of life and culture, re-attunes humanity to the subtle *complexity* within nature.[558] As the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) confirms,

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[556] This reading of an ethics in the imagery of the text is supported by several of Wordsworth's publications. For example, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), in Coleridge and Wordsworth, p. 175: 'Not that I mean to say, that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but I believe that my habits of meditation have so formed my feelings, as that my description of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a *purpose*.' Such statements have been supported by critics, such as Geoffrey Hartman, who emphasizes the poet's 'unusual sense of vocation': 'He never wavered in future years [after 1805] from the project of marrying mind to nature.' Geoffrey Hartman, 'Retrospect 1971', in *Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814*, revised edn (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1971).

[557] Coleridge and Wordsworth, p. 423.

[558] Lovejoy notes in some forms of 'Romanticism' what he sees as the paradoxical valorization of nature for both its complexity and its simplicity (p.72): 'While the "natural" was, on the one hand, conceived as the wild and spontaneous and "irregular", it was also conceived as the simple, the naive, the

authentic humanity appears bound to a particular, simple, pre-urban way of life and pattern of settlements: it is in 'low and rustic life' more than other human conditions that 'the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature'.[559] Indeed, the lowly inhabitants of the scene appear so dispersed and unremarkable, so harmoniously absorbed, that none are obviously visible. Here, formally expressed, is the humanism of reflection described in the Preface and parodied by Self; Raymond Williams puts it more strongly in his discussion of Wordsworth's poetry: 'the affirmation of Nature is intended as the essential affirmation of Man.'[560]

This imagery of harmony, of presence without absence, is similar to that which Derrida finds in the work of another so-called 'Romantic', Rousseau. As Derrida shows, for Rousseau, the proximity of humans to nature 'becomes the unity – as ideal limit – of the imitation and what is imitated'. In such a condition of unity, 'imitation would become useless: the unity of unity and difference would be lived in immediacy'. In all its apparent diversity, the scene Wordsworth describes similarly excludes what Derrida calls differance. It is beyond the difference not only between humans and nature, but also between signifier and signified. All appears to be without aim or mediation; nothing is seemingly capitalized or held in reserve.

The image of the barn is woven as tightly into this image of stasis, into what Derrida might call the text's 'metaphysics of presence' as it is into the rural scene described. In their close relation to place, the 'dwelling-house, barn, and byre' may be read as metaphors for the natural position of humans in the world. Through such passages, of which there are many in Wordsworth's works, rural buildings, such as barns, come to signify an authentic, static way of life. This specific reading of the barn and its relation to context may be seen as typical of and inseparable from the many

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unsophisticated. No two words were more fixedly associated in the mind of the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries than "Nature" and "simple". Consequently the idea of preferring nature to custom and to art usually carried with it the suggestion of a program of simplification, of reform by elimination; in other words, it implied primitivism. The "natural" was a thing you reached by going back and by leaving out.'

[559] Coleridge and Wordsworth, p. 174. The extended quotation reads: 'Low and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; [… and] because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.'

[560] Williams, p.132. See also pp. 127-132.

popular literary, artistic and cultural representations of Lakeland buildings to which Brunskill refers. Indeed, it indicates not only the significance of this seemingly humble, timeless and embedded agricultural architecture to a regional identity defined by romantic poetry; it suggests – paralleling the discussion in the previous two sections – why such literary descriptions, widely known beyond the county, may have more claim over the cultural image of the traditional Lakeland barn than the less well known material evidence of surviving buildings.

So, it seems that the aspects of Westmorland's siting, form and construction, introduced in the previous sections, that conflict with the local vernacular move the buildings closer to the idealized structures of romantic texts. The levelling of site to stress horizontality and roughening of landscape to better conceal the buildings, the chamfering of roofs, the projecting eaves, the unbuildable simplicity of material details all stress humbleness and stability in a way that conforms with the dominant themes of the text as it contradicts the practicalities of traditional construction. Pre-aged and pre-weathered, seemingly un-processed and un-supplemented, the 'natural' materials of walls and roof conceal the passing of time and so disguise the buildings' age. Tebay East especially, like the ruins of Wordsworth's note, seems stilled beyond the present, beyond time. Westmorland seems to secure an image of stasis and authenticity through the cultural imagery of place now in widest circulation. But is this ground necessarily any more secure?

'Still life': ideal and epitaph

The reading presented above is, necessarily, partial. It explores Wordsworth's texts as they are commonly encountered in a touristic context, with a focus on the static beauty of the scene and the life it shows, rather than its narrative content and historical context. In Wordsworth's poetry, however, such images of natural calm and stability are typically juxtaposed with others of rupture, dissolution and loss – and it is important to trace these exclusions before considering Wordsworth's relation to this regional identity. When Williams describes in Wordsworth's texts 'the use of the country, of "nature", as a retreat and solace from human society and ordinary human consciousness' whereby 'characteristically […] it is the lonely observer who "passes", and what he sees is a "still life"', he interprets this as more than nostalgia for an

impossible idyll: it is 'an image against stress and change'.[561] Read in historical context, the stillness of the scene is a challenge to contemporary confidence in industrialization, material progress and human dominion; a polemical epitaph for a landscape and a way of life perceived to be vanishing, captured by the poet as it ceased to exist. The scene shows no signs of death because, in its frozen perfection, it is itself already lifeless.[562] This irreducible connection between death and timelessness, between death and the ideal, is explored by Derrida in *Of Grammatology*: 'If [life] should grow *infinite* – and its essence excludes this a priori – life itself would be made

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[561] Williams, pp. 129-130. Hartman (p. xiv) makes a similar point in more abstract and apocalyptic terms: 'He [considered himself] at a turning point in history which would see either a real marriage of the mind of man with nature or their apocalyptic severance.'

[562] While the reading here and in the paragraphs that follow concentrates on material and social implications of the text's imagery, these are seen always in irreducible relation to, rather than in place of, more literary or psychoanalytic interpretations. The approach draws on and may appear similar to that of Williams, in that the significance of the text's relation to external socio-historical contexts is always maintained without attempting to elide the difference between text and reality. However, at the same time, this reading avoids the critic's singularity of focus and foreclosure of meaning. For while Williams does not deny textual ambiguities, such as between poetic imagination and realism, neither does he consider them particularly significant: the emphasis is, for him, always on the text's relevance to the world and the condition of humanity in general, more than the complex subjectivity it might imply: '[…] an essential isolation and silence and loneliness have become the only carriers of nature and community against the rigours, the cold abstinence, the selfish ease of ordinary society. […] it is the lonely creative imagination; the man driven back from the cold world and in his own natural perception and language seeking to find and recreate man.' (pp.131, 132)

This differs from the approach of critics, such as Hartman, who, rejecting the tradition after Matthew Arnold of interpreting Wordsworth as a straight-forward moralizer, place greater and primary emphasis on the inner workings of the text. Hartman's work draws on psychoanalysis and phenomenology to read in the texts an ontological struggle with the 'consciousness of consciousness' (p. xii): 'In some sense *emergence* itself, our unsteady growth into self-consciousness became the subject.' (p. xvi). Hartman, does not see this position as unrelated to external reality, and suggests a close (albeit clearly hierarchical) link between his thesis of response to the human condition and others' of commentary on contemporary events: 'I did not neglect the historical milieu, but neither did I offer it as an explanation. In a strange way the violence in France as well as the slower trauma of industrialisation coincided with Wordsworth's inner sense of irreparable change: they foreboded a cosmic wounding of Nature – of natural rhythms, of organic growth – which reinforced his fear of an apocalyptic rate of change and nature-loss.' (p. xvi)

This chapter follows William's emphasis on the importance of the text's relation to a perceived, specific material reality, while avoiding the implicit presumption of an objective, unified subject, and a singular, transparent, intended meaning. Thus, the above discussion of 'still life' as marker of material loss may be related to Paul de Man's reading of such frozen moments in terms of the subject's relation to death. More than Hartman, de Man reads Wordsworth's texts primarily for their insights into the human condition rather than material reality, or contemporary socio-cultural concerns. However, where Hartman tends to see nature as offering solace or escape – from the autonomy of the imagination rather than industrialization – de Man sees in the same imagery a heightened sense of mortality and the precariousness of existence: the trigger rather than the resolution of an existential crisis. The apparent tranquillity and timelessness of nature, for him, draw attention to, rather than mask, the instability and finitude of human life. Far from reassuring, de Man contends that such moments – scenes frozen at the moment of death – are destabilizing, as the unbridgeable difference between human consciousness and the world from which it draws meaning becomes strikingly apparent. Thus, for de Man, Wordsworth's 'spots of time' are not moments of nostalgia for a lost childhood, but epitaphs of a death to come; nature becomes signifier of death as well as life, and time rather than nature the key theme of the text; images that are '[…] the retrospective recording of man's failure to overcome the power of time.' (p. 15) See Paul de Man, 'Time and History in Wordsworth', *Diacritics*, 17.4 (1987), pp. 4-17.

into an impassive, intangible, and eternal presence: infinite *differance*, God or death.'[563] To still life is, for Derrida, impossible.

Even where Wordsworth's text emphazises stability, however, traces of life and decay, of *differance*, which deny (as they make possible) the fixity of both ideal and epitaph, are inescapable. Even the 'still' world of the text is not absolutely pure or innocent, not quite Eden before an Adamic 'fall': there may be no need of 'twilight', but only because a veil of vegetation already shrouds human features. Wordsworth's 'man' is within nature, part of nature, a mirror image so close and yet not exactly the same. As he suggests in *Prelude*, the 'harmony' between the human mind and nature is one of 'mutual dominion', 'interchangeable supremacy': however minimal, violence is inescapable.[564] Even here, there is already a separation, an irreducible difference and with it the possibility of human deviance if the 'gentle agency' of nature is not followed, if the reflection is distorted.[565] While there is no direct mention of the city, the text is haunted by its reality and cast in opposition to it: as the theme of dispersion implies an agrarian social structure of autonomous family units, it dismisses the converse – the human concentration and dependency of the city, described in *Prelude* as 'the deformities of crowded life'.[566] An excess of humanity is, the excerpt suggests, unnatural, closing and corrupting.

Against this threat, Wordsworth's poet 'is a rock in defence of human nature',[567] whose task it is to bring humans back into sympathy with their natural environment – an aim that has some similarities with Westmorland's claimed roadside

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[563] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 131.

[564] *Prelude* XIV, 81-84. See also, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802), in Coleridge and Wordsworth, p. 422: '[The poet] considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure.'

[565] 'Gentle agency' appears in 'Michael, A Pastoral Poem' lines 29-30, in *Complete Poetical Works*, pp. 115-19. Here it is nature's objects that open the poet to the world that surrounds him and are credited with stirring empathy:

    And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
    Careless of books, yet having felt the power
    Of Nature, by the gentle agency
    Of natural objects, led me on to feel
    For passions that were not my own, and think
    (At random and imperfectly indeed)
    On man, the heart of man, and human life.

See also, *Lines Written in Early Spring* (p. 397), where the beauty of the scene inspires the following ending: 'Have I not reason to lament / What Man has made of Man?'

[566] *Prelude* VIII, 332.

[567] Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802), in Coleridge and Wordsworth, p. 423. In doing so, he tries himself to get closer to the authentic life he observes: 'I propose to myself to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men' (p. 177).

mission described in the first section. According to the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), the resistance of matter – as in the encounter described above – inspires and gives the poet confidence that such a return may be possible:

> Reflecting on the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonourable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which are equally inherent and indestructible.[568]

Yet this confidence is fragile. As the description of Duddon Valley continues, the narrator, too, feels compelled to maintain distance, as though he might be himself an agent of vitiation:

> As it glistens in the morning sunshine, it would fill the spectator's heart with gladsomeness. Looking from our chosen station, he would feel an impatience to rove among its pathways, to be greeted by the milkmaid, to wander from house to house exchanging 'good-morrows' as he passed the open doors; but, at evening, when the sun is set, and a pearly light gleams from the western quarter of the sky, with an answering light from the smooth surface of the meadows […] 'then' he would be unwilling to move forward, not less from a reluctance to relinquish what he beholds, than from an apprehension of disturbing, by his approach, the quietness beneath him.[569]

Rather than part of the scene, the poet remains detached from the good life he apprehends: as the 'impatience to rove' is ever deferred into the immobility of night, the 'spectator' may describe from afar, but must keep their distance for fear of corrupting affect, of breaking the fragile equilibrium that stills decay. Here, Wordsworth's text reveals that the idyll described cannot be anything but illusory: an *image* necessarily dead to ensure its purity and immortality, which any further intrusion of life, of reality would destroy: an ideal too perfect, too still to exist.

Derrida draws attention in his reading of Rousseau to the paradox of a 'law of spacing' that the ideal society at once affirms and denies:

> For [Rousseau] the essential predicate of the state of pure nature is dispersion; and culture is always the effect of reconcilement, of proximity, of self-same (*propre*) presence. […] Dispersion, as the law of spacing, is therefore at once pure nature, the principle of society's life and the principle of society's death.[570]

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[568] Coleridge and Wordsworth, p. 177.
[569] *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, note (9) to 'Sonnet XVII'
[570] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 274.

On the one hand, culture – that which is seen to mark humans as separate from animals – depends on proximity to other people; on the other, this human proximity distances people from nature, and from the natural laws that maintain harmony in the world. 'Pure' nature and 'pure' culture appear incompatible and yet interdependent. Dispersion is 'natural' but at the same time alienating. For Derrida, the 'law of spacing', like differance, marks this interrelatedness: the way in which every ideal is always already impure, every stability already in motion.

As in Self's article, proximity to the essence of place promised by Wordsworth's text turns out to be, on closer reading, illusory and unobtainable; this past, this illusory ideal, cannot be made present because it vanishes as fast as it is approached. Yet, here, the more convincing sense of unity in the initial image and the apparent objectivity of description make the realization of distance more disturbing and the scene more lifeless still. Whereas Self's urban traveller indulges and remains detached from what is, with its play of contradictory impressions, clearly understood as fantasy, the subject of Wordsworth's text is destabilized by the rupture of an idyllic image taken to be reality. As distancing from the subject renders the scene more lifeless, traces of decay, of a movement that is final as well as cyclical, undermine the supposed timelessness of the image. Even in the scene above, subtle references to death and the abyss of time may be found: the 'ancient abbey', once guardian of souls deceased and promise of everlasting redemption, has itself failed to endure, been reduced to 'remains'. As real and accessible becomes imaginary and unreachable, so that which appeared most stable dissolves into fluidity.[571]

When these counterpoints are removed or overlooked, however, as in the first reading above, this critical sense of flux and alienation is lost and the poet's texts may be again read as unproblematic endorsements of a particular, real, static, simple way of life: Wordsworth the pastoral poet, a-political celebrator of continuity, tradition and nature, through whom – as through the stomping Coleridge satirized by Self – the past may seemingly be lived in the present, history as nature, ideal as reality.[572] It is this

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[571] The position of resignation suggested here parallels de Man's concluding remarks: 'Dissolution thus becomes mutability, asserted as an *unfailing* law that governs the natural, personal, and historical existence of man' (p. 17). This differs from Williams' reading of Wordsworth, which draws, on balance, a more hopeful message of humanity's potential for regeneration. He finds 'a confidence in nature, in its own workings, which at least at the beginning was also a broader, a more humane confidence in men' (p. 127).

[572] Williams (p. 18) identifies a similar process of editing in readings of the classical pastoral: 'Even in […] developments of classical pastoral and other rural literature, which inaugurates tones and images of

Wordsworth, removed from the complexities of literary and historical contexts, that recurs in tourist brochures and magazines, on posters and packaging to advertise places, products and events in the Lake District and beyond: a few well-known quotations applied to images of rolling hills, vernacular buildings or traditional country life. This Wordsworth as regional and national brand is the one dominant in twenty-first century culture, the one seemingly closest to the rhetoric of Westmorland's promotional literature, the one that is the target of Self's satire.

So, how does the barn of Wordsworth's text relate to the 'barns' of Westmorland Services? By quoting verses from Wordsworth's poetry, which are superimposed on prints of local landscape scenery on a wall leading to the toilets – the most trafficked space – of Tebay West, Westmorland appears to express an affinity with the poet's 'romantic' stanzas, and with the positive vision of rural Cumbria that they seem, superficially, to present:

> A sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns.[573]

The 'light of setting suns', overlaid on a photograph of a hillside that is seemingly patterned with the long shadows of scattered trees and buildings, appears literal as well as metaphorical. The glow of twilight in print and text engages nostalgia for a golden age of humans and nature 'deeply interfused', but one which, if lost elsewhere, remains here available to the visitor, a stilled 'spot of time' preserved in the Lake District. In combining print and text, Westmorland gives poetic imagery a material ground. Like the architectural details discussed in the last two sections, however, this quotation, too, points to a contesting of place. Rather than a reverie on Cumbria, it is an excerpt from 'Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey'. In this claiming of Wordsworth's

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an ideal kind, there is almost invariably a tension with other kinds of experience: summer with winter; pleasure with loss; harvest with labour; singing with a journey; past or future with the present. The achievement, if it can be called that, of the Renaissance adaptation of just these classical modes is that, step by step, these living tensions are excised, until there is nothing countervailing, and selected images stand as themselves: not in a living but in an enamelled world. Thus the retrospect of Meliboeus, on the life he is forced to leave, becomes the "source" of a thousand pretty exercises on an untroubled rural delight and peace.' The effect, too, appears similar to that discussed above in the case of Wordsworth: a 'living' world becomes 'enamelled' as an unchallenging image to be consumed in the present.

[573] Wordsworth, 'Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Bank Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798', in Wordsworth and Coleridge, pp. 142-57 (lines 96-8). I reproduce the quotation with the modified punctuation and arrangement of Westmorland's print. The poem describes how nature, 'The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,/ The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul/ Of all my moral being' moved the poet from 'thoughtless youth' into 'purer mind' and 'living soul'.

oeuvre for Westmorland – the company and the region – there is again an act of appropriation that is also an uncontrolled intermixing of places.

While this and the two other direct references to Wordsworth's poetry at Tebay West are short,[574] the image of a mysterious but harmonious rural life that they infer is – as I will later describe – reinforced in a variety of other ways throughout Westmorland's service areas.[575] The landscape of the 'Lake Poets' appears closely related to the 'essence' that Westmorland seeks; an essence seemingly located in a timeless state of natural order and harmony drawn, primarily, from the re-contextualized poetic imagery of a particular historical moment. As the company's sites reference, indeed adopt, this landscape imagery, this essence, this ideal, will not the uncertainties of ownership and autonomy traced in Self's satire and the sense of dissolution and loss repressed by brand Wordsworth be found there, too?

In the next two sections, I explore how Tebay services may be seen as emplaced within so-called 'Wordsworth Country'[576] – this regional brand that links history, literature and landscape. In doing so, my intention is not to claim that a specific text or author is the main influence or, indeed, any form of direct inspiration behind the company's imagery; rather, it is to suggest that Westmorland's identity inhabits and is inhabited by dominant cultural and touristic representations of the region – many of which reference directly Wordsworth and the 'Lake' poets, or are inscribed within an idyllic image selectively drawn from their lines.[577] Westmorland's service areas are, like Wordsworth's texts and the values they have come to represent,

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[574] One quotation, on a print of a view through trees, is from 'Tables Turned':
> One impulse from a vernal wood,
> May teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good,
> Than all the sages can.

The other, a photo of hilltops above the cloud line, is the opening lines of 'Sonnet XXXV' (see Wordsworth, *Complete Poetical Works*, p. 221):
> The world is too much with us; late and soon,
> Getting and spending we lay waste our powers.

Together with the excerpt discussed above, and imagery they seemingly describe, the prints suggest, like the description of the Duddon valley discussed above, human humbleness in relation to nature as moral guide.

[575] Historical prints have recently been removed, or reduced, at both Tebay sites. Halsall, for example, suggests that there were, in 1990, quotations from *The Prelude* at Tebay West.

[576] See: <http://www.wordsworthcountry.com/>. The home page of this unofficial site, offering information and accommodation for tourists, describes Wordsworth Country as 'the Lake District of Cumbria, England' and invites people to 'visit the places William Wordsworth lived and loved'. 'Wordsworth County' is a synonym for Westmorland in H. Rawnsley, *Literary Associations of the English Lakes*, 2 vols (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1894), II.

[577] In the 1835 reprint, Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* specifically marketed the area as a tourist destination, including recommendations of places to stay as well as visit.

read not as intentional constructs, but as events within wider, interrelated cultural currents. How closely, then, do Tebay Services relate to the imagery, fantasies and themes drawn from Self's and Wordsworth's texts, and the ambiguous notions of place and past, subject and object, that these suggest?

Inhuman hut: a veil behind a veil

Where Tebay East and West contradict the local vernacular, I have suggested that they move closer to the poetic imagery of Wordsworth and others. Westmorland's buildings stress the seamless integration of humans and nature, the 'humbleness' of buildings and the otherworldly 'rough' primitiveness of the scene. Yet, Westmorland's relation to the imagery of brand Wordsworth – its ideals and instabilities – is close but not an exact fit: the company's architectural imagery traces a complex position between the differing relations to essence, history and subjectivity so far introduced. I begin at distance – with 'embowering' nature, 'humble' form and material roughness – before moving closer, via discussion of the 'primitive hut', to consider, in the following subsection, view, scale, construction and inhabitation. In the process, I trace a decentring of the human and a complication of historical realities that seem to exceed the satire of Self – and the brand Wordsworth it parodies – to suggest a notion of the ideal related to, but not the same as, note to Sonnet XVII's 'still life'; an ideal between the human and the inhuman, between timeless past and eternal becoming. Again, I concentrate on Tebay East, the later service area, where these trends are more extreme.

Like the barns of Wordsworth's text, both service areas appear located to 'peep out' within the landscape. The northbound site, on ground slightly higher than the motorway, is flanked by two small semicircular coppices of trees – one of which predates M6 construction – that separate buildings and parking areas from the road. On the opposite side of widely-spaced carriageways, the southbound site is in a shallow hollow formed by a gentle declivity – away from the motorway – towards a tributary of the Lune; a natural depression exaggerated by tree-planted earth bunds alongside the road and a large grass-covered mound at the lower (southern) end of the site.[578] Both service areas are thus concealed almost completely from the motorway, and partially from surrounding areas of high ground. As I suggested above, while parking areas are

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[578] On the manufactured landscape of Tebay East, see Dawson, 'Motorway Services with a Touch of Wordsworth'.

clearly part of the road, the buildings seem, especially for the arriving motorist, embedded within the wider landscape, held in place by nature: Tebay West, revealed at the end of a tree-shrouded slip road, is embraced by the woods that flank it; Tebay East, first seen from above, appears cradled within the contours of the landscape. In both cases, pre-existing topographical features are enhanced to achieve this effect: the benefits of 'natural' shelter and of 'embowering' trees have ostensibly been sought. As in Wordsworth's text, nature not only shelters, it veils the impurity of human forms; it blurs boundaries that might otherwise distinguish human from inhuman. It locates the buildings in the eternal time of the land rather than the transient present of the road.

This apparent deference to nature in the buildings' siting is echoed in the form of Westmorland's service areas, and Tebay East, in particular. Viewed in elevation, the 'barn' roofs of Tebay East are, in some places, up to three times the height of the walls; on all sides, projecting eaves cast long shadows that reduce further the walls' perceptible scale. The prominent roofs, which as Dawson notes 'sweep to within a few feet of the ground', seem to manifest the necessity of shelter in an area that has the highest average annual precipitation in England;[579] indeed they suggest that the satisfaction of this basic need – the avoidance of wind and exclusion of water – is the building's primary purpose and the origin of its form: pure shelter. In spite of the local architectural contradictions described in the last sections, the buildings represent an ostensibly 'humble' and utilitarian mode of existence, one that seems to defer to powerful natural forces, to be shaped in response to them, and so to be given 'sanctity' in place by them *[31]*. Recalling the most elemental of constructions, the austere external appearance suggests a correspondingly parsimonious, hermetic and sufficient human presence.[580] Like the barn of Wordsworth's text, it reveals no obvious traces of excess, of what the poet dismisses – in the context of poetic imagery – as 'transitory and accidental ornaments'.[581]

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[579] Dawson, 'Motorway Services with a Touch of Wordsworth'; Meteorological Office, <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/climate/uk/location/england/> [Accessed 16 July 2008].
[580] The notion of architectural form embodying morality is commonly found in treatises on architecture, for example in Vitruvius's *The Ten Books on Architecture* and Renaissance texts that draw from it, in which the classical styles are seen to represent particular virtues. See *The Ten Books on Architecture*, ed. by Morris H. Morgan (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1960), pp. 102-4. One of the most notable associations between simple, sheltering forms and values of nobility, authenticity and propriety is found in Marc-Antoine Laugier's *An Essay on Architecture: In Which its True Principles Are Explained, and Invariable Rules Proposed, for Directing the Judgement and Forming* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1977).
[581] Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802), in Coleridge and Wordsworth, p. 424.

Yet this image also goes beyond humble, exemplifies it to the point of exception: for to represent humbleness the buildings must, in the first instance, be read as human constructs – and this is not necessarily the case. Indeed, from some angles the buildings seem not only responsive to the landscape; they appear to be seamlessly part of it. This effect is (due to the shallow roof pitch) most compelling from distance or from higher land, from where only the roofs of the buildings are visible, apparently hovering just above the ground. The grass-covered mound to the south of Tebay East rises higher than any wall to almost, and from some angles appear to, touch the roofs, so that the latter come to resemble hillocks of slate: emergent, natural landscape features, rather than 'works of man', however humble. Vertical elements – walls, gables, columns, doors – commonly associated with the upright position of human – as opposed to animal – form and the representation of human power,[582] are thus suppressed in favour of an overall image of earth-bound horizontality: this architecture – or rather non-architecture, apparently without design, without premeditation – suggests that humans, if they even exist, are indistinguishable from nature, as nature, rather than a force separate from it. Ostensibly without any human styling, the building seems un-dateable. Distancing from the human present, indeed from any human presence, asserts absolute proximity to nature.

So, whereas the buildings of Wordsworth's texts appear to be objects within a scene, I would argue that Westmorland's sheltering roofs become themselves a veil that functions to 'soften and disguise', indeed to naturalize, the sprawling buildings beneath. Like the veil of twilight that Wordsworth is glad to find unnecessary, this veil of roughness hides a human purpose that vegetation alone would be unable to conceal: building as dissimulation of presence, a veil behind a veil, a veil of absence, a veil of nakedness. Again, I would suggest, Tebay East and, to a lesser degree, Tebay West seems to combine and exceed Venturi, Scott-Brown and Izenour's roadside categories of 'duck' (building form as sign) and 'decorated shed' (building covered with signs): the building as sign, but a sign that conceals itself in ostensibly signless nature, conceals its signification, its significance. In the intricacies of its super-sized roof, it announces without announcing: 'I am not a building', 'I have no inside', 'I have nothing to hide'.[583]

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[582] On verticality as symbol of human/divine order, see Mircea Eliade, *Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. by Willard Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959), pp. 34-7.
[583] See Venturi, Scott-Brown and Izenour, pp. 87-91.

It is useful to note here a key difference between Wordsworth's 'humble works of man' and the 'primitive hut' recurrent in architectural theory – a difference that Westmorland's architecture seems to more than maintain.[584] As Anthony Vidler suggests, such theories, most significantly that of Marc Antoine Laugier, 'which ultimately saw architecture as imitative of the fundamental order of Nature itself, allied the primitive rusticity of the hut to an ideal of perfect geometry, revealed by Newton as the guiding principle of physics.'[585] This emphasis on 'perfect' form and ideal proportions is clearly different from the 'perfection' of eccentricities idealized in note to Sonnet XVII. Rather than humans deferring to a nature unfathomably complex and inherently irregular, references to the 'primitive hut' imply rational deciphering (or divine revelation) and human mastery of natural laws. The result is a harmony with nature that necessarily involves a simultaneous standing out from it: a marker of human distinction as well as similarity, or, to borrow Unwin's identification of two poles in architectural thought and practice, a building that is a 'temple' as well as a 'cottage'.[586]

Joseph Rykwert's exploration of the 'primitive hut' in architectural history draws attention to this centring of the human, by way of a privileged example:

> [The *huppah*] was therefore both an image of the occupants' bodies and a map, a model of the world's meaning. That, if at all, is why I must postulate a house for Adam in Paradise. Not as a shelter against the weather, but as a volume which he could interpret in terms of his own body and which yet was an exposition of the paradisal plan, and therefore established him at the centre of it.[587]

With Westmorland Services seemingly reducing Wordsworth's 'hermitages' and 'remains' to amorphous mounds of stone, the company's 'essence' – of formal dissolution rather than condensation – even more than the poet's imagery, appears diametrically opposed to that of the idealized, upstanding 'primitive hut'. Here, harmony is seemingly found – in building as poetic imagery – not in the object itself,

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[584] Anthony Vidler argues that the 'primitive hut' constitutes one of the 'two dominant typologies' that have 'from the middle of the eighteenth century' 'served to legitimise the production of architecture.' See Anthony Vidler 'The Third Typology', in *Architectural Theory since 1968*, ed. by K. Michael Hays (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), pp. 288-294 (p. 288). For a history of the 'primitive hut', see Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981). Rykwert claims boldly that some relation to the 'primitive hut' 'has been displayed by practically all people at all times, and the meaning given to this elaborate figure does not appear to have shifted much from place to place, from time to time' (p. 183).
[585] Vidler, p. 289. See also: Laugier, *An Essay on Architecture.*
[586] See Unwin, pp. 113-28.
[587] Rykwert, p. 191.

nor in abstract human form, but only in material relations to context; relations that, in the case of Westmorland, deny any human mediation: an ideal ostensibly inhuman.

Sinking structure, standing stones

Westmorland's apparent de-centring of the human position continues at proximity, albeit by different means. Here, details not only maintain the building's more-than-humble veil; they effect a humbling of the subject's visual perception. The interior, its existence no longer denied, nevertheless remains, even at close range, concealed. The front and sides of both Tebay service areas contain few visible openings: low walls are interrupted only by a few narrow slit-windows, the views through which are constrained to perpendicular by the depth of construction; the only large areas of glazing are located beneath deep porticoes or overhangs that conceal in shadow any view into the relatively dimly lit interior. This opacity of the building envelope reinforces the service areas' lithic, sheltering qualities and prevents the contemporary purpose of the interior disrupting the external image of barely human necessity. At the same time, it denies visitors the visual command of immediate surroundings usually afforded by the transparency and bright illumination of contemporary commercial architecture – like the white space discussed in the previous chapter.[588] If the buildings' spreading pitched roofs risk association with suburban supermarket, rather than local hill farm, this is contradicted by the closure of the walls beneath. Made to feel self-conscious by the possibility of unseen eyes watching from within, visitors may, in full knowledge of the building's public purpose, read the closed architecture as private.[589] Even at close range, Westmorland's buildings seem as internally unreadable as the farmsteads of Wordsworth's Duddon Valley; at Tebay Services, however, the denial of views initially promised makes this resistance to the viewer's gaze, this lack of accommodation, more disturbing.

This withholding of the interior is complemented by ambiguities of scale, especially at Tebay East. Despite the high ridge and grand entrance portico, the low walls make the building appear compressed. For the average-height visitor, whose eye-level is above the lowest eaves, there is the unusual experience of entering a building,

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[588] On the 'occularcentrism' of contemporary architecture, see Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*; and on spectacle and transparency in culture, see Baudrillard, *Simulacra*.
[589] On the relation between transparency and openness see discussion in Chapter 1.

its interior unseen, that seems from the outside to be lower in height than their own body, suggesting the need to stoop within.[590] Again, the dignity and dominion of the upright human form appears contested.[591] In part due to the walls' diminutive effect, other elements of the service areas' construction appear over-scaled. The building's squat proportions bring visitors close to timber trusses, described as 'massive' by Dawson. The stout cylindrical stone columns that support them are in height no more than two and a half times their substantial diameter. While visitors may feel they look down on the main roofs of Tebay East, its entrance portico – 'huge' according to the *AJ* reviewer – hangs heavily less than a metre above their heads.[592] So, both extremes of scale – in some places excessive, in others constrained – effect a doubly humbling experience: as though conflating and exaggerating the archetypes of Wordsworth's text, the building mixes elements of 'humble homestead' and 'ruined abbey' into one seamless structure *[32]*. Yet, unlike the poet's clearly defined types, the buildings seem to confound simple categorization. A form of 'temple' emerges beneath the veil of barely 'cottage', but it is far from the erect, elegantly proportioned, human-centred temple of the 'primitive' ideal.

This has implications for the sites' historical placement. Tebay East appears scaled and shaped according to proportions that are not quite human – or at least not of the present – seeming at the same time too large in material components and too low in height. It is as though the buildings are relics of another era, formed by the Herculean feats of diminutive generations past to support a very different way of life.[593] Under the weight of the stone roof, the low walls of the buildings seem to recede into the ground, as though buried or sunken over time, reclaimed and reintegrated into the landscape over the many years since its appearance. Distanced from the contemporary era of their construction, Westmorland's buildings, and Tebay East in particular, seem capable of surviving changes to which those of the present would succumb. As in the texts above, displacement in time appears to promise endurance in place; in this instance an endurance that precedes and may just as well exceed humanity.

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[590] See 'Scale' and 'Geometries of Being', in Unwin, pp. 55, 129-50.

[591] Once inside, however, the space is unexpectedly accommodating: Tebay Services appear smaller on the outside than they do on the inside, and the humbling experience foretold by the exterior is not borne out, physically at least.

[592] Dawson, 'Motorway Services with a Touch of Wordsworth'.

[593] See Unwin, pp. 55, 129-50.

This megalithic association is reinforced by an abundance of large flat stone slabs, up to two metres in length, that form a stepped terrace / amphitheatre against the mound to the south of Tebay East, as well as picnic tables and benches in a separate grassed area accessed directly from the approach road; the latter complemented at its centre by three 'standing stones' arranged in a tight circle – a symbolic community, perhaps, but one of a very different era *[33]*.[594] Material traces of apparent pre-historic inhabitation are evident within the buildings, too. In Tebay West an even bigger slab of rock from Shap hill is the central column that seemingly carries the whole roof structure. In Tebay East, the relic is more recent, but no less impressive in its apparent feat of construction: a thick section of 'dry' stone wall, precisely built in ashlar rather than rubble, appears to support the trusses above. Complete with square stone-lineled windows, this structure seems considerably different from that of the outside walls – the remains of a shepherd's cottage, perhaps, albeit one laboriously assembled.

The seemingly simple jointing of beam to column, vast timber to timber, dry stone to dry stone – ostensibly reliant on gravity alone or at most one basic fixing – visible on the facades of (as well as within) the buildings furthers the myth of construction by 'primitive' ancestors – presumably those of the present occupants – with, one may imagine, great strength, cohesive organisation, and simple but highly refined techniques. As described in chapter one, even at proximity, so far as possible, all signs of technology, of artifice, of the rational, self-reflective human are concealed. In this way, the buildings tap into a cultural fascination and aura surrounding prehistoric structures, such as Stonehenge, the construction of which seems unfathomable from the technology-dependent and efficiency-driven perspective of the present.[595] As the simplicity, weight and roughness of construction details seem to embed the buildings deep into the soil and history of this particular place, unusual proportions, suggesting mysterious origins and purposes, welcome inhabitation by fantasies of the simple, static life and authentic, intuitive practices of another era. If the roof claims silently, 'I am not a building', the columns, portico and standing stones

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[594] On social geometry, see Unwin, pp. 129-50.

[595] Stonehenge and other prehistoric structures feature in television programmes documenting attempts to simulate construction. On Medievalism in popular culture, see Umberto Eco, 'Dreaming the Middle Ages', in *Faith in Fakes: Travels in Hyerreality* (London: Minerva, 1995), pp. 61-72; Veronica Ortenberg, 'Selling the Middle Ages', in *In Search for the Holy Grail: The Quest for the Middle Ages* (London: Continuum, 2006), pp. 225-35.

counterclaim '…but I am still a monument', a monument incomplete, a monument barely human that yet accommodates the human.

Out of time?: The hut in the cave

Returning to the question of Westmorland's 'essence' that introduced the previous two sections and of its placing in time with which this one began, an appeal to brand Wordsworth, to 'romantic' cultural associations, does seem to coincide with many of the buildings' divergences from local vernacular traditions. The exaggeration of natural enclosure, the emphatically sheltering roof, the heavy low structure and simple construction, together with the material qualities already described – local, natural and visibly weathered – enhance the impression of timeless harmony and stability: buildings so well disguised as to be almost invisible in the landscape, yet so massive and heavy that they will always endure the harsh Cumbrian climate. Like those in the 'still life' of Wordsworth's text, Westmorland's buildings appear embedded, petrified in place, or, as the poet describes Peele Castle, 'Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time'.[596] Overlooking, for reasons already described, the service areas' immediate roadside context, the architecture seems to fit closely and timelessly into the local 'natural' context – if not, as already discussed, the architectural one; its history independent of the road it now serves. While change as a purely economic phenomenon is, as already noted, pragmatically embraced by the company, any recent material evidence of it is ostensibly suppressed: architecture – or rather non-architecture – represents continuity and inertia, allowing a new, a-contextual programme to inhabit the site by stealth.

In this sense, Westmorland's buildings lend support to Self's satirical fantasy of an authentic 'romantic' past (in the) present. Yet there are already signs, too, that the devices used in this veiling – the juxtaposition of different scales and historical eras – generate uncanny and contradictory experiences that challenge the initial impression of simple rural familiarity, that exceed not only local vernacular precedents, but also the cultural ideal of brand Wordsworth. For, as I have traced above, the buildings do not exactly replicate the harmony or consistency of imagery described in note to Sonnet XVII. While Westmorland's buildings appear related to Wordsworth's homesteads and

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[596] Wordsworth, 'Elegiac Stanzas: Suggested by A Picture of Peele Castle, in a Storm, Painted by Sir George Beaumont', in *Complete Poetical Works*, p. 463 (line 51).

Brunskill's 'Christmas Calendar' barns, they also refer beyond them, to extremes of contextuality and markers of authenticity further removed from the images of rural dwelling, life and society traced previously. The movement is subtle but significant: from 'humble works' of an active (albeit invisible) agrarian community to mighty structures of barely human settlement, from quotidian specificity to immemorial ambiguity, from harmony with nature to a monumentality invisible within it. Two related observations on the external appearance of Westmorland's service areas, are important here.

First, the two buildings, especially Tebay East, suggest a complex relation to time that combines linear human progress and timeless non-human stability, thereby placing the former within the latter. Westmorland's veil of roughness, I will argue, allows the company to grow while everything else remains still.

On the one hand, the service areas appear located in historicity in general rather than a particular historical moment. The 'essence' of Westmorland's 'hill farm' seems to be found not in a single, ostensibly present, historical reality – preserved (or recreated), lifelike 'in state' – but through a history of natural inhabitation: not one golden age, but the summation of many. Standing stones suggest prehistoric settlement; mounds, thick walls, narrow windows could be traces of medieval fortification; stout stone columns and timber trusses recall Tudor tithe barns or churches; low slate roofs affirm Wordsworth's eighteenth-century homestead (as they contradict the building traditions of the bank barn).[597] Far from an archaeology of place, this (re)presented past, smoothly integrating its multiple references, does not resemble relics curated for discrete appreciation or objective comparison as in a museum – or, to a far more limited extent, in the service areas explored in the last chapter. Rather, it seems to gather traces of different periods into an ongoing, unexplained foundational narrative of the present place. The buildings may be read as humble, but also strong, heroic, brave, chivalrous and pious. Here it seems to be an appeal to the accumulation of times, not timelessness, that guarantees authenticity: rather than the perpetually 'humble' and 'scattered' natural life of the eighteenth century, there is a continuous and uninterrupted outgrowth from nature, from the most ancient of immemorial origins, at the beginning of time.

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[597] I describe and interrogate some of these associations in more detail in the next section.

What is significant here is the evocation of change, of historical progress – an additive progress that seemingly re-appropriates past structures without destroying them – that resists the 'still life' of brand Wordsworth and the precisely relived past/'living history' of Self's fantasy. Indeed, these details visually guard against the 'decay' that Dunning feared 'resisting change' would inevitably induce: a second coming down from the mountain, from isolation, from the ideal. But there is danger here, too: as the avoidance of a claim to a particular reality reduces the implication of lifeless repetition – of the finality that haunts Wordsworth's text – the absolute stability of the ideal risks replacement by precarious economies of difference and becoming, of mortality. For a company concerned to distance itself from the transient culture of the road, the suggestion of historical change, however slight, of a relation to fragments of a past differing from the present, risks undermining claims to unquestionable authenticity and autonomy.

On the other hand, however, these signs of human progress are always contested and circumscribed by others, discussed above, that deny it absolutely: the danger of this flux becoming uncontrolled, excessive or usurped appears contained by the embrace of Tebay's rough roofs, by the veil that suppresses any distinction from context, any human mark upon an unchanging landscape. The resulting imagery asserts continuity *and* change, stasis *and* flow, natural order *and* historical development: human growth within nature, without impact upon nature. Here, Westmorland's imagery seems to coincide with what Derrida refers to – in the context of Rousseau's attempt to define a moment of perfect balance between nature and culture – as 'the ungraspable limit of the *almost*':

> Neither nature nor society, but *almost* society. Society in the process of birth. The moment when man, no longer belonging, or almost not belonging, to the state of pure nature […] holds himself still short of society, or almost so. It is the only means of restoring the becoming-culture of nature. The family, which Hegel too will call prehistoric, the hut, the language of gestures and inarticulate sounds, are the indications of that *almost*. The 'savage' life of hunters, the 'barbaric' and pre-agricultural life of shepherds, correspond to this state of almost-society.[598]

Here, the rough veil appears to preserve this impossible moment of the *almost*, 'the becoming-culture of nature'. Authentic culture appears in perpetual emergence from pure nature, one within the other. As Westmorland's buildings develop hermit-like

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[598] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 253.

beneath their rough shell, the suggestion is not of a past before the division of humans and nature, as a sort of Eden before the fall, but of an ideal trajectory that both transcends and denies the fall. For the Rousseau of Derrida's reading, nature and humans are both fully present: one perfectly formed, the other in perfect development, in harmony and yet distinct. The importance of this imagery for Westmorland is clear: it allows the company to grow without losing its grounding in context, to be *almost* present and *almost* absent at the same time, to build a monumental hut. This is not an ideal, detached 'primitive' hut, but an inchoate, emergent hut for the *almost* human, the human *almost* standing, but without leaving the humble shelter of the cave. As the company's plaque puts it: to be 'entirely of this place […] of the Cumbrian lakes and hills' and at the same time 'of their past and of their future' – a future that is nothing more than a pure accumulation of the past. The service area buildings are thus not read as epitaphs because nothing appears to have passed away. This is a stillness that nevertheless cannot quite be placed. Instead of Wordsworth's illusory and double-edged 'still life', Westmorland presents a life ever growing, a life without death.

Second, this *almost* opening to the present, this challenge to the absolute difference of the past, belies another distancing of visiting subject from material context, outside(r) from inside(r), more pronounced than that traced in Self's and Wordsworth's texts. This past, too, resists appropriation. For the conflation of temporal and a-temporal imagery described above means there is no precisely placeable past (or present) into which the visitor may be smoothly 'transported'. In this reading, a human presence first denied by the naturalism of building form is then decentred at close range by the lack of recognizable signs of use or inhabitation, such as human scale windows or doors, and thus of any trace of domesticity. Overlaid upon the 'humble homestead', there are signs of inhuman landscape and barely human monument. So, while the buildings may still inspire rural fantasies similar in some ways to those traced through Wordsworth's text, these multiply incomplete and contested scenes appear even less accessible, less present – more alive, perhaps, but less liveable. The visitor is seemingly kept out of place.

If this composite imagery does not promise Self's or Wordsworth's specific past in the present, neither does it provoke the sense of absolute loss found in a fuller reading of the poet's work. From the public responses already noted, this certain degree of detachment – familiar with unfamiliar, presence with absence, proximity with alienation – would seem to increase, rather than undermine, the sites' appeal.

Again, what might be seen as resistance to outside influence appears at the same time to serve the viewer's gaze. Barthes notes at the scale of landscape a similar relation between traveller and travelled, which recalls earlier discussions of 'roughness' and 'dispersion'. In his reading of *The Blue Guide*, the recurrent references to 'picturesque' scenery, 'found anytime the ground is uneven', are associated with a pleasurable experience of resistance: 'It is […] the gracelessness of the landscape, its lack of spaciousness or human appeal, its verticality, so contrary to the bliss of travel, which account for its interest.' As with Westmorland's exterior, it is not only 'human appeal' that is lacking from the landscape of the *Guide* as read by Barthes, 'the human life of a country disappears to the exclusive benefit of its monuments.'[599] The service areas, I suggest, respond to a similar desire for the seemingly uncultivated, uncultured, asocial and unrefined, for the inhuman experienced at distance, detached from the privations such a reality might entail. As Barthes puts it, the *Guide* offers 'image and essence without feeling any of its ill-effects'.[600]

Westmorland's veiled facades, like the *Guide*'s descriptions of travel destinations, offer imagery that, despite its material detail, is not easily read in depth or historically placed, and so disguises its power to affect, its significance. By rendering uncertain the building's relation to the present, this stretching through time reduces expectations of connection with the past – and the alienation, described by Belsey at the 'living history' museum, that results from its irreconcilable otherness. If history is understood, as Belsey suggests, as a 'relation to the past', Westmorland's exteriors seem to keep that historical relation stable and yet undefinable.[601] Barthes' critique goes on to draw a link between this apparent loss of meaning, of connection between subject and object, and a condition of *almost* presence, *almost* absence, similar to that traced above:

> To select only monuments suppresses at one stroke the reality of the land and that of its people, it accounts for nothing of the present, that is, nothing historical, and as a consequence, the monuments themselves become undecipherable, therefore senseless. What is to be seen is thus constantly in the process of vanishing, and the *Guide* becomes, through an operation common to all mystifications, the very opposite of what it advertises, an agent of blindness.[602]

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[599] Barthes, *Mythologies*, p. 74.
[600] Barthes, *Mythologies*, p. 74.
[601] Belsey, 'Reading Cultural History', p. 116-117
[602] Barthes, *Mythologies*, p. 76.

Westmorland's buildings may be said to function similarly: a veil of familiar signifiers promise placement in time, which is, if not denied, at each turn deferred.

So, Westmorland's external imagery suggests, I argue, a 'still life' similar to that in Wordsworth's texts, but also goes beyond it to rescue it from death – or at least give that appearance. Here, an apparent stillness of place is bound to a life indistinct and unplaceable in time, both of which in the same move verify and challenge each other. Whereas Wordsworth's text moves decisively from the seemingly accessible to the irretrievably inaccessible, Westmorland's external imagery remains always *almost* accessible: not a singular past made present, but multiple pasts *almost* present; a vanishing of presence that, unlike that in the poet's text, conceals even its vanishing. Exploration of this particular seduction and its implications for Westmorland's claims to local specificity will be key to the next section, in which I also look at how these relations appear different once within Westmorland's buildings. For the interior reaffirms a specific and recognizable historical context, one that seems, initially at least, closer to that ostensibly described by Wordsworth's text and indulged by Self. While the company's exterior tends to deny any relations to recognizably human activity, the interior supplements landscape views with a particular social context of people in place. How will this reassertion of the familiar and the homely affect the play of past and present, proximity and distance, subject and object, authenticity and imitation that I have read in the buildings' exteriors? What kind of notion of the human emerges in the necessarily much more contemporary transactions of Westmorland's indoor spaces?

The place of power

Before moving into the interior, it is useful to consider how Westmorland's architecture constructs relations between inside and outside, beginning by looking again at the expressive horizontality, particularly apparent at Tebay East. As already suggested, verticality of building form is a regional trait not unique to the bank barn. Beginning with the earliest surviving examples, stone buildings in the area tend to be at least two storeys in height and, although sometimes long in the direction of the ridge, always shallow in cross-section. Besides the constructional expediency of the short span and minimal footprint, these proportions were, according to Brunskill, then

vital as a means of defence against persistent raids from across the nearby Scottish border.[603] Although Brunskill suggests that the most striking of these types, the tower house 'has attracted a good deal of romantic interest and a train of legend',[604] these material traces of regional instability and human aggression suggest a romanticism different from the timeless, 'peaceful retirement' of Wordsworth's text. Thus, it is, perhaps, little surprise that the horizontality of Westmorland's architecture denies any reference to these local historical precedents, and follows instead the more commonly recognized image of a grounded, 'humble', vernacular.

This formal move, which appears to distance the company from regional instability, might be expected also to deny any claim to the human power and dominion with which vertical structures are often associated: the service area buildings ostensibly represent submission rather than control. However, the history of the region suggests that a reading informed by local precedents could be different. Brunskill argues that the security offered by height was minimal and that raiders could still besiege and smoke out inhabitants if help arrived too slowly.[605] Verticality would, in this context, appear to signify vulnerability as well as power – the vulnerability of power. Conversely, Westmorland's horizontality, which has so far been taken as a sign of humbleness, may, on the contrary, indicate the assurance of power and wealth unchallenged. For deep plan forms centred on and extending along two crossed axes – comparable to that of Tebay East – appeared in the region only during the late seventeenth century when increased wealth and security allowed, for the first time, the construction of large houses with plans several rooms deep as well as wide.[606] As Pevsner notes of the preceding period: 'More formal or ornamental plans are extremely rare. No E-plans, no H-plans'.[607] Even from the seventeenth century onwards, the

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[603] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 28-39. See also Pevsner, p. 21: 'Throughout the Middle Ages, and especially from the late thirteenth century onwards, the North of England was in permanent danger of Scottish invasion, or at least of cattle-stealing expeditions.'

[604] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p. 38. Other than the tower house (also known as peel or pele tower), the bastle house, another form of fortified dwelling, is also a typical early stone building of the region. Fortified churches are also found in the area.

[605] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p. 31: 'To Judge from sixteenth century accounts of border raiding, the master of the house, being warned of approaching raiders, would drive stock into the barmkin enclosure, then shut up his family and the tenants behind the door and iron grille of his tower house, waiting for the raiders to leave in search of a less well-protected prey or for help to arrive. Defence, therefore, was largely passive and intended to counter lightly armed raiders rather than armies properly equipped for a siege. Attack depended upon surprise or the use of fire to burn down the door or smoke out the defenders.'

[606] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 39-49.

[607] Pevsner, p. 28.

tendency was still to breadth rather than depth in the case of most large houses, with a double-pile (two-room deep) plan replacing the single-pile without departure from a simple double-pitched roof structure.[608] So, might the layout of Tebay East, the twin axes of which are clearly visible in the cross-hip roof form, have more in common with the architect-designed mansion than the vernacular farmstead? Compared to the efficiency and economy identified in the bank barn's compact form, the sprawling, squat arrangement of both service areas appears extravagant. Might Westmorland's humble 'hill farm' be noble manor in disguise?

Distancing from the land: life without work

The morphology of the hill farm and the socio-cultural narrative associated with it provide background to such a claim. *Vernacular Architecture of the Lake Counties* describes the development of the Lakeland farm as a shift from a compact vertical or linear form towards a more extensive courtyard layout. In early examples, derived from the tower, bastle or longhouse,[609] humans and animals are together under the same roof, perhaps even within the same air space.[610] For, as Brunskill notes, 'the association of a farming family and its cattle is an ancient one; […] there are even traditions that the heat and smell of the cattle was at one time considered a benefit'.[611] As farms expand, however, additional agricultural buildings – barn, byre, stable, cart-shed and granary – are typically built around the yard in front of the house to form parallel, L-, U-shaped or four-sided enclosures. Although one later form, the laithe-house, maintains the linear arrangement, even here, the visual and functional distinction between the sections containing house and barn is more pronounced.[612] While this development corresponds to an increase in the size of holdings and greater regional security, the separation of house from more utilitarian and unpleasant parts of the farm suggests a significant change in the relation between people and land, domesticity and labour, inhabitants and outsiders. As Brunskill explains: 'On the larger

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[608] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 42-44; 62-63.

[609] The bastle house is described by Brunskill as 'a two-storey elongated defensive dwelling, including provision for refuge for animals as well as their owners and acting as a smaller substitute for a tower house and barmkin [the defensive enclosure around a house].' *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 33-34.

[610] The longhouse 'cross-passage' may lead directly to the living room on one side and to an animal 'downhouse' on the other. Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p. 57.

[611] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p. 57.

[612] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 78-82. The laithe-house is a later form of the longhouse, but without 'cross passage' and thus separate external entrances to house and agricultural spaces. The section containing house may be whitewashed while the rest is left as unfinished rubble stone.

and later farms, the farmhouse was set apart from the farm buildings to reflect a social distinction.'[613] An architectural division represents the separation of the human from the inhuman and, it would seem, the greater the distance, the more civilized the occupants.

This process of detachment is not only traceable in the physical spacing of buildings and functions; changes in principal aspects and prospects further heighten the experience of separation. Whereas farmhouses in linear and parallel layouts are reached through and usually look out over the yard – complete with animals and dungheap in the foreground – those in L- and U-shaped arrangements tend to face outwards, with main entrance and principal rooms addressing open fields and unsullied views; on farms large enough to have a full courtyard, the house may be wholly detached and approached by a separate access road.[614] As the yard is contained to the rear of the buildings, a clear distinction is established between a representative public 'front' and a utilitarian private 'back': the farm is concealed from and by a house to be seen and from which to see. This does more than distance inhabitants from the mess, dirt, noise and smell – the animality – of the farm; by repressing all spaces associated with labour, it presents the fantasy of a humanity free from work.

A similar differentiation of spaces and experiences may be observed in the interior of farmhouses. While long- and tower houses are based on a single large living space focussed on a hearth, where all family activities – cooking, dining, sleeping – take place, the later double-pile houses separate these activities into specific rooms: larger rooms for dining and entertaining at the front and smaller service rooms at the back.[615] Thus, the increased social status of the building is not on offer to all, even to all of those who dwell at the house. The detachment of the kitchen and laundry from public areas and their removal to the rear of the house – nearer to the animals and farmyard – continues the repression of labour into the interior of the building. As the farm is arranged to deny its dependence on the landscape, the house conceals inconvenient necessities of dwelling, together with those – farm workers, servants and women – engaged in them. In this way, the changed relation to context read in the development of larger farms is contingent upon social position: it is exclusive by excluding those who are categorized as lesser humans as well as animals.

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[613] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p. 81.
[614] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, p. 82.
[615] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 28-65.

As material bonds between house and context are concealed, visual relations between inhabitants and countryside appear to become stronger. As areas of dirt and toil, consumption and defecation, cultivation and domestication necessary for the everyday activities of the farm are repressed this leaves a 'natural' landscape unmarked by the human activities that nevertheless produce, sustain and depend on it. Larger areas of glazing allow the landscape to vie with the hearth as the focus of rooms, while porches and other spaces designed principally for the viewing of surroundings become more numerous in building plans.[616] If the tight enclosure of earlier and smaller farms suggests a life alternating between extremes of shelter from and exposure to natural forces, these later and larger houses imply a condition of comfort and balance, whereby inhabitants are always in sight of surroundings but never compelled to be in touch with them: nature always present, but in mediated form. Context, it seems, comes to exist primarily as image; an image that, once composed, framed and presented to the gaze, appears reassuringly stable and controlled.

As physical detachment from the land signifies independence from nature, possession of the view indicates greater power over it. A comfortable and commanding position within a productive landscape is ostensibly acquired and maintained without effort or consequence; the historic bind between rural settlement and agrarian labour is symbolically broken. In this way, the ostensibly autonomous house represents its inhabitants as autonomous subjects liberated from quotidian concerns for food or shelter – from corporeal aspects of human existence – for whom nature is merely a place of pleasure and play. Following Lacan's notion of identity formation – of a bind between subjectivity and context, self and other – building and landscape are here moulded to reflect and produce an idealized image of humanity; an identity of autonomy bound, paradoxically, to the context from which it claims separation.[617]

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[616] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 40-9.

[617] See Lacan, 'Mirror Stage'. On identification with imagery and architecture, see: Neil Leach, '9/11', *Diacritics*, 33.3-4 (2003), 77-92; Leach, 'Belonging: Towards a Theory of Identification with Space', in Habitus: *A Sense of Place*, ed. by Jean Hillier and Emma Rooksby, 2nd edition (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 296-311; and Christian Metz, *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier*, trans. by Celia Britton and others (London: Macmillan Press, 1982).

Back to front: presenting place

How do Tebay Services relate to these narratives of repression and aestheticization, of distancing between human and inhuman, public and private, served and servant? Westmorland's claims to vernacular authenticity promise a reunification of oppositions: a return to a less mediated relationship to landscape and a less hierarchical organization of spaces. However, consideration of the sequence of visitor experiences at Tebay East – where, again the effect is more pronounced – in particular the contrast between the two key moments where inside and outside meet, reveals a more complex situation.

The entrance facade facing the car park, the service area's obvious 'front', is, as suggested above, configured to be looked at but not through. With closed elevations and shadowed entrances, the buildings appear as regions of texture and colour flat against the scaleless background of hills behind: depth appears reduced. No interior, no middle ground connecting human activity and surrounding landscape is visible: people seem to vanish into a dark interior. In doing so, the buildings recall the 'humble' exterior of small vernacular farms and barns. Yet, in the contemporary roadside context, this exterior appears defensive: while the buildings' materials and form suggest visual continuity with the landscape, the closed nature of the outer surface constitutes a physical barrier between the realm of vehicles that runs to the base of the walls and the seemingly 'unvitiated' nature that lies beyond. The meeting of national roadway and locality is ostensibly abrupt and immediate yet impenetrable: the inviting familiarity of the 'Christmas Calendar' scene is contradicted by the shadowy, non-porous facade. The building takes the position of gateway to a private landscape. Yet this is not in order to conceal, as it was in the larger farms described above; it is, I will argue, to protect.

Once inside, 'front' becomes 'back'. The prospect of the larger houses described above looked out over the route of approach. At Tebay East, by contrast, small windows to the front and a deep entrance lobby direct attention away from the vehicles and roadside paraphernalia encountered on arrival. Instead, the interior points towards a second 'front' that projects beyond the far end of the building, fully glazed up to the gabled roof, to offer views over fields and fells. Deep within the building, the landscape appears suddenly unveiled: that which was private is put on show. Again, as in the exterior view, the middle ground is suppressed: a large pool directly adjoins the

footings on the southern and eastern sides of both buildings, so that reality meets reflection in a view composed of 'natural' landscape and sky only. Like the ha-ha of a country house, the water and its reflections smooth the boundary between cultivated and uncultivated land, so that wild 'nature' seems to begin at the outer surface of the glass.[618] Indeed, the pools effect the experience of a hide: various species of bird – an animal group commonly associated with freedom – swim on and swoop low over the water, within a few metres of diners *[34]*.

The water ensures the purity of the image; it is a barrier, a moat that includes rather than excludes – excludes by including – anything human or material that would otherwise corrupt the scene. Thus, a close-up view of the 'natural' environment is offered in a manner that seems to leave the latter entirely undisturbed by the viewer's presence. With this arrangement, the service areas not only remove other humans from view, they appear to erase any distinction between the self and the object of its gaze. An ostensibly direct, unmediated relation is set up between inside and outside, self and other: ownership of the view, denied from the outside, is from the inside assumed. Arranged over two levels – one approximately a metre below the other – and centred, like an amphitheatre, on the landscape as stage, the dining area of Tebay East maximizes views of the scene. The avoidance of piped music within both service areas – striking in contrast to the multi-media experiences of Hopwood and Donington – allows the possibility of this connection to be aural as well as visual. As one reviewer claims, 'the only sounds are from sheep and their lambs, nesting rooks and gulls circling over the lake'.[619]

A key difference in plan organization appears key to the production of this illusory continuity. For, while both Tebay buildings are arranged according to a functional division comparable to that found in the larger farms – a visible public 'front' is divided from a concealed private 'back' of kitchens, stores and service yard – this act of separation is itself obscured. A ninety degree rotation of the service zone – from the back to the side of the plan – introduces, in its place, a second, ostensibly public, 'front' opposite the first. This removal of utilitarian areas to the periphery of the plan, where they interrupt neither the physical nor the visual trajectory of the

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[618] On the significance of the ha-ha and similar landscape devices, see Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 215-17.

[619] See Loudon, 'Services with a smile'.

visitor, gives the impression of a building apprehended in its entirety – at least once the visitor has progressed beyond the entrance lobby.[620] Thresholds to kitchens and other service areas are well screened, or via doors painted to match the walls. The double orientation thus constitutes a more thorough repression of utility and labour than that identified in larger farms, where the inaccessibility of the rear nevertheless draws attention to the absent presence of hidden spaces and activities; a conspicuous detachment from mundane tasks that constitutes an effective means of establishing and displaying a status different from those still engaged in them. Conversely, at Tebay East, it is not only the service zone but the very act of being served that is hidden. This layout in which every space appears accessible addresses visitors as members of the 'family' that works the 'hill farm'; a romanticized domestic-agrarian space – like that of the early buildings described above – that signifies proximity between people, tasks, roles and experiences. Divisions of labour and status are ostensibly removed within a building that seems more humble and self-sufficient because nothing appears to be held in reserve or required as support.

Crossed axes, controlling access

While the double repression of service – compartmentalized and out of view – unifies the interior around the domestic space of the family, Tebay East also elaborates the role of the building as mediator between subject and context. The mastery apparently granted to the visitor is not as complete as the prospect would suggest. Where a tower house would be enclosed by a fence – a 'barmkin' – to physically defend material property against external attack,[621] the pools appear to protect the service areas' visual and cultural property from a danger that comes from within. Visual immediacy seems to be offered only in return for physical separation, and even this visual connection is not on offer to all. Whereas the nineteenth century visitor is kept always at the 'front' of the house, the visitor to Tebay Services seems never to escape the 'back'. At Tebay East, in particular, movement from entrance to landscape is subtly controlled in a number of ways.

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[620] As I discuss later in this chapter, the entrance lobby initially disguises the significance of the long axis, and it is only once within the dining areas that the concealment of a 'back' of house service zone alongside served dining areas begins.

[621] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 28-31.

The first of these is spatial: an architecture of discrete rooms – defined (at least partially) by walls and by differentiated floor or ceiling treatments – means that the visitor must navigate into and through a series of separate volumes – entrance, restaurant servery and high level dining area – before they attain the proximity to nature described above. This corridor-less organization increases the number of thresholds that must be traversed; each of which implicitly questions the visitors' right and reason to proceed.[622] Whereas circulation spaces or routes are the dominant organizational and even visual feature of many transport buildings, at Tebay Services this is not the case: apart from the entrance hall, no zone is obviously set aside for movement; and the rectangular geometry and symmetrical layout of rooms imply stasis rather than motion.

Second, this results in a high degree of visual separation between the two sides of the building: although there are two ways to reach the dining area, openings between spaces are staggered so that neither is presented clearly to those arriving. Instead, they see surfaces lined with signs and advertisements for facilities, services and products available on- and off-site. Not only is the experience of the view deferred; its existence is initially concealed. Compared to the open plans and internal transparency found in the service areas of Chapter 1, movement through Westmorland's buildings is not actively encouraged.

Third, a functional distinction between the entrance zone along the front elevation and the rest of the building behind establishes a hierarchy between different types of visitor. Reversing a pattern common to the majority of large service areas, what are, in the majority of cases, the most urgently desired facilities, the toilets, are placed at the front of the building instead of the back. Here, there are no contortions of plan and circulation to draw visitors past every other facility before finding relief. Together with the shop, which flanks the entrance on the opposite side to the toilets, this arrangement ensures that those seeking immediate refreshment get what they want without needing to venture deeper into the concealed depths of the building. Here there is no obvious *promenade architecturale*, and, if the landscape is a 'magnet', it is, from the entrance lobby, well shielded.[623] Thus the wall dividing entrance foyer from servery functions as a filter that differentiates and divides Westmorland's 'own

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[622] See Unwin, p. 55.
[623] On the *promenade architecturale* and 'magnet' stores, see the discussion in Chapter 1.

clientele' from other visitors. Indeed, Dawson notes at the time of its opening that, compared to the rest of the building which 'acknowledge[s] the importance of landscape and the local vernacular', 'another culture' is found in the service area shop – 'motorway kitsch circa 1994'.[624] The aspects of roadside provision that do not fit the image the company hopes to project are contained within the entrance zone. Recalling the layout of a large farm, the utilitarian functions are grouped around an internal 'farmyard' to the 'rear' of the main house; an analogy that places arriving visitors on the side of animals and workers: outsiders are kept in their place. Despite imagery that emphasizes humbleness and community, the building appears structured to promote exclusivity and separation.

To step briefly back outside Tebay East, this tension appears manifest – and these structures of internal organisation paralleled – in the crossed axes that mark the building's external appearance: within a seemingly homogenous form and surface, two different tendencies will be seen to emerge, outside and then – returning to the processes of differentiation and deferral introduced above – inside. From the front, the service area is defined by two pitched roofs that meet at right angles, one with a ridge slightly higher than the other. The two roofs shelter buildings of subtly different characters: the open gable end of the taller roof addresses arriving visitors and projects to form a canopy over a fully-glazed entrance. Set back, with a lower eaves as well as ridge height, the second roof extends symmetrically on both sides of the first, atop low walls broken only by a few narrow openings. The juxtaposition of these two axes – one lofty and open, the other low and closed – gives Tebay East an ambiguous relation to the vernacular architecture it claims to follow. For the service area may be read as a hybrid of (at least) two subtly but significantly different rural precedents: a sunken bank barn, specifically the threshing barn that constitutes its upper floor, and the tithe barn.

Alongside properties already described – rectangular plan, double-pitched roof – the threshing part of the bank barn typically has a full height entrance located roughly in the centre of the up-slope side. This basic arrangement is commonly supplemented on the same side by 'outshuts' – lean-to enclosures formed beneath extensions of the roof – which ostensibly lower the eaves height.[625] Tithe barns take a

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[624] Dawson, 'Motorway Services with a Touch of Wordsworth'.
[625] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 82-86.

similar basic form, but are generally several bays longer, grander in dimensions and more ecclesiastical in layout and appearance: broad-side entrances, located nearer one end rather than centrally, are given greater prominence by gabled porches, some extending to the height of the main roof; and in a few cases there is an additional entrance in one gable end.[626] So, if the portico is overlooked, the lateral axis of Tebay East appears not dissimilar from the up-slope side of a bank barn, with low-eaved outshuts on both sides of a central entrance. The hipped roofs, already identified as incongruous to this image in their prominence, might be seen to appropriate and multiply a detail found locally, albeit rarely, on some horse engine houses attached to barns:[627] rather than an exact threshing barn, the lateral axis is an assemblage of local agricultural details related to it. Taken together with the portico, however, the crossed axes, and, especially, the prominent gable entrance seem more consistent with the features of a tithe barn. In this way, the building recalls both barn types (and others), while evading certain identification with either.

The conjunction of these ostensibly similar architectures appears far less harmonious or 'natural' when their differing purposes and cultural associations are considered: while threshing barns were 'humble' places of labour in which grains were processed and then stored for the farm's use; tithe barns were a repository for the products of this labour where a contribution from each farm was taken under the supervision of a local religious authority. Significantly, tithe barns of a scale and arrangement comparable to the service area are found only in southern England, where more fertile soils brought higher yields:[628] this association with the tithe barn does more than signify power, it also indicates a level of wealth and security alien to the region. Thus, Tebay East mixes the architectures of local farmer and religious authority, autonomous individual and (inter-)national institution, and the two – represented by the differing characters of the two axes – seem locked in competition for precedence over the building's exterior and, as will become apparent, its interior. This is already more than just another example of a national language of rurality infiltrating and overlaying the locally specific; with a disguise more than surface deep, the service area seems to masquerade as two very different buildings at once.

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[626] Brunskill, *Traditional Farm Buildings*, pp. 34-47.
[627] Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 87-9.
[628] Brunskill, *Traditional Farm Buildings*, pp. 34-47.

These crossed axes and architectures foretell very different interior experiences, which ally these differing 'Christmas Calendar' images of traditional buildings with differing experiences of the contemporary roadside. While the centrality and symmetry of Tebay East's front elevation suggest an axial layout within, it remains unclear from outside which of the two axes will be internally more significant. The breadth of the facade, exaggerated by the horizontality of details, suggests a shallow building primarily organized along the cross axis. This would be consistent with a bank barn, in which a shallow plan is typically centred on the axis of entry, so that storage and service spaces flank a central threshing floor. Such an arrangement is also found in some smaller broad-fronted contemporary roadside buildings where facilities are clustered around three sides of a squat entrance hall.[629] However, the height, breadth and prominence of Tebay East's portico argue to the contrary for a dominant longitudinal axis and a deep plan; for elsewhere on the motorway network, in larger service areas, such as Strensham northbound, a similar entrance would likely open onto a central arcade with facilities located on both sides. This would be closer to the internal organization of large tithe barns – especially those most ecclesiastical in form – where it is the axis of the main ridge that commands a deep plan in the same way as a nave typically dominates a church. With a main entrance in the gable end aligned with the longitudinal axis, Tebay East pushes this religious association to an extreme. So, overlaid in the same building, low, closed, shallow, centrally-focused and commonplace are brought together in the lateral 'bank/threshing barn', as lofty, open, deep, axially-focussed, stately and spiritual are united in the longitudinal 'tithe barn'/church that bisects it. This would seem to allow Tebay East to present itself differently to different visitors, and to hide its depth – externally, as internally – from those the company might wish to dissuade from venturing too far within. How then do these ambiguous, and seemingly contradictory, external readings relate to the interior, and to the distancing of the building's two 'fronts' explored above?

Country barn, country house

The external differentiation of the two axes corresponds closely with the internal programmatic distinction already described: the lofty and open longitudinal axis

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[629] See, for example, Moto's Scotch Corner (A1, 1980).

accommodates the 'noble' trajectory of the building – the slow unveiling of landscape via entrance hall, restaurant / servery and dining area; the lowly and closed lateral axis houses the 'humble', utilitarian facilities – shop, takeaway café, toilets, information point, public telephones and slot machines. This distinction is spatially as well as functionally apparent. The low suspended ceilings of shop and café accentuate the claustrophobic feel of these tightly packed spaces; the sloping ceiling of the men's toilets necessitates stooping at the urinals; and irregular geometries and contorted spaces indicate subservience to a more dominant programme. Entrance hall excepted, the white-painted plaster walls and ceiling of the cross-axis show no sign of the natural materials exhibited elsewhere. Within this externally more contextual section of the building, the local rural myth is abandoned and a 'humbleness' of expedient contemporary construction and planning replaces the aesthetic, romanticized humbleness of the outside. By contrast, the entrance hall, restaurant and dining rooms are more generously proportioned and each experienced as a complete room.[630] As an enfilade of discrete spaces, this longitudinal axis has much in common with interiors designed by nationally renowned architects of grand houses, such as Robert Adam or John Vanbrugh.[631] The restaurant / servery, rectangular in plan, is circular in experience: counters and screen walls trace a circumference, while, above, the timber trusses of the entrance hall and dining room give way to a taught canvas, held in conical form between two ring-beams *[35]*. This constitutes a circular 'saloon' at the centre of a stately progression from rectangular entrance hall to dining 'loggia' overlooking 'garden'. So, within the 'tithe barn' axis lie, in outline at least, the principal rooms of a country house; a house of sufficient stature to include a saloon, a prestige space for the ostentatious hosting of many guests.[632] Inside, as outside, Tebay East may be read as two overlapping axes, one noble, the other humble.

The axes meet in the entrance hall, but inside, as on the outside, neither takes clear precedence: the pitched roof emphasizes the longitudinal axis, yet the proportions of the space – wider than it is deep – follow the lateral axis. Even the facilities located adjacent to the entrance hall appear to be given equal valence: to the left, the shop

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[630] Although not so axially marked, a similar distinction between a 'humble' entrance area and a more expansive, 'noble' dining area in front of the landscape is also found at Tebay West. As Loudon notes with satisfaction, in 'Services with a Smile': 'Even the ubiquitous arcade game machines are tucked away in an anteroom to cause minimal disturbance.'

[631] See for example Stowe House and Osterley House, discussed in Girouard, pp. 136, 210-11, 240-2

[632] On the social significance of the saloon, see Girouard, pp. 201-4.

spills into the space through a wide, low opening; to the right the café annexes some of the entrance floor area; while ahead, the potential continuity of the pitched roof is interrupted by a full height wall, constraining restaurant access to another low horizontal opening. Internally, as externally, the building continues to deny a simple reading: distinctions that later become apparent spatially, materially, functionally and qualitatively are initially concealed behind an entrance space that presents the building as a non-hierarchical whole. As the whiteness of the shopping centre or typical motorway service area – discussed in Chapter 1 – accommodates and presents different facilities and franchises, no matter how disparate, within one unifying enclosure, Tebay East offers two different architectural experiences – one introverted and utilitarian, the other seemingly more luxurious and contextually engaged – from the same space with seeming dispassionate neutrality.

In this ambiguous space there is, nevertheless, an image on the gable wall that hints at the greater significance of the 'saloon' as it also underlines the distinction between entrance and dining areas. Above the doorway is the portrait of a famous local shepherd, reproduced at more than double life-size. With crook in hand and a sheep lodged over his shoulders, he looks down on arriving visitors with a guarded expression – half smile and furrowed brow. His 'humble' appearance reinforces the company's values: the roughness of his skin testifies to a life spent in touch with the land and the elements; his broad shoulders signify strength and endurance; the mirky, smudged quality of the image, the merging of wool into beard with a lock drawn into the corner of his mouth indicate the unity of man and nature *[36]*.[633]

This shepherd is the symbolic head of Westmorland's 'family': his gaze seems to challenge the worthiness of those who enter his home; his looming scale makes the space feel smaller and more claustrophobic. In an inversion of a typical class structure, the 'humble' shepherd is elevated to the status of master of a building that is far bigger and grander than the house in which he lived: roles of master and servant appear symbolically reversed. In this way, the image may contain an implicit challenge to the established order, which parallels the company's claimed defiance of the top-down, big-business model found elsewhere on the motorway: in this re-creation of a traditional rural context, the labourer appears in control. At the boundary between entrance and restaurant / servery, not only are those willing to spend more time in the

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[633] The painted image is copied from a local archive photo of a famous shepherd from the region.

locality separated from those who prefer to pass it by; those who identify with the company's imagery, as epitomized by the figure of the shepherd, may be separated from those who feel alienated by it.

Yet these identifications do not necessarily follow the social priorities suggested by the shepherd's elevated position. For many of the figures most vocally in support of a traditional country life – from the Romantic poets to Prince Charles – tend to belong to the middle and upper classes, to be those who observe it from a comfortable distance.[634] Thus, National Trust members, second home owners and (sub-)urbanites who aspire to a rural existence may be more likely to identify with Westmorland's imagery than those who live or work in the countryside. The sepia toned painting of the shepherd, like the back and white prints that line the dining room walls, shows rural life through the eyes of outsiders – wealthy members of nineteenth-century society with access to photographic equipment.[635] This is significant, for with the production and ownership of such artefacts comes control over the local history they narrate. These images of lambing, shearing, milking and dry-stone-walling suggest a simple, hard, but happy and rewarding life on the land, in which everyone is content in their proper place within a strong, cohesive community. One caption reads: 'While the men clipped the sheep the girls rolled the wool and everyone enjoyed the get together' *[37]*. Tebay East's barn appears to function in a similar way, elevating, ennobling and romanticizing a particular 'humble' lifestyle from the perspective and for the enjoyment of those with the luxury not to be involved in it. Rather than

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[634] On the writing and representation of the Lake District, see Urry, 'The Making of the Lake District', in *Consuming Places* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 193-210.

[635] The prints are of photographs held by the Victorian collection of the Museum of Lakeland Life and Industry, at Abbott Hall in Kendal, 15km from Tebay. The prints concur with an image of an agrarian idyll – like that discussed above through Wordsworth's poetry, in various ways. As though shelter is unnecessary in a climate that appears always clement, not one of the scenes is interior and no complete buildings appear in any of the photographs: evidence of human artifice, of rupture between people and their surroundings is avoided. Life appears to be lived outdoors at one with the elements, always in touch with a nature that is ever beneficent and bountiful, and in which there is no possibility of lack – or, judging by the prevalence of simple clothes and manual labour, of excess. At Tebay Services, this depiction of the Cumbrian climate is, of course, frequently undermined by the harsh realities of storms, mists, high winds, heavy rains and freezing fogs visible through the full-height glazing of the dining room, and acknowledged by the buildings' form. Yet, the apparent contradiction also serves to heighten the heroism and authenticity of the hardy outdoor folk who seem able so effortlessly and contentedly to endure these extremes: humans and nature at one. From the range of activities shown on the prints, and from the comradeship evoked by the groups collectively engaged in them, there is the impression of a strong rural community, multi-skilled and self-sufficient. The images thus evoke a rural idyll similar to that which is, in Wordsworth's poetry, mourned as it is seen to fade through industrialization. In Tebay West, prior to recent refurbishment, images of the Abraham brothers' famous nineteenth century climbing expeditions similarly suggest rural heroism and a unity of man and nature.

reproducing what locals might identify as the 'essence of a hill farm', Westmorland's buildings seem instead to give outsiders the image, the architecture and the history they want to see.[636]

Significantly, this history of the contented farmer living at one with context, seems to involve the reintroduction of the noble within the humble. The analogy of the country house may be extended to the whole building. Tebay East repeats, in condensed and simplified form, a layout common only in the grandest of houses, from Castle Howard to Stowe Park: two service wings flank a main, served house.[637] Here as 'court', as above as 'farmyard', the entrance lobby / hall is figured as 'outdoor' space within, on the side of the house less open to the landscape. It is this arrangement that allows the buildings' principal aspect and prospect to occur in linear sequence, so that – unlike at the local small- to medium-sized houses and farms – a hitherto concealed view is revealed from within. In the eighteenth-century country house, such a route from front to back marked a transition between realms: the everyday world would be left behind for an idealized landscape of allegory. The spatial arrangement of the country house was crucial to this process of forgetting, this filtering out of unpalatable or disturbing realities – labour, waste, imperfection, the unpredictable.[638] A comparable layout at Tebay East orchestrates a similarly transformative experience: a passage of quasi-religious redemption from the human-profane-placeless realm to the sacred-natural-place. Here, the axis to the landscape follows the axis to alter in the tithe barn / church. At the centre of this service area / country house, the 'saloon' prolongs the transitional zone between front and back. To the cruciform plan it adds a third, vertical axis to the sky, which, together with the space's inward-looking form, temporarily re-orientates as it increases the depth of the interior.

It is thus not only the movement from front to back that is important; this focus is challenged and anchored by the significance given to the centre – not only by the 'saloon', but by the relic of the 'original' cottage wall that occupies the centre of the dining room and seemingly supports the heavy trussed roof above.[639] The view, too, suggests a centring of the human observer within a 'natural' landscape, which,

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[636] See John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2nd edn (London: Sage, 2002), pp. 1-15.
[637] Girouard, pp. 120-62.
[638] See Girouard, pp. 140-5, 214-20
[639] These elements of Tebay East are, I suggest, in some ways comparable to what Eliade discusses as the axis mundi, key to the cosmology of various tribal cultures, and bound up with the defining of territory. See Eliade, pp. 36-8.

although more extreme in topography, may be seen, in its flowing undulations and clumps of trees framing views, as comparable to the gardens of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. A common narrative of the development of the so-called 'English landscape garden' of the mid- to late eighteenth century casts its mannered naturalism in opposition to the abstract axiality of French gardens, such as those designed by André Le Nôtre in the previous century. Yet, it may be argued that an ambition to unchecked imperialism, comparable to that of Le Nôtre's axial alignment of Louis XVI's Versailles to the setting sun, also exists in the imitative merging of cultivated into uncultivated in the Brownian landscapes of Stourhead or Longleat.[640] Through their differing means, both seemingly extend the reach of the owners' power beyond the limits of their territorial boundaries – the difference of the latter being that it does so by stealth. In this sense, the 'natural' landscape is possessed.

Westmorland: the familiar host

So, at Tebay East, there are two key moments of identification with the locality: one external, looking towards the service area, the other internal, looking out from it. Through the first view, the building is identified with the place, as more-than-'humble', barely human structure, timeless yet unplaceable in time. By the second, the visitor has taken the place of the building, to identify him- or herself directly with a particular vision of context narrated by building forms, details and organization, and by the objects and imagery that line the interior. The visitor forms an identification distanced from their role as motorway traveller. Like a telescope, the building brings the landscape closer to the visitor, as it detaches both from the surroundings of the motorway. While the first identification of building with landscape is offered to all; the second is only available to selected visitors. In this way, the building acts as a gateway that controls access to and experience of place. How, then, does this affect the visitor's relation to place?

The view of landscape presented from within, informed by nineteenth-century imagery of people in place, is closer to the 'still life' of Wordsworth's text. Unlike at Brown's gardens, the 'picturesque' features of the landscape are not to be perceived by touring the grounds – as the lake/moat makes clear. The low roof and drop in floor

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[640] On this comparison, see *The Genius of the Place: The English Landscape Garden, 1620-1820* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988), ed. by John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis, pp. 6-7.

level through the dining area mean that the view here is best observed from a sedentary position, one that allows the view to remain an 'unvitiated' ideal. Tebay East, as Self's satire suggests, seemingly allows the visitor to stomp the hills like Wordsworth, but from the comfort of a fully serviced interior. If the dining room offers ostensibly unrestricted views of the 'natural' landscape and, often in this location, extreme weather, it does so from a space that is, like the 'lounge space' described in Chapter 1, a home-from-home. The dining 'tithe barn'/country house 'loggia' is experienced as a series of interrelated smaller, domestically-proportioned spaces: the central 'cottage' wall and lowered floor area overlap to seemingly split the space into at least nine partially-defined 'rooms'. With carpeted floors and smooth-plastered walls, these spaces are far from rustic. Similarly, at the entrance to Tebay East, numerous globe lampshades fill the ceiling of the café *[38]*. One of the few interior features visible from outside, they defy the more-than-'humble' exterior with the promise of intensified, comfortable domesticity. As one reviewer puts it, 'Sitting down in [the] coffee shop you could liken it to a typical countryside café. Yellow teapots, cups with saucers, and country-style cooking.'[641]

The difference here, compared to the 'lounge space' described in Chapter 1, is that the host is familiar and explicit, the notion of dwelling more tightly defined, more formal – and more exclusive. Across the different dining 'rooms', there are no differences in decor or furniture; all tables are circular, most the same size and set for four people; all seats are upright. The signifiers of home – the historic imagery, the large hearth at one side of the dining area with several sets of antlers displayed above – are not generic, but seemingly owned by the 'family', part of the place and the history of the building. This not only compounds the intimacy of a space in which the lack of piped music makes other conversations easily audible and encourages hushed tones. Instead of Hopwood or Donington's many lounges in ostensibly 'neutral' and 'urban' whiteness, this is the many-alcoved fireside lounge of a familiar country-house-cottage: here, visitors are guests in a house whose rightful owners appear to be watching from every wall. If the dining areas are exclusive, they are thus also highly determined.

On the one hand, then, both service area buildings, Tebay East especially, promise possession of the Lake District from a position of power – at least for those

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[641] 'A Surprise Treat on My Travels', *Bristol Evening Post*, 19 August 2004, p. 16.

who get further than the entrance lobby. Like suburban fantasies, and National Trust properties, they mix allusions to 'nobility' with more familiar contemporary markers of domesticity, of comfort, of homeliness. On the other hand, this 'nobility', this ostensibly powerful position atop the hill, seems at the same time 'humble', offered from a position of near invisibility in the landscape. As Tebay East promises visitors the seat of both lord and shepherd, of 'noble' and 'humble' authority, it also contains and controls them.

The company thus takes the position of mediator of boundaries, of policer, promoter, and owner of place. Tebay East and West are bound up with attempts to control relations between inside and outside: materially, culturally, physically. In more than name, Westmorland the company appears inseparable from Westmorland the place: Tebay East and West appear seamlessly integrated into the landscape, disguised by the most 'vernacular' of roofs, un-supplemented 'local' materials, and the seemingly most ubiquitous and insignificant of roadside-rural structures – the shed-barn; they reference and allude to strong regional cultural associations, to what I have called 'brand Wordsworth', but also beyond it to suggest a relation to the past that is dynamic as well as timeless, a summation of golden ages, an accumulation of histories without loss. As such, Westmorland seems to operate on the authority of 'local' place, even *as* 'local' place. This complicates what I described above as explicit hosting. For though there is clearly a host, that host appears to be the place itself.

Yet, the relations that Westmorland claims to police cannot be absolutely controlled. As the company engages with the national network of the motorway, it cannot help but be caught up in the wider economy of the road – and to carry the place it claims with it. Thus, to the extent that Westmorland defends place from the road, it also puts it on the road. As it places visitors within the locality, it is itself placed, not least by economies of 'local' tourism and roadside 'vernacular' that threaten to render Westmorland's sites barely distinguishable from national chains: just another 'Essex barn', or one of numerous National Trust sites presented consistently for the consumption of outsiders. It both concentrates place, in its gathering of references, and it disperses place as the business expands. As Westmorland seeks to 'capture the essence' of the Lake District it plays a part in a wider contesting of boundaries between local and national, country and city, tradition and modernity, a movement from which nothing can be held back. The buildings of Tebay East and West – but also, I have suggested, those of the wider place, roadside and beyond – are as

inseparable from this negotiation as the history of the company discussed in the first section of this chapter. Thus, I do not read Westmorland as a 'non-place', as somewhere without fixed social relations, history or identity, but rather as a contesting of place within complex multi-layered social relations, histories and identities, which are never fixed, and, however disguised, always significant.

CONCLUSION

In questioning the place or non-place of some contemporary British motorway service areas, this thesis finds place in motion. These readings of Hopwood Park and Donington Park, Tebay East and West show roadside buildings to be far from meaningless and their meanings to be far from superficial. Each building considered is, I argue, bound up with complex cultural, material, historical and social contexts, in which they take multiple meanings. In the readings I offer, none of these meanings are separable from context or fixed absolutely. This is, I stress, not to render the differences between those meanings insignificant, but to show how they are marked by what Derrida calls differance or iterability, by processes of differing and deferring, by differences that are always already repetitions; and that it is in this persistent drawing and redrawing of boundaries that power relations are contested and maintained. This thesis shows the importance of interrogating those boundaries – spatial, and at the same time cultural, economic, and political – that seem most absolute and the uncomfortable interrelations they conceal.

It is in this sense, I argue in Chapter 1, that Hopwood and Donington are silent hosts. In 'whiteness', 'greenscape' and 'lounge space', they appear to offer unlimited hospitality. Boundaries seem transparent or depthless, the space uniform and neutral, the buildings all object, not architecture. Yet the conditionality of the space becomes apparent in the policing of thresholds, the ordering of space, and the limitation of rest. As the buildings mix allusions to the 'public' open space of democracy, and the 'private' enclosure of the fully-serviced home, they promise freedom of choice and of movement. In doing so, however, they conceal the laws, mechanisms and wider relations on which these offers depend. The hospitality of the service area is exclusive to those with cars, money and mobility. Where choice is simulated, travellers are in reality bound to a limited number of national and multinational brands, operated as franchises by one of three nationwide service area providers, each of which are owned by multinational investment groups. The illusion of 'lounge space' disguises the way in which, in contemporary life, many people have little time to spend at home. When life is spent moving between various ordered, controlled, 'homely' enclosures, 'lounge space' reinforces the impression that the world beyond the illusion of the home is dangerous. In this way, 'lounge space' discourages the crossing of boundaries – set by the spatial organization of the motorway system as much as by brands, by the

expectations of modern working life and by class – whilst upholding a liberal humanist illusion of an everywhere hospitable home-from-home.

This reading of two typical contemporary service areas traces dominant trends at the British roadside, the context from which 'independent' operator, Westmorland, claims to differ. In chapter 2, I consider Tebay East and West, where an 'authentic' experience of 'local' place is offered to the motorway traveller. These exceptional sites, the main focus of this thesis, promise a reversal of power relations: here it is the context of the road, rather than that of the locality, which appears to be excluded. The buildings' 'local' materials, forms, and 'traditional' techniques are seemingly embedded within the 'living' culture of the place. Yet Westmorland's pledge to be 'entirely of the place' and at the same time to 'capture' its 'essence' shows up the complexity of the company's position. If 'essence' must be gathered, where does this gathering begin and end? Who or what gathers what or whom? In this sense, Tebay East and West – materially as in other aspects of the sites' operations – are part of an ongoing process of defining place, of drawing boundaries between what is inside and outside.

In the first half of the chapter, I trace processes of attempted differentiation. The company assembles sites, buildings and details that, as they seem to match the most widely-circulated imagery of the Lakeland idyll – the 'Christmas Calendar' barn sheltered between lake and fell – also distance the service areas from more distinctively local upland architectures, and the specificity of topography, climate and culture of which those architectures are part. In a hilly northern landscape of tall, gabled bank barns, Tebay East becomes a low-eaved, multi-hipped barn of the southern plain. In their dependence on identification by outsiders, both service areas are irreducibly bound up with the cultures and economies of the road they serve, themselves always at risk of 'capture' by the external forces they purport to resist. In the competitive economies of the roadside, the buildings show place as differance, as a process of differing and deferring without limit. Tebay East and West demonstrate that there is no 'essence' of place, but only place as a nexus of multiple, relatively stable interrelations, some more stable than others.

In one sense, this process of 'capture' is well disguised, the possibility of artifice concealed: as 'undecorated shed', the buildings appear to be all structure and no sign. In 'dry' walls and roofs without flashing, the construction itself is ostensibly pure, nothing more than the most 'natural' and 'traditional' of building practices. Yet,

as Derrida suggests in the notion of *pharmakon*, apparent remedy might just as well be poison. The walls are nineteenth century fantasy, the roofs, a modern conceit. Low-roofed southern 'barns' now signify suburban accessory as much as rural necessity. Instead of 'Lakeland hill farm', they might be read as one of a national chain of 'Essex barns', 'Roman' service areas or National Trust 'country-house(-cottages)'. Unlike Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour's casinos in the Las Vegas 'desert of signs', Westmorland's buildings cannot be separated from the material and socio-cultural contexts they claim. As part of a contesting of place, Westmorland asserts the 'local' 'independence' of the region at the national roadside. In the same process, however, its hybrid of interrelated local and national signifiers risks transforming that place in its image, rendering the buildings of the surrounding landscape poor copies of Westmorland's original 'essence'.

In the second half of the chapter, I explore Westmorland's relation to cultural representations of the region – representations which, like Tebay East and West, tend to place the Lake District through the gaze of the outsider. In Wordsworth's poetry, I trace a writing of the region as national idyll, preserved in stasis for the benefit of all, a reflection of idealized humanity. I show how, in the same texts, ideal becomes epitaph, in the sense that a 'still life' inevitably also means death. As Tebay East in some ways follows this cultural script, it also exceeds this rural idyll in at least two senses: as more-than-humble barn, it de-centres the human; by multiplying differences in time – from 'pre-historic' standing stones to 'eighteenth-century' homestead – it suggests not a 'still life', not one golden age but the accumulation of many. The building thus appears to inhabit what Derrida terms 'the ungraspable limit of the *almost*': between nature and culture, stasis and progress. As 'the hut in the cave', it offers to the visitor an image of stable place, but one within which the company itself resists being stilled. In one sense, the company evades a politics of stasis imposed upon the landscape, principally by the views of outsiders; in another, it demonstrates a tactic of development that could infiltrate the area by stealth, whereby, irrespective of scale, the building is taken to be local so long as the roof is slate.

Finally, I suggest how this position is key to lines of control and exclusion within the building, to a hosting more obviously selective and differently concealed. With crossed axes of humbleness and nobility, of threshing barn and church/tithe barn, Tebay East distinguishes between utilitarian roadside functions along the entrance facade, and the National Trust/country house of the spaces beyond. In this way, the

building is selective in the access it offers to the landscape of place. It also tightly controls the experiences of those who do venture deeper inside. Offering the position of 'lord' and 'shepherd', domestic comforts within a grand space, there is 'lounge space' here, too. Tebay East's version of roadside domesticity promises possession of the landscape as it keeps visitors separate from it. As at Hopwood and Donington, it is not the company that seems to impose the rules. Here, the host is not effaced, but conflated with place. Westmorland the company becomes unseen mediator of access to Westmorland the place, contesting and controlling boundaries between inside and outside, local and national, rural and urban.

The company that has become such a significant force within the local economy controls the threshold to a whole region from which it seems inseparable. In fact, the company's most recent 'local' venture 'Rheged, the village in a hill'[642] – a vast indoor realm that could be described as Lake District World: a theme park, a shopping centre, a conference centre, an Imax cinema, a wedding venue and, of course, a service area with twenty-four-hour petrol forecourt and shop – does more than just that. Rheged Discovery Centre is, according to Cumbria Tourism Statistics, the second most popular regional attraction after Windermere Lake Cruises.[643] Here, an image of the Lakes is not only produced and controlled; that image is offered as a substitute for any physical engagement with the region beyond the building. To a greater extreme than both Tebay service areas, Rheged appears to be seamlessly part of the landscape, with all three storeys and petrol station concealed beneath Europe's largest grass-covered roof, complete with artificial cliffs, waterfall and cave-like stone entrance portal *[39, 40]*.[644] Inside, an atrium of white surfaces, centred on a three-storey castellated 'stone' tower (containing the lift), looks out through full-height glazing across a 'cliff'-lined pool to the remains of lime kilns. This service area as tourist attraction, as archaeological site, as landscape, is able to offer, in a rural location only one mile from the M6, a scale and breadth of commercial, business and entertainment functions far in excess of those permitted at official service area sites. Through its material as well as cultural and economic claims to 'localness', this stealth service area achieves what other operators have sought, but not been permitted to achieve: the

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[642] This is how the building is marketed on various regional tourism websites. See, for example: <http://www.english-lakes.com/rheged.html> [accessed 21 March 2008].

[643] This data is for 2010. See <http://www.cumbriatourism.org/research/attractions.aspx> [accessed 31 October 2011]. The attraction received 406, 995 visitors, out of an average of 15m tourists per year.

[644] See <http://www.rheged.com/> [accessed 30 October 2011].

service area as 'destination in its own right'. And this is not the limit to Westmorland's growth. In August 2011, the company, together with local partner the Gloucestershire Gateway Trust, was granted planning permission to develop and operate Gloucestershire Gateway Services on a stretch of the M5 bordering the Cotswolds, where the potential for high returns has attracted the attention of larger operators, but where their applications have been consistently refused on environmental grounds. With all buildings due to be concealed under an undulating turf roof, Westmorland again promises, through an architecture seamlessly integrated with the landscape, a local operation without impact. In its ability to win access to places from which other developers are excluded, Westmorland has proven potential to unlock and maximally exploit 'local' sites in the most environmentally sensitive – and most touristically lucrative – of locations, and to become gatekeeper, mediating access to a chain of 'local' landscapes, allowing their sedentary consumption from a safe distance. If such tensions in Westmorland's 'local' operation become more manifest as the company expands, my close readings show how they were always already at play in Tebay East and West.

In both studies, then, I trace how apparently stable constructs, in one case, of so-called 'non-place' and, in the other, of rural local 'place', conceal processes by which boundaries are marked, maintained and re-inscribed. I identify a theme of 'lounge space', a space linking home, car, city, and 'country-house-cottage' which offers the contemporary traveller an ostensibly seamless experience of familiar, homely, spaces. On the one hand, lounge space promises ownership, on the other, it excludes and prescribes behaviour. At Hopwood and Donington, at Tebay East and West, illusions of wholeness and transparency conceal the relations of force that mark the hospitality of 'lounge space' as more conditional than it would initially appear. Lounge space is, I suggest, far from unique to the service area: it links urban café, airport lounge, and, increasingly, spaces within public buildings, from parliaments to universities, hospitals to libraries. In its multiple manifestations, this space of hospitality without host offers a familiar yet anonymous environment of relative comfort without responsibility, whatever the building, wherever it is located. It is a space of apparent plenty where everything is provided without consequence, where the processes of production, distribution and preparation – of work and service – are concealed.

In introducing lounge space, I positioned the term in relation to Marc Augé's 'non-place' and Rem Koolhaas's 'junkspace'. Like both, lounge space is a way to describe a spatial condition associated with so-called 'supermodernity' or 'late capitalism', with the accelerated global circulation of people, goods, brands and cultures, and its implications for how one's place in space, time and society is understood. The proliferation of lounge space would seem to be similarly bound up with the spread of networks of global commerce deeper into so-called public and private realms – with the privatization of spaces and functions that were formerly the domain of the state and the commodification of the domestic environment. In this sense, lounge space, too, contributes to an increasing ambiguity of distinctions between not only public and private, but familiar and unfamiliar, work and rest, consumer and consumed. But there are important differences, too.

Non-places emphasizes the loss of stable, 'anthropological' bonds between people and material places, a movement from active co-production of social relations, identities and environments to passive, technologically mediated incorporation within an over-determined global system. In exploring 'lounge space', by comparison, I concentrate not on loss or on a radical shift from one mode to another – conclusions that are, I argue, prone to nostalgia – but on the complexity and multiplicity of relations through which place continues to be variously constituted and continually reconstituted, on how relations in and to places, in all their various and variously mediated forms, remain significant and contested. It is in this way that lounge space hosts both familial reunions and wi-fi working, becomes a haunt of regulars as it is also a transitory interchange, is a home-from-home that invites appropriation, but also a seamless city that resists marks of presence. If *Non-places* overemphasizes the homogenizing power of globalization, 'Junkspace', from the perspective of this thesis, overplays its tendency to dissolve all orders. Koolhaas's notion stresses continual flux, describing a condition that is 'subsystem only', a ceaseless proliferation, seemingly unreadable. This study of lounge space, by comparison, concerns the significance of the ostensibly banal: how such spaces remain bound up with wider constellations of meaning, and how that which resists – materially and psychologically – the commercial logic of ceaseless refits is important to how these spaces are understood. Indeed, my readings of lounge space suggest that fragmentation to the degree described by Koolhaas is an illusion that serves to conceal the wider systems and processes of meaning making from which such spaces are inseparable.

This is not to say that 'lounge space' erases the difference between contexts. Westmorland's lounge space selects a more exclusive clientele, those who prefer country-chic to IKEA pop-minimalism. Allusions here are to familial gathering around the fireside, rather than the flat screen of multi-media home entertainments: a lounge of hushed conversation, rather than competitive polyphony, more restful than restless consumption. As at Hopwood and Donington, there appears to be unlimited sustenance close at hand; but here, instead of the boundless larder of in-house high street, it is the inexhaustible bounty of nature emerging effortlessly 'home grown' from the surrounding fields. Most of the food served is locally sourced, much of it from the Tebay farm, and 'farm shop' products vary seasonally. As a different kind of lounge space, Tebay East and West show up some of the repetitions and exclusions elsewhere. Nevertheless, in the vistas of landscape they offer, they perpetuate an image of humble nobility, of passive entitlement, of uncomplicated consumption, of action without consequence. At a time when environmental degradation continues apace and alternative sources of energy production must urgently be found, the service areas look over a landscape seemingly unthreatened by the 'vitiation' of Wordsworth's texts, and ostensibly unaffected by the industrial processes and distribution networks of which the motorway is a key part.

In this way, Tebay East and West show up the seemingly irresistible commercial logic of 'lounge space'. For, with each new venture and each refit, Westmorland's lounge space becomes more similar to that elsewhere. In my readings of Tebay East and West, I focussed on how Westmorland's claims to be independent belie an irreducible interrelation of places traditional and contemporary, rural and urban, local and (multi-)national, and how, in spite of claims to difference, it, too, produces a lounge space of sedentary consumption, where the landscape is to be passively consumed. Recent additions to the building make this trajectory towards lounge space more clear. Not only have the lounge areas been significantly enlarged, the retail space has more than doubled, and, with the introduction of cafés near to entrances, the relation between lounge and commerce has become far closer. Most significantly, perhaps, many of the traditional, local details have been covered over with a uniform emulsion of whiteness, and uniformly upright chairs have been increasingly replaced by a landscape of comfier seating options. Nevertheless, as my study of Westmorland's service areas also suggests, lounge space demarcated by wooden beams, enclosed by stone and arranged as a procession through the distinct but

interconnected rooms of a 'country-house-cottage' remains different from that of an 'urban' steel and glass box. Not all lounge space is equally open or welcoming, and its welcome is, in each case, differently selective.

Contextuality is key to this thesis. On the one hand, architecture cannot be purely functional, as Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour's critique of Modern architecture shows; on the other, the building blocks of architectural meaning are, I argue, not as fixed as they appear in some passages of *Learning from Las Vegas*. As these studies of service areas demonstrate, in order to be able to assess how these apparently insignificant buildings make meaning, it is necessary to look at a breadth of interrelated contexts that cut across disciplinary boundaries and notions of high or low culture. I have considered, amongst other things, Romantic literature, blogs, government regulations, geographies of malls and histories of rural architecture.

As I have also shown, context always escapes the control of architects, owners and journalists, just as it escapes the conscious perceptions of any one individual service area user. This, of course, also applies to this thesis. The reading that I offer is inevitably partial. But what I hope it demonstrates is a way to draw together a variety of contexts that are usually perceived as separate and considered apart, within a building type that is commonly overlooked. Against the grain of notions such as 'non-place' and 'simulacra', I have considered how buildings that appear mundane and ubiquitous, such as service areas, show up varied and meaningful relations, which are not only relevant to the roadside, but symptomatic of wider cultural trends and changes.

The work to be continued in this trajectory extends far beyond this project. The questions raised by this thesis, and which I want to explore further, come out of the question of contextuality as it has emerged from my readings of motorway service areas. What is the significance of a kind of 'building without architecture' – so ubiquitous and banal it appears to go-without-saying – that nonetheless creates powerful spatial-cultural-material illusions? What does it mean when a type of building that is, in its roadside monopoly, more ruthlessly and overtly commercial than most others, and more obviously involved in the networks of global interdependencies that shape our daily lives, nevertheless produces experiences that promise disconnection, unity and stability? There is a way in which contemporary service areas with as ostensibly different agendas as Hopwood Park and Donington Park, on the one hand, and Westmorland, on the other, use experiences of spatial unity, of unlimited

homely hospitality to conceal uncomfortable connections and power relations, in particular, and the connectivity of modern life, more generally. At the same time, however, they are haunted by the forces they repress. In their inevitable and powerfully material links to speed, movement and displacement, they become prime sites of unstable cultural space, which undermine all attempts at assertions of stability. These places are uncomfortable not because they are 'non-places', but because they tend to question our place. It is here that cracks in illusions of customer choice, liberal humanist self-unity and personal detachment begin to show. They may even force us to take up a position on our increasingly apparent interrelatedness with our environments, both 'cultural' and 'material'.

This thesis also calls for further investigation of what I have termed 'lounge space'. The motorway service area is, I have argued, only one context of lounge space, a condition common elsewhere, too. In this thesis I have demonstrated some of the ways in which the notion of lounge space can be key to reading service areas and their significance to contemporary mobile life. While different contexts produce different lounge spaces, there are, I have suggested, great similarities between those different instances. Further work is necessary to explore more fully how such spaces work elsewhere, in different kinds of building and modes of transport, in different kinds of socio-economic and cultural conditions worldwide: at how differences in context are differently significant, and what recurs in spite of these differences.

Such a 'genealogy' of lounge space would also consider its changing forms and themes through time. Lounge spaces of global travel and commerce, and their role in reconfiguring social and symbolic relations, have received considerable attention from writers at least since the early twentieth century. Siegfried Kracauer's account of the 'The Hotel Lobby', for example, observed the way in which high-backed chairs allowed many people to be in the same space without any compulsion to communicate, how, in this space of anonymous silence, it was not possible to form meaningful relations.[645] Such work would explore emerging differences between the accounts and spaces of different times, including, for example, how such environments have become more choice- rather than service-focussed, how the module for such spaces has moved from the white male individual to the family-sized group, and how silence has given way to multimedia 'white' noise. This, then, would be a way to explore further,

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[645] See Siegfried Kracauer 'The Hotel Lobby', in *Rethinking Architecture*, pp. 53-9.

through specific instances, how place is always in motion, how, in lounge space, so-called places are always interrelated with so-called non-places and how, through these interrelations, meanings and power relations are always in the process of being materially as well as culturally rewritten.
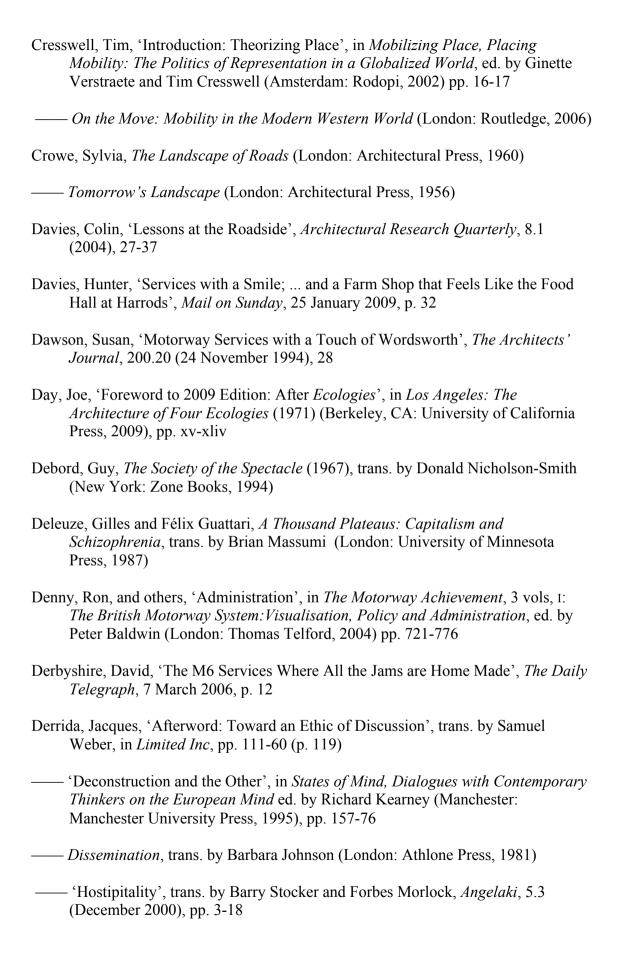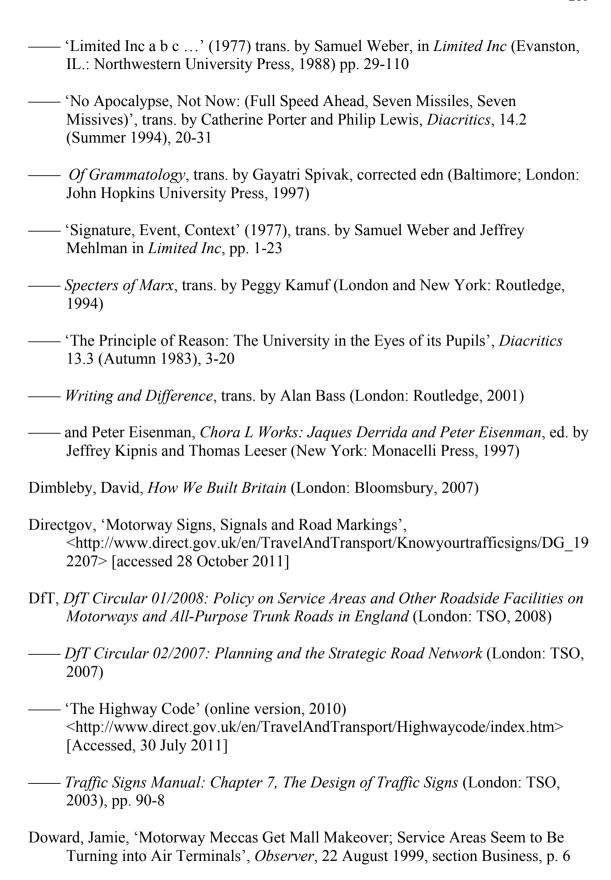
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APPENDIX I

List of figures

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APPENDIX II

Figures

Fig.1. Hopwood Park: the street in the square

1 entrance
2 WHSmith
3 Waitrose
4 Fone Bitz
5 amusements
6 servery
7 Burger King
8 KFC
9 main seating areas
10 fast food seating
11 café
12 café seating
13 toilets
14 tree screen
15 terrace
16 pond
17 stream
18 service yard
19 car parking
 service spaces

Fig.2. Hopwood Park:
ground and first floor plans 1:500

Fig.3. Donington Park: the square in the street

1 entrance
2 M&S Simply Food
3 Ladbrokes
4 WHSmith
5 Travelodge entrance
6 servery
7 Burger King
8 KFC
9 main seating areas
10 café
11 café seating
12 entrance to
   meeting rooms
13 Burger King
14 fast food seating
15 toilets
16 terrace
17 pond
18 stream
19 service yard
20 car parking
■ service spaces

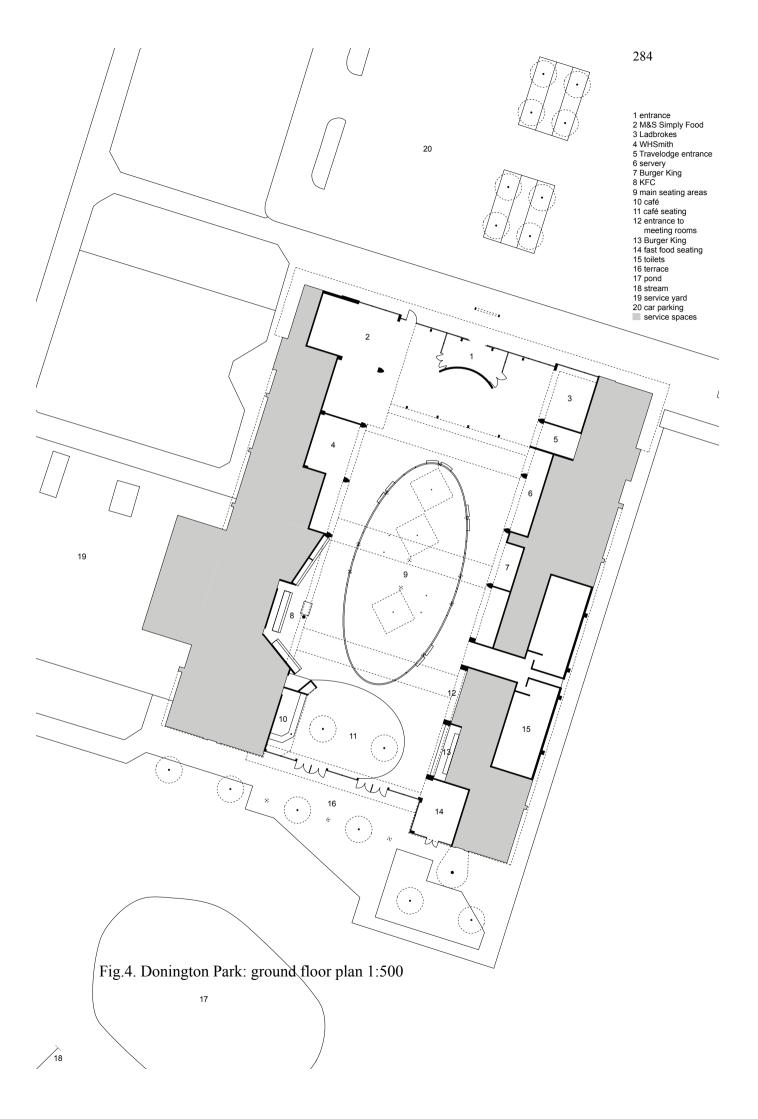Fig.4. Donington Park: ground floor plan 1:500

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Fig.8. Donington Park: from auto to eco

Fig.9. Donington Park: greenscape

Fig.10. Hopwood Park: promenading to the toilets

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Fig.12. Hopwood Park: place as sign

Fig.13. Hopwood Park: lounge space

Fig.14. IKEA: catalogue lounge

Fig.15. Hopwood Park: the silent host

Fig.16. Hopwood Park: policed at the threshold

Fig.17. M6 across Shap: Tebay Services are behind the trees

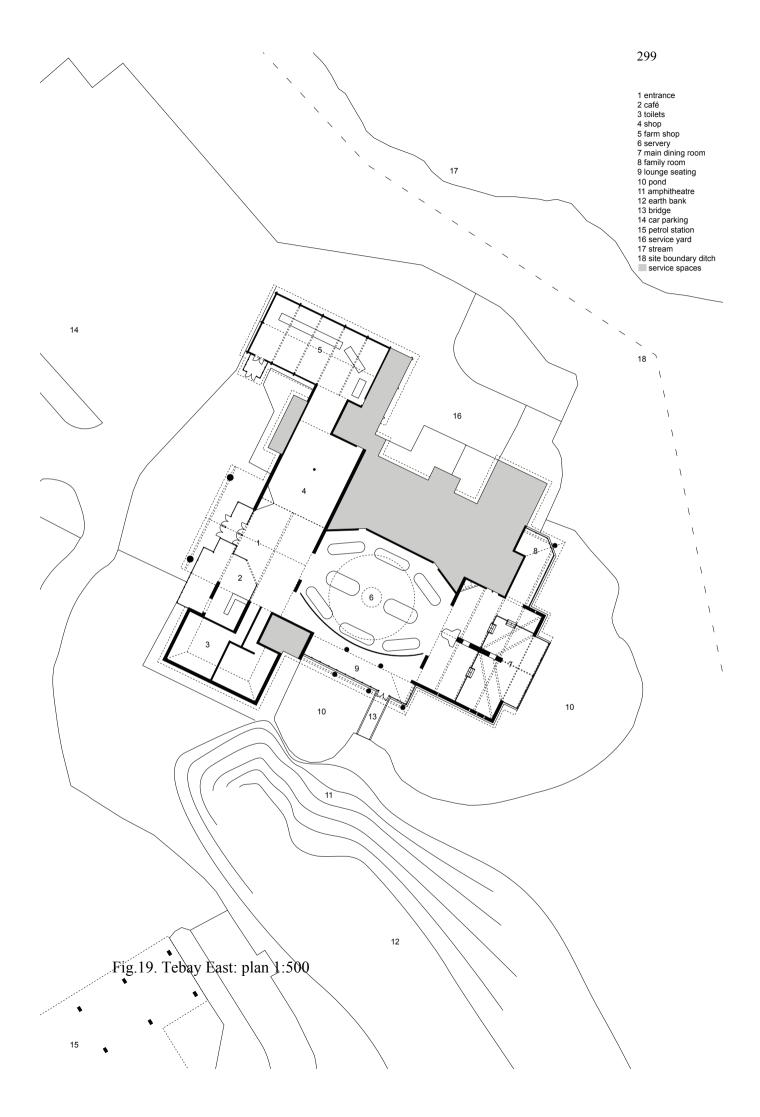Fig.18. Tebay East, from the north: 'Christmas calendar' barn

1 entrance
2 café
3 toilets
4 shop
5 farm shop
6 servery
7 main dining room
8 family room
9 lounge seating
10 pond
11 amphitheatre
12 earth bank
13 bridge
14 car parking
15 petrol station
16 service yard
17 stream
18 site boundary ditch
service spaces

Fig.19. Tebay East: plan 1:500

Fig.20. Tebay West, from the south: stones, hips and gables

13

14

1 entrances
2 farm shop
3 shop
4 toilets
5 café
6 servery
7 dining rooms
8 pond
9 service yard
10 petrol station
11 route to
   Westmorland Hotel
12 stream
13 earth bank to M6
14 car parking
■ service spaces

10

11

2

1

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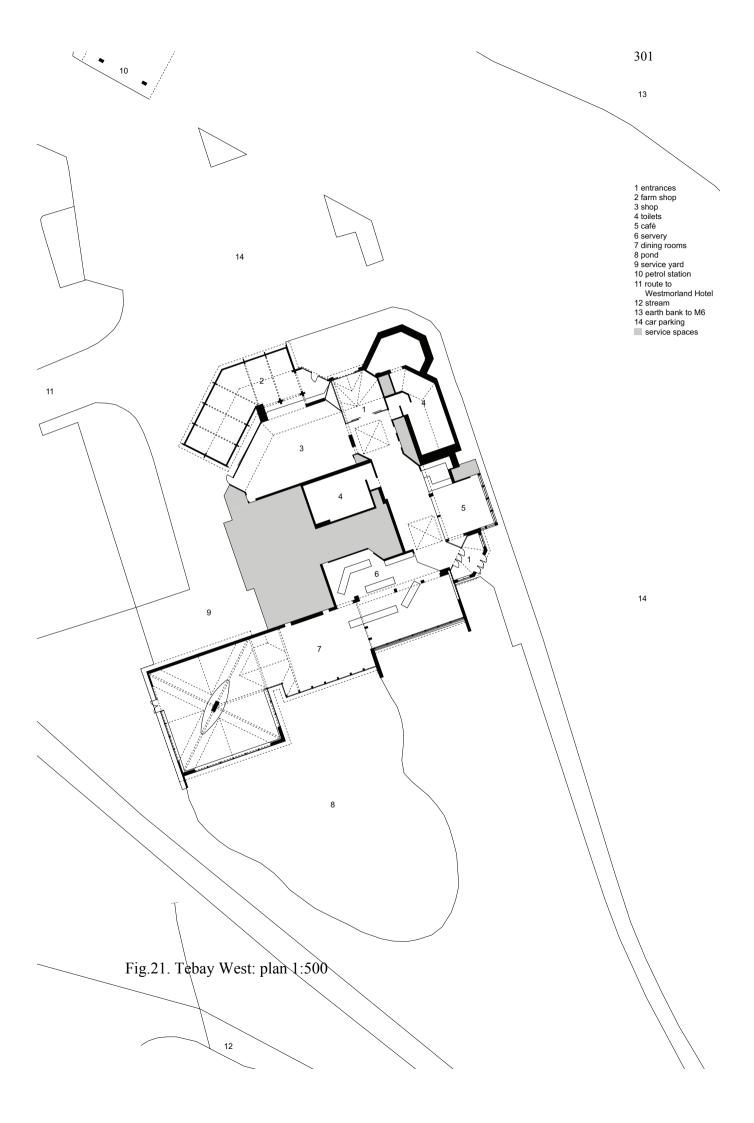
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Fig.21. Tebay West: plan 1:500

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Fig.22. Tebay East: limiting place

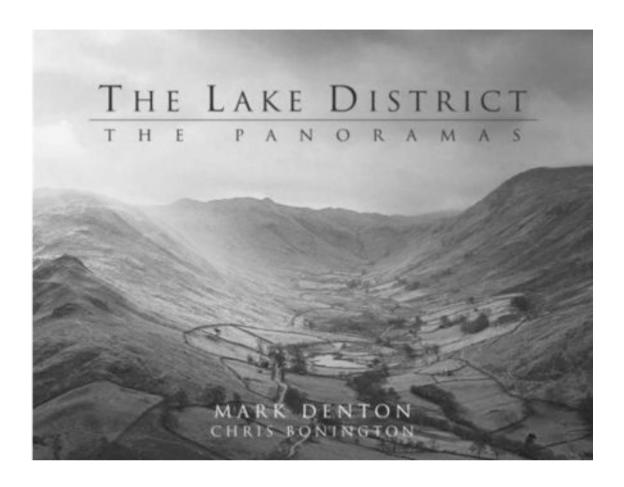Fig.23. Westmorland bank barn, near Barras, Cumbria

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