

## ○ VOLUME 1 NUMBER 2, 2002

**Departing Sovereignty****Justine Lloyd**

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*"An airport is kind of a place between heaven and earth," said Danielle Yzerman, spokeswoman for Charles de Gaulle. "He has found a home here." (Neuffer 1997)***Introduction**

1. The story of 'Sir Alfred', an Iranian man who lost his papers while in transit and lived in Charles de Gaulle airport for more than eleven years, occupied a significant, although decidedly eccentric, place in the global news media throughout the 1990s. 'Sir Alfred', whose real name is Merhan Karimi Nasseri, lived between the pizzeria and an electronics store in the airport's Terminal One, "his days punctuated by the rhythm of the flights", from 1988 until confirmation of his refugee status in 1999 (Neuffer 1997). His nickname apparently came from his desire to travel to England, his mother's native country and his temporary home as a student in the 1970s. Living in a transnational zone of business and tourism travel, he neither spoke nor learnt French during his years in the terminal. Even after he was granted French travel documents, he refused to leave the airport, demanding that he be given permission to resettle in the UK and that all immigration documents delete references to his nationality as Iranian (Moseley 1999).

2. For more than a decade he managed to survive by taking advantage of the airport's quasi-domestic infrastructure: shaving with an electric razor every morning; washing up in the passenger lavatories; taking his clothes to the airport cleaner; using the left-over complementary first-class toiletry bags and meal coupons given to him by flight attendants (Daley 1999). He passed the time by reading novels and best-sellers and doing a correspondence course in business administration (Daley 1999). After nearly seven years of advocacy by a French human rights lawyer, Christian Bourguet, in July 1999 Belgian authorities handed over papers proving that Mr Nasseri was a bona fide political refugee. Finally, in September, the French immigration authorities provided the residence and travel papers allowing Mr Nasseri to resettle as a refugee within the European Union.

3. As a figure stuck on the threshold between the 'third world' and the first, the situation of the stateless person has preoccupied our historical era as an important marker of the limits of proper social space. As Walter Benjamin observed of the Parisian *chiffonier* (or ragpicker) during the industrial revolution, the ragpicker, an itinerant scavenger of re-sellable rubbish, inhabited and contributed to the city under modernisation, yet subsisted in medieval squalor. In the modernising city of Paris, the gaze of the dandy and the ragpicker met (Missac 1995, p. 97), with far-reaching consequences for both:

When the new industrial processes had given refuse a certain value, ragpickers appeared in the cities in larger numbers... The ragpicker fascinated his epoch. The eyes of the first investigators of pauperism were fixed on him with the mute question as to where the limits of human misery lay. (Benjamin 1976, p. 19)

4. 'Sir Alfred's' experience as a long-term resident of the airport terminal certainly captivated journalists and filmmakers, with accounts of his daily routines regularly surfacing in global media outlets. He was the subject of at least one documentary on French television during the early 90s, a French-Spanish feature film in 1993, and a British mockumentary in 2001 (Lioret 1993; Luchford 2001). His story has been catalogued and confirmed as 'true' in an internet site devoted to urban legends ('Man who lived in an airport' 2002).

5. In these texts, his condition was explained as a hyperbole of the condition of 'terminal boredom' familiar to many tourists and global workers. A journalist from the *Boston Globe* introduced Nasseri to readers in the first paragraph of her story, titled 'A man without a

country', by describing him as looking like any passenger waiting for a flight:

sitting patiently on a red plastic bench in Charles de Gaulle Airport's Terminal One, luggage piled neatly by his side. He sips a cup of hot chocolate and scans the crowd, occasionally cocking his head to listen to the airport announcements. He peruses a book, Hillary Rodham Clinton's *It Takes a Village*. (Neuffer 1997)

6. Like the relationship between the ragpicker and the bohemian described by Benjamin in his essay 'The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire', a refugee could never be part of the cosmopolitan class we might designate as 'frequent flyers'; but everyone who belongs to the highly mobile class of transnational workers and global tourists "could recognise a bit of himself" in 'Sir Alfred' (Benjamin 1976, p. 20).

7. This article, then, departs from the case of 'Sir Alfred'/Nasseri to show how efforts to contain such extremes of transnationality within border zones have produced additional sites of statelessness and un-sovereignty. This project seeks to counterpose, or bring into dialogue, two highly interdependent and analogous, yet qualitatively different spatial practices: on the one hand, the practices of economic globalisation, migration and tourism which produce the external border of the transnational state in the consumption and leisure spaces of the theme park, airport, resort and convention centre; while on the other, the procedure of punishment, detention and correction which produce internal border in the prison, the detention centre, and the systematics of citizenship. The legally-defined extraterritorial zones - in which the figure of the stateless person has materialised - are a sign of the need for global trade centres and airport cities. These ambiguous extraterritorial zones produce equally ambiguous extraterritorial subjectivities. These subjects inhabit a dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, expressed in terms of useful human subjects and waste. The discourse of 'border protection' - while not the focus of this study - demonstrates that by invoking second-order metaphors of 'virus detection' in the national body of data, the nation state increasingly must discriminate between real and fake identities, purely 'economic' and purely 'political' migrants.

8. By explaining and delving into the relationships between these sets of spaces and the figures that inhabit them, the contingent and historically specific nature of this fascination with border control might be uncovered. It is hoped that this might undo the continued disavowal of the ways in which these subjects are interlocked in the traditional framework of nationalism.

### Consuming borders

*When we buy a watch we don't have to go to South Korea anymore; we can have South Korea come to 'us'. South Korea comes cheap... we have it up our sleeve...". (Acconci 1990)*

9. As the architect and artist Vito Acconci has described the contemporary cultural situation, world-scale consumption and its systems of material exchange miniaturise and privatise foreignness and make distant places intimate. Yet nations and borders do not disappear in global consumption networks, but are hyperlinked through commodities and economic exchange. According to Acconci, the availability of imported material objects has transformed modes of travel and belonging.

10. Human subjects, irresolutely political and cultural, are awkwardly incorporated into this world system. Certain transnational subjects are invoked and encouraged as forms of liberalisation by the nation state, while others are discouraged and highly disciplined. This shift in the horizons of ordinary mobility sets up a tension between economic and political definitions of sovereignty - and judging by recent moves to absent the nation state from jurisdiction of the sites of global migration - this tension is intensifying. In order to manage this tension, governance of subjects by nation-states is becoming equally the governance of subjects in spaces of transit and exchange, of the locations of transnational subjectivity. These contemporary spatial practices emerge from a highly contradictory system of movement worldwide, a situation we might call *the age of uneven mobilities*. While the grand narrative of the twentieth century has been one of mobilisation: of capital, of commodities, of people, it might be wise to consider the uneven effects and trajectories of what Ulf Hannerz has called *forced* and *voluntary* cosmopolitanism (Hannerz 1996).

11. Enforced cosmopolitans - refugees, displaced persons, exiles - are no longer kept out or let in at clearly defined 'edges' to the nation-state, marked by the trope of the border zone in a military patrolled fence or wall, but are encountered within the sites of global communication and transnational exchange. The border becomes uncanny; identity papers and bank balances are the means to a moment of individuation that takes place not at the edge of national territory, but in the heart of the global city. The discursive basis of this border is clear in the history of the term 'airside'. The demarcation of a new form of border through this legal and administrative term - first used during the 1950s - clearly describes that part of the global city which is not considered national territory for the purposes of

immigration and customs control. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, in its second edition, defines "airside" as

the side of an airport terminal building from which aircraft can be observed taking off and landing; hence, the area of an airport beyond passport and customs controls which gives immediate access to the aircraft, and in which only passengers and airline and airport officials are permitted: *contrasted with "LAND-SIDE" (Oxford English Dictionary' 1989)*

12. This ambiguous national border is materialised in the airport: shopping mall, incarceration point, waiting room, city square all in one. Claims to democracy - while negotiating flows of migration, consumption, trade and tourism - in this new age of privatisation are underlined by the 'partnership' model articulated in the newly privatised Sydney Airport Corporation. [Sydney Airports Corporation Limited (SACL) was established by the Commonwealth Government, after it announced on 13 December 2000 that the SACL group would be separated and privatised as two separate and competing companies. One company would operate Sydney Airport; Bankstown, Camden and Hoxton Park Airports would be operated as separate companies jointly managed by one company. (SACL 2001b)] In June 2001, Sydney Airport was named Best Airport Worldwide (15-25 million passenger category) at the 'Airport World Global Airport Service Excellence Awards', a factoid heavily promoted in the Airport's advertising campaigns. In response to these awards SACL's CEO Tony Stuart praised the partnership between public and private sectors, commenting in a press release

that the commitment to deliver a world class Total Journey Experience was strong in all Sydney Airport's partners, including airlines, *border agencies*, retailers and ground transport providers to deliver... [and ensure] this facility meets the increasingly high demands placed on airports by passengers, domestic and international. (Sydney Airports Corporation Limited (SACL) 2001, emphasis mine)

13. This relegation of the nation state to the function of 'border agency' masks a complex process of negotiation of state investment and capital flows, and ultimately denies the difference between enforced and voluntary forms of mobility. This newly privatised zone in which the nation 'decides' what kinds of mobility are permitted and inscribes it onto subjects - the border control point - is increasingly conflated with the zone of free and uncontrolled mobility. The phrase 'Total Journey Experience' belies the experience of enforcedly mobile subjects such as Nasser. The partnership model must act as if all subjects are equally participating in global mobility in order to function. The border's extraterritoriality is transformed into a space of consumption and free play, hence the equivalence of 'retailing' and 'border control'. I wish to suggest in the next section that by engaging in detailed comparative work on these new spaces we might learn a great deal about the production of subjectivities in an age of transnationality, translocality and transculturation. I wish to ask, obliquely, through a reading of Benjamin's work on the arcades, how is the worker in the global economy related to the refugee? How is the transnational academic related to the stateless person? In such an unevenly speeded-up and hypermobile world, we still need to understand how these subjectivities are geographically and politically specific, how they are mutually constituted and defined by boundaries that are intensifying at the same time as they are becoming more capricious. This project, then, has to both foreground the material networks that both enable and block the movement of bodies, while balancing this material analysis with an understanding of how subjects are increasingly discursively formed through changes to the understandings of social value that circulate around the keywords of freedom, democracy, and liberty.

### The global arcades

*We have the chance in this century to achieve an open world, an open economy, and an open global society with unprecedented opportunities for people and business.*

*Tony Blair, UK Prime Minister, Davos, January 2000 (Glover et al. 2001, p. 13)*

14. This contemporary situation of transnational exchange turns on ongoing historical changes in the relationship between cities, nations and global space, begun during the industrial revolution. The physical construction of the world city has also been a modernisation of the global imaginary. During the Haussmannisation of Paris, which took shape in the 1860s with the institution of the grand boulevards, imperial facades, and intertwining of visible poverty and underdevelopment with modernisation, Benjamin identified the arcades - now past their prime - as the last refuge of the bohemian and dandy, forced off the city streets by increasing traffic. Priscilla Ferguson in her book *Paris as Revolution* notes that "The physical remodelling of the city topography ... [was] only the most visible [manifestation] of a more profound transformation of urban society," and considers Haussmann's Paris as "revolutionary because it is modern ... with individuals crossing geographical and social boundaries and with the boundaries themselves shifting" (Ferguson Parkhurst 1994, p. 133).

15. Haussmann set to work in 1859. His work had long been regarded as necessary and the way for it had been prepared by legislation. 'After 1848,' wrote Du Camp in [*Paris, ses organes, ses fonctions et sa vie dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle*], 'Paris was about to become uninhabitable. The constant expansion of the railway network . . . accelerated traffic and an increase in the city's population. The people choked in the narrow, dirty, convoluted old streets where they remained packed in because there was no other way.' At the beginning of the fifties the population of Paris began to accommodate itself to the idea that a great face-cleaning of the city was inevitable. It may be assumed that in its incubation period this clean-up could have at least as great an effect upon a good imagination as the work of urban renewal itself. (Benjamin 1976, p. 86)

16. This profound transformation of the imaginary of nineteenth-century metropolis, from the physical alteration of transportation routes and architectural refurbishment to ideological changes in class mobility, foreshadowed the changing relationship of national borders to the capital: no longer spatially distant, the technologisation of borders created ambiguous social spaces of transit. New administrative techniques had to be built into the physical structure of the terminal, as Benjamin, cited in Buck Morss, describes, whereby "[r]ailways penetrated to the heart of Paris, and railroad stations took over the function of city gates" (Buck-Morss 1989, p. 89).

17. Increasingly attendant to the intersections between texts, images and their social context, Benjamin's theory of the dialectical image sought out the opportunities to decentre mass cultural forms from within. Possible sites of such production was exemplified for Benjamin in the cultural form of montage. Montage as practiced by photomonteurs such as John Heartfield, reconfigured the content of popular culture as signs 'out of place', torn from their original, mass-produced context and reinserted into publication and sites of display. Montage as a practice complicated the professed unity of images and introduced the sense of temporal and spatial simultaneity of cinema into photography. As outlined in his exposition of the relationship between cultural forms and political formations, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Benjamin argued that in film, the technical and signifying practices of the modern work of art merged, bringing together form and content: "discontinuous images dissolve into one another in a continuous series" (Missac 1995, p. 99). In the service of avant-garde socio-political movements, artists used montage to produce images that included comical or satirical captions. Such captions set text against image, word against object, contradicting their claims to singularity. The ultimate aim and achievement of montage was to make "visible the gap between sign and referent" (Buck-Morss 1989, p. 66). Benjamin's materialist philosophy of history, thought through the detritus of the nineteenth century city of Paris, returns again and again to as a montage effect present experience in contemporary spaces of travel and consumption in post-industrial cities like airports.

18. Benjamin's writings in the 1930s sought to define exactly how these new public spaces also produced new spatial practices, practices which are still with us today. Benjamin's unfinished *Passagen-Werk* or *Arcades Project*, sought to understand how the design of the arcades - "the original temple of commodity capitalism" - contained within its incitement to wandering and disconnection an emphasis on spatial transitoriness and ephemerality (Buck-Morss 1989, p. 83). In the arcades, the optical (visual) montage effects discussed above were also paralleled by haptic (tactile) montage because of the ways in which a walk through the arcades linked together and distributed within the same site many incompatible and fantastic spaces. These 'passages' that linked one shop to another, streets to shops, one time to another, created a perambulatory montage effect that could break the commodity free of "the phantasmagoria of politics". As well as taking 'place' in the arcades, this phantasmagoria worked through the spectacular presentation of the wonders of modernity in urbanist events such as 'World Expositions'.

19. The new sites brought all urban classes into contact with each other and, in so doing, gave rise to new identities that were embodied in a series of publicly visible and representable figures: the *flâneur*, the sandwichman, the street-corner-boy, the ragpicker, the dandy, the prostitute (Benjamin 1968, pp. 186-187). These new figures, specularised and 'botanised' on the asphalt of the big city represented new, uniquely metropolitan subjectivities. These figures of modernity expressed changed relationships between individual time and public time in the increasing speed of urban traffic, as well as the changing relationships between individual labour and public displays of commodities in big cities. For Benjamin, these new figures embodied new human capacities and reactions to stimuli in the metropolitan street, as he described the new 'haptic' and 'optic' environment of the big city: "Moving through this traffic involves the individual in a series of shocks or collisions." (Benjamin 1968, 175) The effect of these shocks and collisions was the development of new subjectivities, as modern "technology has subjected the human sensorium to a complex kind of training" (Benjamin 1968: 175)

20. It is important to note that these figures, especially the *flâneur* and the prostitute were excessive and hyperbolic subjects, as they expressed the pathologies of modern life. The

*flâneur* was not a 'real' person but a figure who performed an implausible relationship to modern life. Because the *flâneur* 'domesticated' public space - "The street becomes a dwelling for the *flâneur*; he is much at home among the facades of houses as a citizen in his four walls" - he expressed the ambiguity of the social relationships of modernity (Benjamin 1978, p. 157). The figure of the prostitute coalesced discourses about working-class women's biological deviancy and fears of their newly-found visibility in public space. As Guilana Bruno has argued, such representations of the female prostitute in the metropolis reveal as much about the category of 'normal' femininity as they do about real women who made money from prostitution: "it is the only activity that may satisfy the desire for idleness, license, and indecency" (Bruno 1993, p. 71). The arcades, both "house and stars", and the prostitute, both "saleswoman and wares", housed and performed the utopian time of modernity in one image, a dialectical one (Benjamin 1978, p. 157).

21. Benjamin thought that these new urban displays harnessed the powers of carnival to industrial production in order to convince the proletariat that material progress equalled social progress, yet these events also placed the urban beyond the reach of any single individual or interest group and actually produced the collective architectures of mass culture. Benjamin's focus on the contradictions between individual consumption within these new public spaces and the evocation of private desires within governmental and industrial spatial forms acts as a counterpoint to a tendency in other cultural theorists - such as Bakhtin - to over-estimate the transgressive potential of the marketplace. The latter's study of the language of the marketplace in Rabelais, according to one of the major contemporary studies of post-Renaissance carnival, dangerously emphasised: the open, extraterritorial space of the marketplace, 'outside' of the official local hierarchy and its languages and 'within' the popular festive body: it is the grotesque body at home with itself, evading the spatial constraints of the public-building (the Church, the Law-Court) and the private house. Partly because he associated it with the utopian, 'no-place' of collective hopes and desires, Bakhtin simplified the paradoxical, contradictory space of the market and the fair as a place-beyond-place, a pure outside. (Stallybrass and White 1986, p. 29)

22. Far from eliding or resolving such paradoxes and contradictions, Benjamin's fascination with the arcades circulated around exactly such ambivalence to the market-place in industrialised culture. He oscillated between understanding such spaces of consumption as either mythical places that stood 'outside' capitalist production and rationality, or as deeply implicated in the welding of commodity fetishism to political regression, in Fascism. Truly a new phenomenon in its "cosmic proportions, monumental solidarity, and panoramic perspectives..." the new urban phantasmagoria of Fascist Germany "dwarfed the original arcades and eclipsed them" (Buck-Morss 1989, p. 92). Thus Benjamin argued in 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' that it would only be through the excavation of 'counterimages' and the elaboration of a 'retrospective' view of history that notions of history as a continuum could be challenged. Rather than the forward-looking discourse of progress, a vision that left modernism blind to its own destruction, Benjamin believed a 'materialistic historiography' that inserted the moment of 'shock' and interrupted the stable identity of the present would pose a serious challenge to the monologic drive of the "futurist myth of historical progress" (Buck-Morss 1989, p. 92). Walter Benjamin's explicitly modernist historical imagination, then, sought to embrace and fascinate the critic with visual phenomena as a source of historical disruption, and to uncover figures suffused with tension and contestation.

23. In order to consider this transformation of subjectivities in spatial terms, Benjamin's (and Adorno's) notion of the constellation, which is both temporal and spatial, is very useful. The distribution of subjects in the urban network can be seen as a such constellation: spatially, in that it involves a circuit of bodies around a central point, and; temporally, in that it implies a process of movement, which is only experienced in fleeting moments, not as linear, natural history. When asking questions about the production and consumption of mobility within an urban and transnational framework, the Arcades project offers a very useful model for a phenomenological account of the new economy of mobility. Benjamin's history of the formation of modern urban space works because of the ways in which he drew into a single circuit a set of urban individuals who expressed collective tensions and desires on the streets of the new metropolis: the *flâneur*, who encounters his female counterpart in the prostitute - highlighting the gendered dimensions of urban mobility, as well as the organisation of mobility by categories of social economic class - and the poet who meets the ragpicker - uncovering the new forms of mental and physical labour that the 'high capitalist' city demanded and afforded. Thus Benjamin noted that Baudelaire's inscription of the ragpicker's labour in poetic terms exceeded "the limit which his poetry [had previously encountered] in its immediate confrontation with social subjects" (Benjamin 1999, p. 359).

24. Benjamin shows us how these social types were produced by the spaces created by capital flows in the nineteenth century city. He offers a method for understanding their social relations and their spatial trajectories. A key figure the new metropolitan mobility

inscribed in the Arcades Project is the bohemian -- suggested to Benjamin by Marx's description of this class, *la bohème*, as occupying a marginal social position, leading an "irregular life whose only fixed stations were the taverns of the wine dealer" (Benjamin 1976, p. 12). The contemporary meaning of 'bohemian' demonstrates the interplay between physical and social displacement permeating the construction of Western subjectivity. The transfer of meaning of 'bohemianism' from the condition of stateless people such as the Roma to a new social class tied to new forms of cultural production, as Haunani Kay-Trask has argued (in a paper entitled 'Restitution as a Precondition of Reconciliation' and presented at the *Globalisation online* conference), "illustrates how political ideology - that thick layer of beliefs and justifications which bind citizens to nations - frames legitimacy" (Kay-Trask, 2001).

25. The transferred senses are taken from French, in which *bohème*, *bohémien*, have been applied to the gipsies [sic], since their first appearance in the 15th c., because they were thought to come from Bohemia, or perhaps actually entered the West through that country. Thence, in modern French, the word has been transferred to 'vagabond, adventurer, person of irregular life or habits', a sense introduced into Eng. by Thackeray. (Oxford English Dictionary 1933, p 968)

26. This unsteady socio-economic position of the nineteenth century bohemian class mimed the spatial practices of diasporic medieval communities. The bohemian as the archetype of the cultural producer is a 'new man', yet this thoroughly modern subjectivity contains as a trace pre-modern migrations that took place before the formation of the nation-state. The bohemian, then, like the other social types documented in the Arcades project forms a dialectical image: a way of investigating fragmentation, indeterminacy, historical jump cuts.

### The traffic in subjects

27. By tracing the history of the 'airside' - the very material of a society based on migration and transience - technologies of travel are put under examination. This analysis locates 'traffic' as a crucial event in forming new public spaces - a kind of animating force for culturally formed spaces and times which are under intersection in the site of the airport. Drawing on Benjamin and Simmel, Raymond Williams, in his essay, 'The City and the World', reflecting on his 1973 work *The Country and The City* introduced a third term, the global, to the binary rural and urban. From this new challenge to urban selves and rural others, Williams speculates that the nature of transport is a key question for cultural criticism in its aim to understand the involvement of capital in structuring consciousness:

The communications system is not only the information network but also the transport network. The city, obviously, has always been associated with concentration of traffic... But traffic is not only a technique; it is a form of consciousness and a form of social relations. (Williams 1989, pp. 80-81)

28. The street, whether overtaken by the excitable crowd or the traffic jam, is a privileged site in modernity, that in its temporal (rhythms, speeds, slow lanes) and spatial (alienations, externalities, proximities, distances, separations, connections) dimensions, Williams sees as both produced by and producing social relations, and most significantly, social relations under capitalism.

29. An important influence on Williams' (and Benjamin's) reading of urban space, George Simmel's essay 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', written in 1903, identified the intensification of circulations of goods and people in the modern city as significant break with the emotional relationships of the small town. Simmel thought that the rationality of the metropolitan type was based on the new fiscal economy, as well as the individual's incorporation into an urban network: "Money is concerned only with what is common to all, i.e. with the exchange value which reduces all quality and individuality to a purely quantitative level" (Simmel 1971, p. 326). Money, for Simmel, is 'the frightful leveler', de-sacralising objects and de-mystifying their social relationships, turning urban modernity into a surface of appearances and display: "it hollows out the core of things, their peculiarities, their specific values and their uniqueness and incomparability in a way that is beyond repair" (Simmel 1971, p. 330). All relationships, including the most intimate, could be reduced to a question of 'how much?', Simmel observed, and this question started in train a constant and unrelenting transformation of labour to commodity, and transmission from one person to another, in which all 'things' "float with the same specific gravity in the constantly moving stream of money" (Simmel 1971, p. 330).

30. This process did not empty out individual subjectivity of any significance, and Simmel actually believed the opposite. His essay describes the ways in which the increasing standardisation of city forms as producing the notion of the individual. For Simmel, Nietzsche and Burke were key figures of this process, as they defined themselves as 'subjective' individuals against the new mass, 'objective' culture. In its speed of exchange and simultaneity, the city appears in Simmel as "not a spatial entity with sociological

consequences, but a sociological entity that is formed spatially." Thus new kinds of interactions in the city street, their increasing speed and heterogeneity, the very moments of encounter and exchange that this constant movement has produced, constitute new forms of sensory consciousness, new forms of perception:

To the extent that the metropolis creates these psychological conditions - with every crossing of the street, with the tempo and multiplicity of economic, occupational and social life - it creates in the sensory foundations of mental life, and in the degree of awareness necessitated by our organisation as creatures dependent on differences, a deep contrast with the slower, more habitual, more smoothly flowing rhythm of the sensory-mental phase of small town and rural existence. (Simmel 1971, p. 330)

31. This description of the metropolis as both social and physical structure - founded on the understanding of modern traffic as a cultural form that *separates* individuals in a *common* mode - re-appears in Williams' writing as a 'form of settlement' intersecting the older forms of settlement such as towns, villages, hamlets, and incorporating them into a 'whole network' (Williams 1989, pp. 80-81).

32. The theme of traffic is more than a mere symbol or metaphor in Williams essay, it is a topos of exchange that defines modernity. Caught together in a logical and textual 'chain' of transactions in modernity, money, pedestrians, vehicular mobility all 'mediate' the world, and produce new and different kinds of relationships between selves and others, public and private. What kinds of traffic there might be, and what kind of technologies extend and mediate this traffic are critical to the kinds of overlaps and disconnections that there might be between social and technological forms.

### Unsovereign places

*asylum seeker*, a person seeking refuge, esp. political asylum, in a nation other than his or her own... 1959 Amer. Polit. Sci. Rev. 53 990 *Small and medium-sized countries most exposed geographically to the influx of \*asylum-seekers must needs watch out for the slightest policy reaction of stronger powers.* Draft entry ('Oxford English Dictionary' 2001)

*displaced person*, one removed from his home country by military or political pressure, esp. a non-German compelled to work in Germany in the 1939-45 war, and thereafter homeless. Abbrev. D.P. 1945 Broadcaster (U.S.) June 7 *The real difficulty was and is the care of the slave laborers, men, women and children the Germans had imported from all over Europe to do their work for them. These we call Displaced Persons and for brevity refer to them as DP's.* ('Oxford English Dictionary' 1989)

33. By bringing together the tourist, the global worker and the refugee in constellation, the national citizen as a fixed and unified category of person might be uncoupled from the security of the national home and reworked into an ethical recognition of national self and stateless other. In this final section I survey the increasing excision of the 'airside' from national space with examples drawn from news reports and government discourse on migration and travel.

34. Each civil war, and new flexible formation of the labour market has created its own figure of statelessness. Each new subject formation attempts to inscribe the stateless persons in a temporal and spatial narrative of movement towards or away from the national home. From 'guestworker' to 'economic migrant' to 'undocumented worker'; from 'refugee' to 'displaced person' to 'asylum seeker' to 'boat person'; to 'illegal arrival', each new term marks the need for new words to describe new spaces and new subjects of twentieth century. These names are also attributions of agency: the displaced person is merely the passive victim of external forces that move people across borders, or pull the border out from under them; 'illegal entries' are not even people, but cargo 'smuggled' by criminals; while the asylum seeker is exercising a freely formed, conscious choice to cross a border and claim a right (Ruddock 2002). This formation of agency in the bodies of non-citizens works through a change of sovereignty at the port of entry - the moment at which refugees can claim their status as such. As has been shown by recent trends in migration legislation, however, this claim can be blocked by a strategic suspension of national sovereignty. [Anticipating this very question, DIMIA has recently published a 'fact sheet' on border control, outlining this new style of territorial sovereignty which discriminates against undocumented persons, while maintaining all economic rights: "Do these provisions affect Australian sovereignty over these places? No. As stated above, the effects of inclusion in the definition are very limited. The Migration Act continues to apply in these areas, with additional provisions applicable to unauthorised arrivals at those places." ('Fact Sheet 81: Australia's Excised Offshore Places', 2002).] If the nature of the national border is so changed, this liminal zone becomes the place at which *refugees* are turned into *illegal migrants*.

35. If the names change, so do the horizons of citizenship. The borders of the city and the nation are increasingly interwoven through 'airside' passport checks at nodes of illegal

migration. Identity-construction works through a system of national economic deregulation and re-regulation through work/residency permits. Global knowledge workers are enabled and honoured in terminal architecture, wireless internet ports, visa-free entry and fast track departure queues. Those without transnational knowledge and border-crossing abilities for reasons of education, economics, or race are relegated to endless interrogation and waiting. As indicated at the beginning of this essay, the scale inhabited by these figures has split on the one hand into globally hypermobile: the global knowledge worker, transnational intellectual, or the globalisation researcher, who works away on a laptop in the airport lounge, airline seat and taxi, delivering their highflying report on before flying out to the next stop-over. On the other, the 'incompletely global' person is fixed and held by the terminal architecture, lacking access to the scale available to the hypermobile class - a situation exacerbated by the events in New York on 11 September 2001. The framework by which unwanted identities are detected is anchored to Orientalist notions of modernity versus antiquity, secularism versus religious fundamentalism. While analysis of the complex and rapidly escalating collapse between political, economic, ethnic and gender difference into the categories of 'terrorist' remains a topic to be pursued elsewhere, I indicate in what follows is that this process has been ongoing. I suggest that what has happened in Australia under the rubric of the 'Tampa Crisis' corresponds with tendencies in progress at other key global junctures of immigration and asylum, particularly recent developments in Germany and the United Kingdom.

36. In the Australian case, the Howard government's legislative excision of a 'migration zone' from its northern-most territories located in its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) bordering Indonesia in 2001, teamed with a plan to airlift potential refugees to remote Pacific Islands is the culmination of years of policy construction of an elaborate 'anti-asylum seeker fortress' (De Jonge 2002, p. 37). [Australia has one of the largest EEZ's in the world, with total sea area under Australian jurisdiction exceeding total land area.] The international human rights monitor, Human Rights Watch, singled this policy out for special mention in its 2002 World report:

Under the legislation, it "excised" various Australian territories, such as Christmas Island, Ashmore and Cartier Islands, and the Cocos Islands, from its "migration zone" and refused to consider asylum applications from anyone arriving at those places. Instead, the asylum seekers were transported to other non-Australian Pacific island states while their refugee claims were assessed, or simply sent back to sea. (Human Rights Watch 2002)

37. This policy, while legally flawed, has been highly successful in managing the tensions discussed above. The subject of detailed analysis by expert lawyers and a High Court legal challenge, the policy is argued to be in contravention of the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (Refugee Convention) (Hunyor 2000). The inclusion of requirements that asylum seekers seek protection in other countries that they might pass through before they enter Australia is problematic mainly because many of the boats which arrive in this zone transit via Indonesia, which is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and lacks laws and procedures for determining refugee status. Historically, the beach has been an important trope of a vulnerable limit space for national sovereignty in Australia (as discussed by Katrina Schlunke in this issue). The excision of the zone, and the designation of 'boat people' as exceptional, illegal, unwanted non-citizens stands is also clearly iniquitous when compared with the far higher numbers of tourists and travellers on temporary work permits who overstay visas or work illegally. [1999/2000 and 2000/2002 were the only years since 1995 in which unauthorised arrivals by sea exceeded those by air.]

38. In the UK, recent anxiety over the breach of national borders have brought about similar attempts to extraterritorialise immigration zones. In mid-2001, British immigration authorities sent British officers to Hungary's main international airport to increase checks on Hungarian nationals seeking to travel to Britain. The checks were designed to screen out Czech-Romanian asylum seekers before they boarded the plane in Prague. According to news agencies, these checks were dropped by October, because the would-be refugees had successfully been discouraged from travel. The European Documentation Centre for the Rights of Romanians is bringing a lawsuit against Britain because of the airport checks ('Britain suspends asylum seeker checks at Prague airport' 2001).

39. Closer to British territory, the Channel Tunnel, in particular its freight train service yard at Frethun, near Calais, has posed the most visible and enduring 'illegal' entry point. After freight services were restricted in November 2000 while security measures were sorted out, a delegation of European parliamentarians visited the depot on 27 March 2002 to inspect security procedures. While the delegation was in attendance, 150 asylum seekers rushed the trains to try and enter Britain. While both French and British officials were embarrassed by the actions of the asylum seekers, some were pleased that the politicians had experienced the problems first-hand. Graham Smith, planning director for English, Welsh and Scottish railways, was reported as saying (employing an appropriately homely analogy for the edge of the British nation): "The fence they have is something that would grace your



garden but is not very good at repelling asylum seekers." ('Chunnel asylum seekers invade as MPs check security' 2002) The location of the Red Cross refugee camp housing 1200 people at Sangatte, described as a "notorious staging post for illegal entry to the UK... a vast hanger [sic] only three miles from the Channel tunnel entrance" continues to trouble both French and British governments, and looks like requiring UN intervention to resolve (Beattie 2002).

40. The most efficient solution, rather than increased physical barriers and removal of unsightly camps, seems to be indicated by the German example. Since 1993 Germany's main international airport, Frankfurt-Main, has been a legally declared detention zone.: The airport's transit area has the legal status of an extraterritorial zone. Refugees arriving by plane are held there to prevent them from entering upon "German territory", and thus being able to fight more effectively for their asylum and right to stay in Germany. (Zimmermann 2000)

41. The suicide of a 40-year-old Algerian asylum seeker, Naimah H., in May 2000 highlighted the predicament of many refugees, who can be detained indefinitely in the transit camp if their applications are complicated or unsuccessful in the first instance. Naimah H. had been in and out of prison and detention for over one year. On May 12, the *Frankfurter Rundschau* declared that:

For asylum-seekers the airport remains what it was under (former CDU minister Manfred) Kanther: an internment camp at the portal of the Republic; on the fringe of legality. It is a place which makes people ill and - as is apparent from the case of Naimah H. - drives them to suicide. (Zimmermann 2000)

42. Uncomfortably contrasting with the image of the highly mobile tourist/citizen, the deportation program whereby international airlines cooperate with governments in transporting deportees to their country of origin has encountered problems after several asylum seekers died in transit at Frankfurt airport during the 1990s. According to an Amnesty International report, the 1999 death of a 30-year old Sudanese asylum-seeker, Aamir Ageeb, during such a deportation:

is not the first case of an asylum-seeker having died after being restrained during forced expulsion at Frankfurt am Main airport. In August 1994 a Nigerian national, Kola Bankole, died of heart failure during his forced deportation from Frankfurt am Main airport. He was restrained, sedated and gagged with a device made by one of the police officers at home from socks and a belt from a window blind. ('Death of Sudanese Asylum-seeker' 1999)

43. To return to the beginning of this essay, surely such an image marks the current limits of human misery. The airport detainee is a figure embodying dialectical tensions stemming from the uneven distribution of contemporary mobility. The challenge remains to rework current models of sovereignty and citizenship in order to work loose the fixed boundaries between citizen and non-citizen. The traffic in subjects goes on as if we are all already living in the global village, and as if the territorial excisions discussed above will resolve the contradictions of the 'open society'. Any resolution must entail a global response to local conditions, and link such abdications of national sovereignty with the transnational impulse.

44. As Kathleen Kirby has suggested in an essay on the psychic and bodily contradictions that produce vertiginous subjectivity, vertigo is "an attempt to resolve, in imagination, an uncooperative environment" (Kirby 1996, p. 98). Kirby associates a form of particularly modern vertigo with marginal subjects, who, because they lean "over the brink of the self, are unable to "indifferently co-operate in culture's logic" (Kirby 1996, p. 101). Such self-displacement, partial perspectives and local knowledges are bound to produce vertigo when set against the massive social change engendered as a result of Australia's global aspirations. The global sense of place that such stories construct is a fractured and split ground suspended in the 'now-time' before vertigo is conquered and resolved into the sublime. In that moment of dizziness in the face of urban disorder, lies the possibility of change and transformation. Sublimity and abjection are crucially inter-related, and mutually constituted. Alternative representational practices, by engaging fragmentation and heterogeneity against totality, might undercut both abjection and sublimity. If the spatial structure of domination that characterises the 'cultural logic' of nationalism is composed in the chronotope of adventure-time and heroic acts of history, engaging complexity and difference in minor acts of storytelling will produce a different chronotope: ordinary-time at the site of the domestic.

45. In this power matrix of industrialised space, in which economies rework intimate relationships between identity and location, the national subject has much at stake. The challenge here is formulate a way of belonging, without reaching back to a notion of a national home as a site of transparent connections and pure attachments. The end point of this process is figured in the fall back to origins that is commonly offered in conservative politics: a realisation of 'being', one's identity thus ontologised and finalised. The site of the

local in an alternative transnational imaginary should instead figure citizenship as a moment that concretises dialogic processes. This imaginary, in contrast to conservative impulses, constructs citizenship as a site of *becoming*.

### Conclusion

46. By adopting a way of seeing suggested by the Arcades project in this essay, I have explored the ways in which the contemporary nation is an assemblage of forces that has produced a set of figures. This is a speculative project, as I have invoked these ghostly figures at the same time as I have historicised and contextualised them. I have suggested that a critical constellation of these figures might be constructed at a key site of contemporary national sovereignty, that of the border control point. I have described some important cases in which the border - far from being a place of firm and fixed identities and clear divisions between self and other - is increasingly being vacated by national sovereignty. This ambiguous local in the global serves as an after-image with which to grasp some ethical questions: how can we redistribute mobility more equitably? What would the consequences of such a truly 'open society' be? This is a most pressing question if the nation state is giving up its role as a mediating force between local and global and now sees its function instead as both a travel agent for national culture and its privatised security guard.

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### Author's Note

I am indebted to Fiona Allon's notion of 'uneven mobilities' in a paper entitled 'On the beaten track: Backpacker cultures and communities in Sydney' (Unpublished conference paper presented at Crossroads in Cultural Studies, June 29-July 2. Tampere, Finland), and also to Claudia Sadowski-Smith's discussion of how controlled and bordered spaces are problematically conflated with zones of uncontrolled mobility. She cites NAFTA as a recent example of this, and argues for moving "beyond [a] view of globalization and nation-states as two separate and opposed domains of theorisation and politics, which has been essential to the neo-liberal, predictive rhetoric about global developments" (Sadowski-Smith, 2002, p. 3).

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