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"Unavoidably Side by Side"

Mobility Studies – Concepts and Issues[1]

I.

Mobility is one of the crucial experiences, perhaps even *the* hallmark experience of our time. In the context of what Jürgen Habermas has called an "economically fashioned global society" (Habermas 1998, 95; my. trans.), mobility has become an aggregate of complex individual and collective, real and imagined processes. Such processes involve the deregulated mobility of goods and capital (mobility "from above"), the regulated mobility of people (mobility "from below") as well as the simultaneously regulated and anarchic mobility of ideas, images, and information ("horizontal mobility").

These various forms of mobility have fashioned and refashioned also the research protocols and the analytical vocabularies of the Humanities, especially those of Cultural Studies. Cultural kinetics has become the order of the day, a fact that is reflected also in the vocabulary that guides and channels our critical practice. A whole panoply of multi-locale terms and concepts have emerged. Especially the prefix "trans" proven to be particularly generative; there is a veritable fam-

1 The title phrase is an echo of Kant's notion of people having to countenance the fact of their inescapable connectedness, "in wechselseitigem Einflusse gegen einander stehend", developed in his Grundlegung der Metaphysik der Sitten (1785).

ily of trans-terms: transnationality[2], transculturality[3], transit, transgression, transdifference, etc.

This predilection for mobility-sensitive terms has set the stage also for the return of some old favorites from the 1950s and earlier: Diaspora, cosmopolitanism, exile have each been resuscitated and redesigned for contemporary use, at times with a slightly different inflection. While, for example, diaspora once designated the specific historical experiences of Jews or Chinese, today the term has become a general descriptor for "the 'global flows' of transnational cultural traffic" (Benita Parry qtd. in Robbins 1998, 1). I could go on at some more length with this overview but, I think, the point has been made: the Humanities have over the last years privileged a particular research imagination[4], one that has *dwelled in and on motion*, has highlighted exchange, culture's internal and "external networking" (Welsch 1999, 19), its "worlding" (Dirlik 2004, 288), the "web of connections" (Greenblatt 2010, 5) and interrelations in which it is involved.

What these various conceptualizations have in common is the assumption that the signatory social and cultural practices of our own time (and in some instances of the past) can only be satisfactorily analyzed, if they are seen as "mobilized" (Urry 2007, 7), i. e., as moving and performing across a variety of different social and semantic spaces.

2 "Transnationalism, in other words, raises basic questions about the meaning of national belonging and identification, or cultural identity, when a population is dispersed broadly spatially, following different historical trajectories in different locations. It also assigns a formative power to encounters between people of different national and cultural backgrounds, who are transformed by the encounters in different ways. It is an irony of transnationalism that it inevitably calls attention to the local and the place-based …" (Dirlik 2004, 296).

3 "First, transculturality is a consequence of the inner differentiation and complexity of modern cultures. … Secondly, the old homogenizing and separatist idea of cultures has … been surpassed through cultures' external networking. Cultures today are extremely interconnected and entangled with each other. … The new forms of entanglement are a consequence of migratory processes, as well as of worldwide material and immaterial communication systems and economic interdependencies and dependencies." (Welsch, ibid.).

4 Such a mobility-sensitive research orientation has characteristically been defined as "multi-locational imagination generated by a system with many centres but no longer any specific national cultural belonging: deterritorialised cultures." (Bromley 2000, 14).

II.

Mobility is most commonly theorized as a quality or property inherent in people, objects, images, or ideas, viz. their ability of transcending their respective local addresses and attachments. This quality or property is distributed unevenly – some people or objects are more mobile than others – and it is inflected by the structural inequalities of race, class, gender, or geographical position. What is mobile can be plausibly described as having disembedded – mobilized – from their former locations and attachments by processes of dislocation/relocation, exile, or migrancy; it is therefore both grounded and loose.

Hence, I will open my argument in this essay with a figure that has since the early moments of Western civilization served as representative figure of mobility: the stranger. The unfamiliar person from elsewhere is also one of the emblematic figures of our own time. Whether regarded as impending threat or as long-awaited guest, the foreigner, the alien, the outsider, is keeping us engaged – emotionally, morally, intellectually and academically.

The stranger renders concrete, he or she embodies, so to speak, the global flows of our time, the complex network of contact, exchange, interrelation in which more and more people are implicated. At the same time, the stranger – while him- or herself has already been mobilized – mobilizes others as well: his/her arrival and subsequent presence poses questions of appropriate conduct, of duties and obligations and hence reminds people that mobility innervates important issues of individual and communal ethics.

My understanding of the stranger and his/her pivotal position in regard to mobility practices has been resourced above all by the work of Georg Simmel. Almost a hundred years ago, Simmel turned his attention to a figure he variously described as "wanderer", "outsider", or simply stranger. For him a defining characteristic of this figure, this "fundamentally mobile person," is that, as a result of this mobility, he/she gets in touch with a society and culture to which he or she is "not organically connected, through established ties of kinship, locality, and occupation ..." confronting it instead from the outside. This confrontation upon arrival then produces "a particular structure composed of distance and nearness, indifference and involvement" (Simmel 1950, 402–408).

I find Simmel's account useful, even intriguing, because his model of countervailing and unresolved tendencies – "distance and nearness, indifference and involvement" – offers an account of the impact of mobile persons which goes beyond conceptualizations of him or her in merely negative or differential terms, as, for example, in Kristeva's *Strangers to Ourselves* (1990) where such strangers are scripted as our unacknowledged alter ego. Simmel, on his side, does not ask who or what a stranger is. Instead, he highlights the event or encounter character of his or her presence, an element he calls the "reciprocal tension" produced by the stranger upon arrival. This reciprocity is conceptualized by Simmel around a chiasmic figure; he speaks of "a proximity that is distant ... and a distance that is proximate." (*ibid.*)

Simmel's account of the stranger – "the person who comes today and stays tomorrow" – does have, in my view, certain advantages over such recent mobility scripts which routinely accord a *prima facie* interventionist agency to the stranger, as the harbinger of social and cultural difference. This is a position taken in an exemplary fashion by Homi Bhabha who organizes his conceptualization of difference around "the people of the pagus – colonials, postcolonials, migrants, minorities – wandering peoples who will not be contained within the *Heim* of the national culture" and whose arrival at the borders of the modern nation announces what he calls "the death-in-life of the idea of the 'imagined community' of the nation..." (Bhabha 1994, 164). Over against such triumphalist accounts, Simmel's focus on the stranger has the advantage of highlighting the ambiguities surrounding the presence of the stranger and calling for a site-specific approach to choreographing his or her mobility. In other words, rather than privileging the dynamic and transversal aspects of mobility, the proposed focus on the strangers favors an encounter perspective, the meeting over against the mixing of people and cultures.

In this paper I will attempt to trace the mobility of the stranger and the encounters with him/her in some exemplary sites or constellations. I will read these as providing the *structure* of which the mobility of the stranger would then be the *concept*. What amounts to the same thing, the constellations under description here can be viewed as representations of the tracking continuing, complex and often movements, between various parts of the globe in which strangers are always implicated, often against their will. In what follows I will present in alphabetical order a few of such constellations with the intention of developing a critical vocabulary for mobility studies.

III.

ARRIVAL

Many cultures past and present have set aside special spaces for strangers making first contact with the host culture. In the United States, Ellis Island in New York City harbor has become a cultural cipher for the "getting there" and "being there" of strangers. In our own time, the transit lounges of airports, bus or railroad stations have similarly become markers of mobility. This process can be traced in various cultural practices. John Rechy's novel *The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gomez* (1991), for example, scripts the arrival of a twice-divorced single parent Mexican American mother in her mid-40s in such a special place the bus terminal of Los Angeles:

> She arrived at the Greyhound Station near skid row in Los Angeles. It was a day of fearful heated winds. In the distant horizon a fierce fire raged and coated the sun with a veil of smoke. The red, yellow, and green of traffic lights glowed strangely out of the film of ashes. Hot shrieking wind whipped into the city as Amalia stood outside the Los Angeles bus depot with her two children and wondered where Torrance [a section of L.A.] was. (Rechy 1991, 38)

Amalia has never before been to L.A.; her arrival is just that of yet another person among the steadily growing ranks of the "third world service proletariat" (Davis 1990, 156) in what is perhaps the most "global city" in the United States. That Rechy should describe her coming to L.A. in an almost apocalyptic tone which is reminiscent of earlier L.A. fictions, most notably, Nathanael West's *Day of the Locust* (1939), is no accident. Arrival, as the novel shows, does not mean "being there." Amalia's presence is here and in the further course of the narrative represented as ultimately inconsequential vis-à-vis the larger forces at play in this arrival scene, forces whose violent character foreshadow a series of catastrophic events in the protagonist's personal life as well as in that of the city.

The story line focuses on one day in the life of this Mexican-American woman, the day following her arrival, and in doing so highlights the precarious nature of the subject positions of a stranger in the "in-

ternal Third World" (Jameson 1990, 51) of the global city. All places at which she finds herself during that one day are more or less provisional; her current home in a "stucco bungalow unit in one of the many decaying neighborhoods that sprout off the shabbiest part of Hollywood Boulevard ..." (3). "She lived," so the text says on another occasion, "within the boundaries of her existence, and that did not include hope, real hope. She felt that any choice she might have made would have led her to the exact place, the same situation – finally to the decaying neighborhood on the fringes of Hollywood" (13). In this way, the novel conceives of Amalia's life as an ultimately inconclusive performance "of having arrived but being nowhere in particular ..." (Joseph 1999, 151).

Such an understanding of arrival as leading the stranger to a "nowhere" has become a staple element in representations of contemporary mobility. A particularly poignant representation of this kind can be found, for example, in the blockbuster movie *The Terminal* (2004; Steven Spielberg dir.). Its protagonist Victor Navorski (played by Tom Hanks), on his way to the United States from his Eastern Europe, has just arrived at New York City's John-F.-Kennedy Airport when in the wake of a military conflict his home country ceases to exist. Without his citizenship, Navorski embodies what Simmel called the state of being "not organically connected" to anybody or anything. As citizen of a nation-state that no longer exists, he is denied entry and at the same time he cannot go back home. He becomes homeless, or perhaps rather, transnationally homeless. Stuck at his point of arrival, Navorski is forced to make the airport his home, setting up residence in the corridors and making friends with the airport personnel.

As was said above, the symbolic importance of arrival for the make-up of the national in political, social, and cultural terms is reflected by the fact that in all cultural special spaces of arrival are set aside for the stranger. Following Foucault's reflections on heterotopic spaces where "the real sites [of a given socio-cultural order] ... are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (Foucault 1986, 24), this heteronomic quality of mobility-related sites has recently captured the attention of cultural critics such as Meagan Morris, Marc Augé or Barbara Bender. Their work is particularly useful for mobility studies not least because it has made it possible for us to direct our attention not just to mobility in space, but to the way stations and the end points of human mobil-

ity. In much of traditional cultural theory these have remained more or less implicit, or been taken for granted. Points of arrival, as my examples have shown, are "non-places" (Bender 2001, 78) in the sense that they are not part of the local spatial economy, or, rather, are heterotopic by transcending it: by pointing to an elsewhere, they sustain negotiate, mediate connections with the world outside and beyond a given dispensation.

HOSPITALITY

To the degree that visions of empty spaces and virgin land have become increasingly ideological, discussions of arrival must include an awareness of the conditions obtaining at the time and place of arrival, the local constraints which also guide possible interactions between residents and arrivals.

Encounters with strangers, with those whose "origin is in another culture" (Sassen 1996, 195), can be regarded as one of the windfalls of mobility. At the same time, such encounters involve questions of the consequences, and the costs, of this arrival, both for the stranger and the culture receiving him or her. In the words of Amy Gutmann, the overarching question emerging in the aftermath of arriving strangers is how "people who differ in their moral perspectives can nonetheless reason together in ways that are productive of greater ethical understanding." (Gutmann 1992, ix) What we are talking about here concerns about normative foundations of societies, the distinctive political, social, legal, cultural self-understandings by which a community defines the "we, the people" and which are affected by the encounter with people whose origin is elsewhere. I will discuss the practices and problems of incorporating strangers into existing communities under the umbrella term of hospitality, and by doing so, I hope to cast some light on the relations between *mobility and morality*.

The word "morality" is important here, because my claim is that the focus on arriving strangers makes it possible to discuss the transnational not only in terms of moveable material or syncretistic symbolic content but also in terms of what Lawrence Buell has called "oughtness ... [or] the ethical life-world of obligations." (Buell 2000, 10) One name for this "oughtness" (Lawrence Buell's term), is "hospitality."

In common parlance, hospitality describes an ideal situation in which the arriving person is welcomed and received with respect and

a willingness to share. This concept of hospitality, as we all know, has its roots in classical antiquity. It has resurfaced in recent years in the context of a growing awareness of the impact of strangers and the necessity to reflect on the moral obligations accruing to him/her in the wake of their arrival. A particular prominent voice in this debate was the late Jacques Derrida. His deconstructionist approach to the issue of hospitality starts with a reversal of the subject positions of stranger and host. Questioning the possibility for any self to be ever at home with him/herself ["l'être soi chez soi"], Derrida undermines the conventional binaries of home and abroad, self and other.

In this way, Derrida's take on hospitality reiterates much of his critique of the centered subject and of representation: Hence, his fundamental premise is that the subject position intended by the term 'hospitality' can be figured as analogous to the arbitrary position of the signifier in a system of differences a signifier which, following Lacan, will never connect with a signified, and thus remain mobile. His belief in the impossibility of ever fulfilling the subject position of "host" and "stranger" explains Derrida insistence on something that he calls "pure hospitality": "Pure hospitality consists in welcoming the *arrivant* ... before knowing or asking anything of him" (Derrida qtd. in Naas 2005, 9). Hospitality thus understood is an unconditional and essentially unlimited form of opening granted to a stranger, an absolute Other about whom nothing is known: "I am talking about the absolute *arrivant* ... He surprises the host ... enough to call into question ... all the distinctive signs of prior identity ..." (Derrida 2000, 34) Absolute *arrivant* and absolute hospitality are thus radical instances of something that comes, or comes to pass.

In this way, Derridean thought on hospitality involves a (re)construction of arrival as *radical opening*, "the possible happening of something impossible", as Derrida phrases it (*ibid*.). Such an opening to arrival, is, however coming at a price, the price of abstracting from all concrete, material conditions of arrival. The *arrivant* is thus depersonalized and reduced to "the neutrality of that which arrives, ... also to the singularity of who arrives" (Derrida's words) while hospitality is at the same conceived as only a form hospitality, in Derrida's words, "hospitality toward the event." (33) In such a phrasing hospitality becomes detached from most practices of material or symbolic encounter that I have been concerned with in the argument I have presented so far.

In all fairness, however, it has to be mentioned that aside from such philosophical tropings, Derrida has toward the end of his life repeatedly insisted on a practical and political – and moral – dimension of hospitality. In a 1996 piece on "Cosmopolitanism" he discusses hospitality in the more mundane terms of refugee rights, and it is here that the link between hospitality and morality or ethics becomes most pronounced: "*ethics is hospitality*; ethics is so thoroughly coextensive with the experience of hospitality". But, he goes on, the praxis of hospitality also shows its limits: "because being at home with oneself ... supposes a reception or inclusion of the other which one seeks to appropriate, control, and master ... there is a history of hospitality, an always possible perversion ..." (Derrida 2001, 17) Against such perversions, Derrida has sought to shore up the idea or ideal of pure, unconditional hospitality.

Derrida's discussion of hospitality engages two prior conceptualizations of the concept, one Kant's *Zum Ewigen Frieden* (1795) which offers the examples of a limited form of hospitality[5] against which Derrida's reasoning militates, and Emmanuel Lévinas's philosophy of the Other. Lévinas' understanding of hospitality in many ways resembles Derrida's. As a matter of fact, Derrida's notion of hospitality is indebted to Lévinas, especially the latter's conceptualization as the Other as the primary agent through which self, individual subjectivity, constitutes itself. In this perspective, it is the stranger which through his/her arrival allows us to be self.

Lévinas shares much of the poststructuralist critique of centered subjectivity. The "finite subject", as he argues in *The Trace of the Other*, "is one that does not fully possess itself" (10), is not quite at home with itself. It is only in a relationship to an Other that the self can overcome its isolation. This Other calls the self to itself: "The Other is in me and in the midst of my identifications" (Levinas 1978, 125) prior to any awareness of this, waiting to be received by that self.

In contrast to the Kantian system which relies on formal rules of ethical conduct, Lévinas posits personal responsibility toward an Other as the basis both of the self and of society. In fact, the acceptance of this particular responsibility is also the necessary precondition of all

5 For Kant, hospitality is restricted to the demand that a stranger entering the host's territory be treated by without hostility. He calls this "Besuchsrecht".

forms of moral or ethical conduct. "Levinas identif[ies] ethicity with acknowledgement of the other." (Buell 2000, 7) The primary mode of fulfilling the ethical responsibilities occurs in the act of hospitality. Hospitality – in Lévinas' words "giving to the other the bread from one's mouth" is here no longer an option which a self might exercise or not. It is the very condition for there being such a self. For the purposes of my argument, the Lévinasian concept of hospitality marks an extreme, perhaps an end point in which arrival as entry becomes an opening, to other, to self, even to the transcendental. In this inscription of hospitality, is and ought are reconciled or – in Frankfurt School parlance – *versöhnt*.

Hospitality, however, consists not just in given sustenance to the stranger, it involves openness also toward his/her thoughts. I am talking here about the problem of indigenous epistemologies and the recognition of the limits of one's own thought systems. It is not enough to give shelter to the stranger, hospitality is also a call for reweaving the fabric of our thought in the face of other thoughts. This involves the mobility of people, objects and ideas, in a constellation that Paul Rabinow has called "an ethos of macro-interdependencies" (Rabinow 1986, 256) Such an ethos requires, Rabinow explains, our being "attentive to (and respectful of) differences ... [with] an acute consciousness ... of the inescapabilities and particularities of places, characters, historical trajectories and fates" (*ibid.*)

RECOGNITION

Recognition is a term that usefully adds to the perspective offered by hospitality in that it references the various processes through which the *effects* of large-scale mobilities of people and ideas discussed above are making themselves felt in the public sphere of democratic societies in the Global North. Recognition is a key arena in which these societies are brought "to acknowledge *socially* and *politically* [and also *culturally*] the authentic identities of others" (Appiah 1996, 92).

Questions of recognition have loomed large in debates about multiculturalism, identity politics or cultural citizenship. These debates are well-known and need not be rehearsed here. They have mostly centered around the question of whether the recognition of differential identities is indispensible for the creation of a "difference-friendly society" (Fraser

2000, 95) or whether it merely leads to stifling and essentializing forms of cultural identity. The present argument is still invested in the "undiminished topicality of recognition" (Hansen 2000, 128) but follows a slightly different route. Its point of entry into the critical conversation on recognition is marked by the work of Axel Honneth.

Honneth has written extensively on issues of recognition from a Frankfurt School perspective. In his view, recognition is a key arena for theorizing cultural interactions today because what is at stake in the act of recognition is nothing less than "the intersubjective conditions for undistorted identity formation" (Honneth 2003, 3; all quotes from this text are my translations) in modern pluralist societies. And only when such conditions are being met by requisite social and political arrangements can human beings from different cultural backgrounds live and function in the public domain of such societies as self-determined, autonomous actors. What is at issue therefore is not so much the local acceptance of certain differential cultural material but the formation of broader contexts of intersubjective communication that make recognition possible.

In order to limn out these conditions, Honneth develops what might be called a *performative* theory of recognition which he grounds in the distinction between cognition (*Erkennen*) and recognition (*Anerkennung*). While cognition designates an act by which a person, in our case, a stranger, is identified as an individual, we understand by recognition "that expressive act by which the cognitive act is invested with the positive force of an affirmative assertion. Recognition differs from mere cognition ... in that it is dependent on media which provide an expression of the status that a person is now being endowed with" (15).

What is important for the present purposes, is the fact that in dealing with cultural Others recognition marks the transition from cognition to communication, from rational understanding to practical behavior. Among such forms of behavior are, in Honneth's view, care, affection, even love. In order to illustrate how his theory of recognition works in the public sphere, Honneth cites a literary example, Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man (1951). Social (and I might add, cultural) invisibility as represented in this text, is, for Honneth, a performative act, an expression of social (and again, cultural) non-existence (10) – an argument that echoes many of the points made by Frantz Fanon (in his

"The Negro and Recognition," 1967) among others about the enforced "invisibility" of African Americans.

In the present context, recognition opens up a field of communication in which the person performing the act of recognizing a stranger not only affirms the presence of this strangers but at the same time also expresses a commitment to a "difference-friendly" behavior toward that stranger, based on standards of hospitality (Honneth speaks of reciprocity). In this way, recognition changes not only the conditions under which a strangers appears to the host but also changes this very host. It "decentralizes" (22) him or her and in this way also mobilizes host and his/her community: "The act of recognition is [...] the expressive articulation of an individual decentralization which we perform in the face of the value of another person." (Honneth 2003, 27)

Recognition as understood by Honneth is an important addition to a vocabulary of cultural mobility. It names a specific way of intercultural communication which is decidedly non-monological, and in so doing invites a reflection, not just on the material and intellectual circumstances of mobility (as with hospitality) but, and perhaps more importantly, on the cognitive consequences entailed by mobility, on the willingness to acknowledge cognitively and in one's practical behavior the presence of people whom we do not fully understand.

IV.

As I hope to have shown, the conceptual space marked by the term "mobility" is large and varied. Broadly speaking, we can say that mobility describes a subject position in which an individual leaves one, often his/her material or semantic field (Lotman) and enters another one which is substantially different from the one in which that individual was previously located. At the same time, mobility also describes a performance, namely as actively overcoming given assignations of position or address. Hence, it cannot be theorized adequately as property or ability, *mobility needs to be conceptualized around the relations* that it generates.

These relations are inflected by structures of power privilege, and they need not be friendly: Someone's arrival is often the moment of someone else's displacement (witness the processes of ethnic cleans-

ing on the Balkans and elsewhere). No wonder then, that many of the anxieties generated by the current world system are organizing themselves around mass mobility.

Mobility furthermore involves questions about direction and purpose of human movement in space: which positions do people arrive at, which others do they leave behind?

Rather than addressing these questions separately, I want to close my argument on behalf of a sustained and systematic analysis of mobility in the Humanities, possibly in the field of "Mobility Studies," by returning one more time to Simmel's argument about the essential duplitiousness of the stranger as the archetypal figure of mobility. Simmel speaks of "distance and nearness, indifference and involvement" (402–408). I hope to do justice to this doubleness by reading mobility as both (1) an *entry* and (2) as an *opening*. The first perspective highlights the experiential, performative, interventionist aspects of mobility. It is essentially an individualist reading. The second perspective looks upon processes of entry from the receiving end. It is interested in the conditions meeting the stranger, possible linkages between that stranger and the existing social and cultural structures.

(1) Mobility as entry. One of the most plausible ways of discussing mobility in this fashion consists in discussing mobility as a coming-to, of a person, object or idea, to a particular location. This perspective focuses on what Gregory Bateson has described as an "uncommitted potentiality for change" (Bateson 1973, 473) in human existence.

Understanding mobility as entry furthermore opens up the wider field of the *temporalities* at work during the performance of mobility. In this performance, two temporalities overlap, what was and what is yet to come. Thus the question frequently asked upon arrival, where that person is coming from, is "never an innocent one. ... To pose a question of origin is subtly to pose a question of return, to challenge not only temporarily, but geographically, one's place in the present" (Visweswaren 301).

Understanding mobility as entry reminds of the fact all forms of movement contain a moment of doubt, of epistemological uncertainty: "The advent of the stranger," Martin Dillon argues, "is fundamentally deconstructive. It always brings to presence the strangeness, heterogeneity, and supplementarity of the human way of being as such,

and thereby, also, the political challenge human being faces to address that strangeness in survivable and hospitable ways." (Dillan 1999, 95)

2) *Mobility as opening*. The mixture of "indifference and involvement" which Simmel saw as defining characteristic of strangers poses questions of access, of acceptance, in short, the whole panoply of possible reactions by the host society to the presence of the stranger. My own discussion above of hospitality and recognition has gone some way toward anchoring an understanding of mobility as opening. It also ties in with the critical work in the Humanities concerning possible interpellations of strangers, their "othering," in societies past and present.[6]

Seen from the status quo side of things, the mobility is always an *event*, the entering of a new factor into the given dispensation. As Joel Kovel has said, "[t]he triumph of history is never complete ... [there is] an unbound preserve ... within which archaic modes of being are preserved in negativity, i. e., repressed." (Kovel 1981, 71) The stranger, his/her arrival, and the claims resulting from that arrival remind us of that "unbound preserve" which is this view always present in the status quo. If one pursues this idea further, mobility can be seen as having something of the quality of *kairos* about it, an unexpected and beneficial change, and the unforeseen presence of the stranger[7] becomes a moment of excess, an almost utopian presence which is capable, at least potentially, of subverting the stable and predictable structures of everyday life and bringing about fresh and ground-breaking ones in an increasingly connected, yet also sharply divided world, in human beings finds themselves unavoidably side by side.

6 The work referred to here is too complex to be referenced here. Cf., for example, the discussion in Start Hall, Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In: Identity: Community, Culture, Difference, ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wisehart, 1990. 226–287.

7 Such a view likens mobility in a perhaps surprising way to thinking. Nietzsche understood thinking as a process in which ideas and concepts come when they want and not when we do. This parallel owes much to the double intendre of the German word "Einfall" which can mean both inroad and inspiration.

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