Hitchhiking
Cultural Inroads

Patrick Laviolette

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Hitchhiking

"As someone who has hitchhiked herself a bit, back in the day, I read this monograph with great interest. Risk, adventure, and trust are three of the hearts of hitchhiking in this lively and novel book describing a fascinating cultural practice and modern form of mobility."

—Catherine Lutz, *Thomas J. Watson Jr. Family Professor of Anthropology, Brown University, USA*

"Laviolette's *Hitchhiking* is not intended to get you to your destination fast. If you can wait for the lift, however, you will be rewarded with stories of people and their places, enmeshed with song texts, culture theory and visual road signs. In the end, hitchhiking becomes far more than a mode of physical mobility. Rather, it's a way of being in the world and an anthropological method—one that values the poetry and adventurousness of the journey."

—Peter Schweitzer, *Professor of Anthropology, University of Vienna, Austria*

"In this enchanting and important book, Patrick Laviolette explores the art of hitchhiking in our times. In so doing he brilliantly demonstrates how hitchhiking is linked to the shared economy, individualism, collectivism, human rights, risk, fear, existential uncertainty as well as the phenomenology of landscapes, mobile museums, and social contexts. In *Hitchhiking: Cultural Inroads* Laviolette demonstrates powerfully and artfully how hitchhiking is a metaphor for living—and living well—in a troubled world. This book is a model for doing anthropology in the 21st century."

—Paul Stoller, *Professor of Anthropology, West Chester University, USA*, and author of: *Yaya's Story: The Quest for Well Being in the World (2014)*

Shadow Beg, *l'Auto-Stoppeur et Son Ombre*. Timişoara RO, 2017, PL selfie (after Friedrich Nietzsche [1909])

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In memory of:
Stephen V. Moore [1937–2019]

Preface

Start—The Auto-Stop Diaries

This is not a how-to manual or an adventurer's guidebook. It is not an historical overview, nor is it—despite the title and the influence here of Che Guevara's *The Motorcycle Diaries* (1995)—a travelogue, or an amalgamation of haphazard anecdotes. It is certainly not a biographical memoir or diary, neither in the strict or loose sense of such terms. The aim instead, bold as this may seem, is to provide the first comprehensive English language monograph within the humanities and social sciences on the phenomenon of hitchhiking in contemporary times.

Why doesn't such a text exist already I hear you asking. Quite frankly, I don't know. The answer might reflect the somewhat paradoxical character of this form of transport as being simultaneously both ubiquitous and marginal. Indeed, pretty much everyone of a pre-millennial generation has a story, or even several. Yet perhaps the topic has never been taken all that seriously. Or when it was, this was with the intention of discouraging it, of turning it into one of the most socially tabooed activities during the transition from the late twentieth to the early twenty-first century. And this it has become. Scarification, piercings and tattoos—once the mainstay adornments of punks and misfits—are now far more part of pop-culture than hitchhiking. How did this occur so quickly? Such are the concerns addressed here, amongst many others, in what is the first book length contemporary study in academic terms of this once fashionable activity.

Now it should perhaps be noted sooner rather than later that I wrote this book on the road. Not, as it were, whilst pounding away on a portable miniature keyboard. Nor by scribbling thoughts and observations in a notebook during those lonely moments when stranded somewhere waiting for a lift, although I have done this to a certain degree. The period of ingestion was certainly much longer and more complex than that, effectively taking many years. Nevertheless, after committing to presenting dozens of conference and seminar papers[1] in order to hash out some of the main concepts herein, the final push needed to pull all my material together occurred quite quickly, during a sabbatical window that effectively spilled over into a prolonged stint of unemployment and 'homelessness'.

> This is not a story of heroic feats, or merely the narrative of a cynic […]. In nine months of a man's life, he can think a lot of things, from the loftiest meditations on philosophy to the most desperate longing for a bowl of soup—in total accord with the state of his stomach. And if, at the same time, he's somewhat of an adventurer, he might live through episodes of interest to other people and his haphazard record might read something like these notes. (Ernesto Che Guevara 2003: 40)

Again, the reader should take this in its more figurative rather than literal sense since I did not write up the final draft whilst endlessly tramping around Europe. Nor was I living on the streets, even if it could be said that I had no real fixed abode during this period in my life, with few restrictions to tie me down. My professional obligations during this time could simply be dealt with when having access to my laptop and a decent internet connection. As a result, the implicit themes in this volume, addressing spatial freedom for instance, definitely mirror the spirit and context in which the text was written. Perhaps the end result is overly nostalgic at times. To emphasise the point, the places involved in producing this book include, amongst others, the following: Antwerp, Berlin, Belgrade, Bratislava, Bucharest, Falmouth, Halle, Helsinki, Leicester, London, Reading, Slovenia, Riga, Tallinn, Tartu, Vienna and Warsaw. I therefore owe a huge debt of gratitude to the many friends and colleagues who hosted me, offered chances to discuss

[1] See Appendix 1 for a full list of seminar and conference presentations.

half-baked ideas or, it should be added, occasionally drove me to the next destination.

* * *

I am especially grateful to Madison Allums and Mary-Al Sayed in the offices of Palgrave Macmillan. They have guided this project to completion when I would have been happy to leave it stranded by the roadside, hiding behind a bus shelter or something. In her role as Commissioning Editor, I can only apologise to Mary for taking so long with delivering the final manuscript. Such an apology is due to lots of people who had to deal with me recently. Anyway, at the risk of omitting many, as well as implicating those who I do thank into the sharing of this volume's many flaws—well sorry, but what the hell… I have worked on risk sport after all.

First, the fluid members of the Baltic Anthropology Graduate School (BAGs),[2] particularly Gareth Hamilton and Klāvs Sedlienieks who presented papers in a two-part set of EASA & SIEF panels that Tanya Argounova-Low and I co-convened on the Auto-Anthropocene (in Stockholm and Santiago de Compostela). Also to Jessica Symons, Andrew Irving and Nigel Rapport for convening the panel 'Materialising the Imagination: How People Make Ideas Manifest' (RAI conference, London 2018). This session was the catalyst that allowed me to begin collaborating with Judith Okely.

I am equally indebted to the panellists in our IUAES session in Poznan in 2019 on Hitchhiking, Affect, Spaces co-convened with Jaqueline Holler and Michael O'Regan. Many others have been supportive and/or helped shape some of the ideas in less obvious, yet no less real, ways. These include: Aleksandar Boskovic, David Byrne, Claudia Campeanu, Joe Clark, Tim Dant, Paolo Favero, Ruth H. Finnegan, Iulian Gabor, Sarah Green, Michael Hayler, Valdimar T. Holstein, Tim Ingold, Suzana Ignjatovic, Rohan Jackson, Siobhan Kattago, David Kirke, Ullrich Kockel, Mari-Liis Ling, Rosalind Marsh, Daniele Merendelli, Jon Mitchell, Yuri Rosa Neves, Spencer Pawson, Noel Salazar, Katja Seidel, John Stewart, Paul Stoller, Chris Tilley and Elisabeth Timm.

I'd like to acknowledge the generous help of some of the main research participants, key informants and hitching enthusiasts. Especially

[2] Supported by the Wenner-Gren Inst. Development Grant #08 (from 2015 to 2020).

Miran Ipavec, Anton Krotov, Antonin Borgnon, Clemens Schmid, Lýdia Pribišová, Ant Hampton and Rita Pauls, Gigi Warny. The names of some research participants have been anonymised or obscured in the volume. With their consent, the identities of many others have not been changed, mainly to identify them as the rightful creative copyright holders of the artworks, curations and other achievements described. Jean Sébastien Marcoux, ever the student/teacher, read a draft of this manuscript when it was still in a state of disrepair—a chaos of ramblings and musings. His rapid-fire enthusiasm gave me enough fuel to parallel park this particular attempt at rounding a jagged circle—at arriving, so to say, at some destination. He suggested to me at the time that I should cut a chapter, perhaps the last one. Make of this what you will… I certainly have by ignoring that particular piece of advice. Yet his encouragement, intellectual generosity and friendship over the years have nevertheless been invaluable in helping me return to and eventually complete this book.

This research was supported in part through the Estonian Ministry of Education and the interdisciplinary project *Culturescapes in Transformation: Towards an Integrated Theory of Meaning Making*' (IUT3–2) of which I have had the pleasure of being the shadow PI to Hannes Palang. I was also extremely fortunate to receive support during 2019/2020 from two residency Fellowships. The first of these was in Bucharest at the New Europe College and the second in the Institute for Advanced Studies (LIAS) at the University of Leicester (this latter being spent in Covid-19 self-isolation).

Above all, artist Kerstin Kary has been brilliant in managing many of the visuals for this overdue volume. I hope one day soon to be able to curate some small exhibition that can showcase many of the sketches that she 'threw away' when working on a suitable drawing for the cover. I am ever indebted to my mum Janine Langlois for her unflinching support. And to the silky toe-rag kitten V. S. Cosmo for keeping me sane, if this could be said of anybody dedicating so much time and effort to writing about such an unorthodox topic.

Finally, this book is dedicated to the kindness of all the drivers who have given lifts to solo hitchers such myself over the years and to those other travellers who prefer to ride with travelling companions. The volume might be more about hitchhikers in terms of the principal unit of analysis, but what we do could not exist without the continued generosity of those prepared to stop along the way. Long may you continue to resist

the culture of fear and propaganda that has turned the participants of this form of adventurous travel into frightful or even endangered Others.

PATRICK LAVIOLETTE
NEC, Bucharest, Romania, 2020

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CHAPTER 1

Getting to the Other Ride

Pre-Amblings

It was another of those small talk conversations we often have at parties. The kind many of us dread. 'Where are you from? What do you do?' I'd been invited by a mate I hadn't seen in a while, rather spontaneously it seemed, although it was quite possible my presence had been requested in the capacity of wingman. We met up beforehand for a quick chat, arriving once things were well underway on a warm lazy Sunday afternoon.

It was obvious that many of the others had already had a few drinks so before mingling we grabbed some refreshments quickly. At this point there were a few rapid introductions. Then suddenly I found myself escaping the kitchen to find some air and explore the premises. The morning had been spent in some bemusement, trying to do some reading and writing. So I wasn't feeling especially social when the 'hi, who are you?' questions started. Too sober to have the courage to make stuff up, I relented instead to finding out loads of life-history details that I would quickly forget about people I would surely never meet again.

Or maybe not? This was one of the possibilities that made this small talk setting so awkward and why I began over-analysing the simplest, sometimes banal sounding questions. To soothe my uneasy and restless mind, I focused on the ambient background sounds being played by a party DJ. At least someone here had good taste in music I thought as Beth Gibbons' piercing voice cried out the first lines to a song I knew well:

P. Laviolette, *Hitchhiking*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-48248-0_1

Can't anybody see? We've got a war to fight,
we never find our way, regardless,
of what they say.
[…].
'Roads'[1]

It always struck me as funny how we can selectively hear different words depending on our frame of mind. At the time, I was working quite a bit on urban exploration. So I was convinced that Gibbons' voice was deliberately obscuring 'war to fight' with 'wall to climb'. Anyway, to shake myself out the daydream I told myself to focus on the scene at hand. Now this wasn't a work do, or a friend of a friend's birthday bash. Not a graduation party, nor even a house warming. In fact, why the hell was I there again? Oh yes, not that it really matters, but it was one of those 'thank Christ the Olympics are done with' BBQ events in some posh chap's half acre back garden, in a fairly exclusive borough in London's Zone 2. Not his parent's place either I should stress, although it was obvious that they had fronted up a considerable amount for the mortgage, freehold no less.

'Bound to be plenty of fit birds there' my mate Reg said to incite me. And yes that is short for Reginald in case you were wondering. So you can guess at the class strata that we're dealing with here. Anyway, there I was chatting up one of these fit birds, on my second piss-weak gin & tonic, when that second dreadful question was dropped. 'So then, what is it you do?' As if that wasn't bad enough, it was done during one of those awkward moments when the conversation of everyone around had sort of come to a stop and everybody closed in on this as an excuse to have something new to focus on. It's suddenly one of those times when one is thrust into being the centre of attention amongst complete strangers. Without, it must be said, having actually done or mentioned anything noteworthy to warrant such curiosity.

But there you go. At the drop of one sudden question during an (in)opportune moment, I was made to be the most interesting thing in the room, so to say. Indeed, I probably was the strangest stranger at that party—clearly an outsider. Yet I hadn't decided to crash this shindig just to be put into lecturing mode again.

[1] Taken from the album '*Dummy*' (1994) written & performed by Portished (Gibbons, Barrow, Utley) London: Go-Beat Records.

Caught off guard I mumbled 'hmm' in a slightly over pensive way. This is an obvious strategy to stretch out the timid pause long enough to gather one's thoughts, to size up the situation and, it would seem, to add yet another element of suspense to this somewhat odd social situation. 'Would you put up with, well it's kinda complicated?' I squeeze out this non-committal evasive statement through my teeth whilst slurping down half the glass in order to buy more time (note to self, next time I hit the bar it'll have to be a double). Over a dozen pair of eyes then commenced that disturbing 'someone's in the hot seat' gaze.

'No… thought not? Well, in a word, I'm an anthropologist'. 'Someone who studies insects!' the reply from the lad opposite wearing some putrid patterned Bermuda shorts and an equally tacky rugby top. He looks like the youngest person at the party. 'Ahh, there's always one. That was a bit of a wasted public-school education' I retorted with an uncharacteristic sarcasm which I hoped wouldn't be picked up on by everyone eavesdropping. He was a fairly big lad but probably still an undergraduate, so easily more than fifteen years my junior. I could tell he's intimidated by the unnecessarily harsh banter, which left the others laughing without sympathy for him. Not that they seemed to know exactly what anthropology was either.

'You have a shorthand party-piece definition then?' my conversation partner asked. 'Well, leaving aside physical anthropology for now, which comprises mostly anatomy and evolutionary matters, Social Anthropology is the study of what it means to be human as well as the study of what humans mean… or, if you prefer, the study of what humans mean whilst being most meaningfully human'.

'That has a nice ring to it', she replied 'but how's that different from sociology exactly?' she added. 'I mean you're talking about the study of people and cultures right?' concluding without much hesitation. 'Yes, good point. Historically though, sociology was concerned with urban, Western settings. Whereas anthropology has often dealt with "the Other"—sort of a sociology of peasant foreigners if you will—not that this is an especially PC way of putting it. These days, however, the boundaries are much more blurred. The differences are mostly to do with theory and method as well as institutional of course. So anthropology, sociology, ethnology even—in many ways can all be pretty similar, if not the same thing'. It's always good to throw in the word pretty when talking to someone completely fanciable.

Someone else then interjected ‘so you can study anything, including garden parties at the closure of the London Olympics?’ Damn, that’s always awkward—get ‘em all feeling a little paranoid that every situation, including this one, could be the subject of one’s unflinching scrutiny. Do I choose the ‘well why do you think I’m here’ route? Or is it better to opt for a more tactful approach, ‘ya sure, if you’re into that sort of thing?’ I went for the latter. Remember, the booze bravado hadn’t set in yet.

‘Hmm, if every anthropologist went around studying every situation of daily life, well, that would be rather bleak, no? I mean there is a certain rigour to maintain, with quality controls and various levels of specialisation involved. This sounds a lot like management speak now, I know. Anyhow, generally you’re right, any anthropologist worth their grain of salt could turn the most mundane thing into a worthy topic of research. That was sorta behind the big revolution in Cultural Studies in the 1960s when an idea for the humility of everyday life came about. Y’know, the revelation, so to say, that the situations we ignore and/or take for granted have the potential to reveal as much, if not more, about society and its values than those big elaborate rituals or events which the majority of people are actually quite ignorant about in terms of origins, meanings and so on.’

There was a small pause as the others took in my mini-lecture. And then, as if to bring us back down to real-world concerns, someone interjected ‘so whatcha working on now then?’ Pointless self-justification I felt like answering. The chap who just asked had been talking with Bermuda boy so this didn’t seem the wisest reply at that stage. ‘Ah, y’know, several things. It’s good to have many irons in the fire as it were. My stuff’s quite eclectic. Generally, I work on material culture, landscape and risk. A few years ago I wrote a book on adventure sport for instance. At the moment though, in case you wanted something more specific and current, I’m trying to finish a piece on hitchhiking’.

‘I hitched ‘round Europe in my gap year’ this tall bloke who’d remained silent until then threw in. He was one of the older people there, that is to say, someone more of my generation. ‘I was painfully shy at school. Couldn’t talk comfortably with anyone I didn’t know already. A mate suggested we do some hitching in the North. Loved it and quickly broke out of my shell. So one day we decided, sod it, let’s see how far

Fig. 1.1 Paolo Favero & Patrick Laviolette, Auto-selfie, Antwerp, September 2019

we can get; made it to Istanbul and back via most countries in Eastern Europe except the former Yugoslavia'.[2]

'Careful, might have to get out my notebook. But ya, almost everyone has a story. Even for those kids who don't have any personal experience, it's one of those topics that many people feel they can relate to because there are so many pop-culture references. We've all seen these in films, or on the internet and whatnot right? I'd guess that even without having read it, many here are familiar with Tony Hawks' story of hitching around Ireland with a portable mini-fridge in order to win a drunken wager. And yet, would you believe it, hitchhiking hasn't been taken especially seriously by academics. In fact, there is no comprehensive study in the humanities or social sciences that deals explicitly with this type of travelling. So, once I finish this little article I'm working on, well, the plan is to write a monograph' (Figs. 1.1 and 1.2).

'Wow, a whole book about something that doesn't exist anymore'. Bermuda boy has found his little way to try his hand at reciprocating the overzealous animosity I threw at him earlier. 'Sure, fair 'nough. Perhaps though, that's even more reason for there to be an exhaustive overview of the topic? Besides, you're right, it's absolutely true that hitching is close

[2] We can safely assume what the reason is for avoiding the Balkans in this case, since this young man's gap year would have most likely been around the early 1990s.

Fig. 1.2 Judith Okely hitchhiking in France in the 1960s

to being extinct here in Britain, even in much of Western Europe. That's not the case, however, if we look at the Baltics, the former Soviet-Union or other Eastern Bloc countries, including Cuba. I've even heard it being called a window to the West in such places. So that's kind of the premise for the project. To provide some type of cross-cultural comparison for something that was so ubiquitous to the second half of last century and

then started to dwindle in certain parts of the world. Not to mention that quite recently, there is evidence of a revival taking place'.[3]

Also, the point isn't to write a book about hitchhiking for the sake of it. Rather, the idea is to use this activity as a prism to understand other social factors and larger human traits and imaginaries. Hitching is only interesting if it can enlighten us on such things as gender relations, perceptions of risk, notions of trust and sharing, attitudes towards marginality, estrangement and transgression, fleeting friendships and empathy, interactions with infrastructures, technology, ecology, landscapes and so on. Entomologists don't study fruit flies because they are interested in this species per se. Rather, they're enquiring into states of reproduction, population dynamics and other bio-geographical features.[4]

This, that and the Other[5]

Also known as *autostop* and *trampen*, hitchhiking (hitch/hĭk/ing) has variable subtle differences of definition (Wilson 2014). According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, it is a term of obscure origin which is partly synonymous with the Scots word *hotch,* meaning to move in jerks. One edition then goes on to define the verb as to 'travel by begging lifts from passing motor vehicles'. In an American version of the expression hitchhike, *The Random House College Dictionary* offers us: 'to travel by getting free automobile rides and sometimes by walking between rides'.[6] Although hitchhikers in the United States probably do not walk that much more than do their counterparts in the British Isles, the reference to walking still implies that North American hitchers must be more persevering. This possible misnomer might be due to the larger size of the territory in which they can roam. The difference in terminology is also interesting because it stresses that hitching in America occurs only in small

[3] (see especially Chapters 2 and 7).

[4] This last comment was a deliberate wind-up obviously. And the thing about fruit flies was far from my own analogous observation by the way. It was a point made by Allen Abramson at UCL a few years before, when we had been discussing the importance of trying to understand adventurous and risky behaviours.

[5] I'm 'hijacking' a provisional paper title that I recall Barrie Sharp saying he would love to write one day.

[6] Since editions vary, see Welsh (1988: 10).

passenger vehicles. The reason here might be legal since insurance companies there are often quite strict about allowing freight carriers to pick-up strangers (Reid 2020).

Despite these disparities, the two definitions converge by iterating that the hitchhiker is travelling with the aid of a mechanised mode of locomotion. Further, both highlight that he or she relies on the charity of others. By emphasising that the lifts are free, however, the American rendition appears to be somewhat more democratic or 'classless'. Conversely, the British variant accentuates that the hitcher is—for all intents and purposes—a travel beggar, suggesting a greater shortage perhaps, hence a declaration of necessity.

In exploring such etymologically based themes about mobility, we will surely begin to understand some of the semantic and semiotic nature of travel discourses, along with their interpretations.[7] But of course it would be easy for critics to highlight the trivial tones of such wordplay games. Not everyone would find value in deconstructing the genres of hitchhiking references and literature. Some might find it annoying, trite or perhaps even morally/politically irresponsible. Besides, there are linguistic variations on the term that result in subtle yet quite significant variations on the levels of 'freeness' involved. Hence, given the myriad views that one could have towards elucidations terminology, this volume explores some anthropological ways to consider this stochastic method of travel which even seems to go through various cycles of academic popularity and attention (Rinvolucri 1974; Cox 1980; Widmer 1990; Chesters and Smith 2001; Wald 2006; Purkis 2012; Kendall 2016; Mahood 2018, etc.).

This book certainly serves as a non-linear, autoethnographic thought-piece on how to clear up banal interpretations about hitching roadscapes

[7] [*Longman's Lexicon of Contemporary English* (McArthur 1981) dedicates seventy-six pages to a typology of words grouped around the heading 'Movement, Location, Travel, and Transport'. In it, thousands of words and expressions are cross-referenced into categories that blend standard definitions with more obtuse phrases. For example, the sub-set 'Meeting People and Things' (M72 verbs) offers a conventional definition for the action 'to meet with' which reads: "meet with [v prep T1] to meet or encounter something, usually bad: He met with an accident on the way home". One can also find sets of word associations that allow for a more free and creative construction of meaning. The example I'll use here is found in the alliance of words named 'Location and Direction' in which the term 'faraway' also 'far-off' is expressed as: "[Wa5;A] distant, remote: He heard the faraway sound of voices. (*fig*) She had a faraway look in her eyes; she was thinking of him. (*poet*) It happened in a far-off land".]

and the cultural attributes of this purposeful method of travel. Mildly inspired by Ernesto Guevara, the current work explores a range of semi-public/semi-private symbols in the diarised context of the semio-space systems in which they occur. It examines the hybridism derived from a mechanical, emotional and communal mixing of auto-stop's transport themes as if they were a sporting arena for risking rebellion and revolution. Here protest and the anti-structural come together with elements of altruism and charity. And so, if auto-stopping is so paradoxical as to embed certain selfish facets with kindness, what other features might it equally be camouflaging simultaneously?

The English journalist Tony Hawks probably best 'defines' the practice by not defining it, but instead by capturing its essence with the following statement. It's one of the many poignant reflections that he makes about hitchhiking after making a drunken bet to travel around Ireland with a small fridge within a month—a bet which he managed to win.

> One guy, seeing that I was hungry, insisted on buying me a huge lunch and when I thanked him for his kindness, he simply said, 'Pass it on.' I liked this selfless concept – repay me by rewarding someone else entirely with a generous dollop of goodwill. (Tony Hawks 1998: 31)

After glancing at *Hokkaido Highway Blues* (Ferguson 1998), *Following my Thumb* (Morris 2012), *One for the Road* (Horwitz 1987), *Holy Hitchhiking Foreign Highways* (Elgin 2010) and a few other pop-culture books that exist somewhere between self-help pulp and pseudo social experiments (a genre, it seems, mostly populated by North American authors recently), I feel uneasy in defining my own book's niche. Yet somehow it's important to point out some distinctions, if only perceived. For instance, I've started to realise that my musings are not so much in the vein of a social experiment as they are a type of experimental sociology. That is, I'll be using hitchhiking to make ethnographic observations about our late 'modern', or cosmopolitan age, as well as some of the subcultures surrounding adventurous, competitive and alternative transport.

So ultimately this is not exclusively meant to be an anthropological game of smoke and mirrors. That is, an academic exercise to test any hypothesis about the decline of the auto-stop phenomenon in an age of neoliberalism gone mad with excessive individualism and a rampant culture of fear. Nor is the main objective to compare attitudes towards auto-stop from Western versus Eastern European perspectives. These

ideas certainly feature and will be explored in some depth. Yet my real goal, in tandem with the erratic form of hitchhiking itself, is to experimentally investigate a set of conceptual and embodied themes related to this practice.

This tactic, certainly playful at times, is in keeping with the style of an extended thought-piece on the significances of non-orthodox modes of travel. The themes in question are manifold. Amongst others they include: adventure, alienability, creativity, gender, mobility, phenomenology, placelessness, risk planning, reciprocity, sous-veillance, subversion, trust and technology, time and patience/waiting—to name a dozen of the more prominent ones.[8] If a red thread emerges to give the whole some coherent meaning, one might say this is a volume about those embodied imaginations that relate to European travel narratives as mediated through the act of hitchhiking—where risk, adventure and trust all feature.[9] We could draw together some key word associations and language games to speak of hitchhiking as a sum-total, (anti)social fraction of Otherness. We could, but that would be silly, at least at this stage.

Methodologically Speaking—Actively Moving

In terms of research methods, this volume relies on participant observation and hindsight memory of experiences that are largely autobiographical and autoethnographic in character.[10] The social anthropologist Sir Edmund Leach strongly defended this perspective towards the end of his life when writing: 'Ethnographers must admit the reflexivity of their activities; they must become autobiographical' (1968: 12). Despite the

[8] It should also be pointed out that one of the roads-not-taken in this volume is 'trade-plating' (see Carver 2013). We could quibble over definitions as to whether this is a misgiving of the project since both practices do share some features in common. Ethnographically, however, the self-ascribed identities of both these categories of traveller appears so distinct from each other that it seems justified to omit trades-platers here and instead call for a distinct study on this phenomenon. A subsequent comparison of our respective findings would quickly demonstrate whether or not this is a correct assertion.

[9] As Paul Stoller succinctly writes: "Narratives can compel people to imagine their future" (2019: 6).

[10] e.g., Okely and Callaway (1992); Okely (1987); Radin (1963); Reed-Danahay (1997), etc.

heightened discourse over reflexive issues in the social sciences, it is nevertheless remarkable that over 30 years later so few anthropologists have openly admitted to applying autoethnography to research their own societies. Overt descriptions of ethnographic scenarios that are empirically and politically inspired from the anthropologist's own personal experiences certainly exist. Yet these are often in the vein of the 'heroic' arrival stories abroad, as discussed for instance by George Stocking in *The Ethnographer's Magic* (1983). The current fieldwork synopsis, by way of shared journeys through hitchhiking in familiar settings, however, provides somewhat of a step towards considering counterpoint examples within a framework of familiarity, what many refer to with shorthand expressions such as the 'anthropology of/at home'.

Social anthropology was initially conceived with an interest in the Other, often requiring fieldwork in distant, exotic locations. Yet with concerns to understand kinship relations and everyday life, a focus on the Other's domestic spaces quickly became an established tradition, dating back to the founding of modern ethnography and continuing to today. Regarding field research in foreign lands, however, times have changed. Anthropological studies within familiar settings have become more than merely acceptable; they are often the norm, at least for the purposes of training aspiring fieldworkers.[11] The home space here is thus an analytical category and utopic construction for understanding human behaviour, symbolism and social relations. This project therefore considers such things as: the home as a mobile environment; landscapes of care; co-opportunism and autoethnography; the utopian search for alternative systems of reciprocity, sharing and transport sustainability.

Moreover, in their contribution of a special journal issue on the futures of autobiographical studies Hernandez et al. (2017) write not just as co-authors, but as a team to produce an increasingly sought-after form of collaborative autoethnography. Their essay singles out such an approach as: 'an important addition to the field of self-narrative research as well as about the inherent challenges of this kind of inquiry' (2017: 251). For his part, the media sociologist Billy Ehn (2011), Ehn et al. (2017) talks of DIY autoethnography. Such reflections on collaboration and DIY are most apt in relation to hitchhiking. When combined with the methodological implications of Ehn and Löfgren's *The Secret World of Doing*

[11] For instance, see Latour's *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence* (2013); as well as Berliner et al. (2013).

Nothing (2010), they allude to fascinating insights for a type of travel that involves 'manual' labour (with the hand), where time is measurable in waiting, but not paid for directly by more conventional commodity sources.[12]

In wishing to abide by these interdisciplinary advances, a few notes about my relationship with the topic and with cars are required. For a start, with a few memorable exceptions, I do not drive, having never done a driver's test. Material on the topic has been collected sporadically since my student days in Scotland in the mid-1990s all the way through to the present time (obviously with much less vehemence over the past decade). At one point in the late 1990s, I thought hitchhiking would become the topic of my doctoral research but was dissuaded by my supervisor who warned me against the lack of ethnographic coherence, emphasising I should focus on the cultural significances of a particular region or place and could tackle such conceptual topics later in my career, which is precisely what this book hopes to do.

I have picked up hitchers with partners who drive, or on a couple of occasions with mates. With a colleague in Estonia in the summer of 2012, for instance, when we collected someone who had been hitchhiking around the world for over a decade and called it 'an all encompassing lifestyle'. I have hitched in pairs, but only with women. All in all, I've travelled in this way around most of the UK and quite a bit of Western Europe, particularly Benelux and Germany. More recently I would consider Slovenia as part of my field experience.

Other notable things in terms of my own experience is that, even though I don't drive and this hasn't necessarily been raised in my talks with drivers, I've never been asked if I could potentially share the task of driving. This is most likely because I wouldn't call myself a long-distance hitchhiker, having never undertaken more than three or four days at a time. I have crossed international borders and hitched at night, but have rarely visited more than say five countries on a single trip. I've never had any inappropriate sexual advancement by a driver, or been made to do anything I wasn't comfortable with.[13] I've not been in any accidents,

[12] This might sound familiar to those familiar with Robert Stebbins' arguments in *Serious Leisure* (2006).

[13] With the exception of having to listen to political and religious musings I don't share, or music genres I'm not fond of particularly.

nor have I ever asked or been asked to get out of the vehicle unexpectedly. More recently, I've taken just over a dozen lifts with online car-share providers, a medium that obviously requires some direct financial exchange. And as someone who would start to fit into the category of the retiring hitcher, I now resort to hitch-spotting as an interdisciplinary and playful way of staying away from the overstimulation of constant fieldwork.[14]

In terms of the methodological consideration for research collaboration, just like hitchhiking is a process of taking on a passenger, this volume itself has required that I take on-board co-authors in order to complete some of the chapters. These are more recent collaborations-in-progress of trans-autoethnographic memories and fieldwork findings. They allow the volume to present material that is para-sited, cross-generational and experimental. As such, methods that play with border-crossings and transgressions, kinship affiliations and instantaneous multi-media data collection/analysis all feature, making it nearly impossible to leave the field.

Hitchhiking took on methodological significance when I started my fieldwork. My ethnographic home, if you will, is Cornwall, the South-western peninsula of the UK leading into the Irish Sea. When I formally began fieldwork there in 1998, hitching provided me with a self-conscious attempt to meet informants spontaneously and interact with them on common ground. In travelling to Cornwall alone for my first May Day, I had taken the eight-hour night coach from Victoria Station which arrived at East Taphouse in the early hours of the morning. Since this was the closest the coach was going to Padstow, I had to hitch the remaining 30 miles because there were no local buses for several hours. Regardless, the journey would have required many transfers.

The gender and class angles are important here since, perhaps unusually, a woman picked me up. I had had plenty of experience with hitchhiking in the past, but on the whole it was mostly men up to that point in my life who had stopped to collect me (or us when hitching in pairs). It did not feel strange in Cornwall, however, to have what seemed like a 'hippie-esque', 'middle-aged' woman with a dog pick me up in a cramped car, almost expecting me to be travelling to Padstow's May Day celebrations as well.

[14] Two literary heroes for people of my generation, Douglas Adams and Irvine Welsh, have inspired this technique.

I learnt quickly that 'public' forms of transport (including the bus, trains and even taxis) were often not the cheapest, nor even most efficient means of travel. Yet when one's field expands considerably beyond what is comfortable to walk or cycle, what better methodological praxis can there be as a social researcher. It's fairly obvious now that a great way of meeting people and speaking to them about my fieldsite was to spend hours in vehicles doing nothing special. Simply getting around and trying to discover some essences. Hitching a lift in particular put me on an equal footing or even in a dependent relationship with many informants. As a field strategy, this is something that one should not undervalue. Granted this can result in negative repercussions as well, such as estrangement. I am nevertheless confident that deliberately placing oneself on the margins can yield benefits that outweigh any engendered alienation to result. Indeed, to appear unassuming and unpretentious is surely a tactic that most fieldworkers strive for during their research. Consequently, I firmly believe that sharing the spaces of public transport has provided me with many more contexts of encounter than I would have obtained by using my own motorised vehicle.

Indeed, hitching can perhaps be seen as a hybrid form of public transport since users of such transport are usually individualised through their purchase of the travel, whereas hitchhikers enter into a sociable and non-monetary relationship with the transport provider. And yet hitchhiking nevertheless blurs the boundaries between public and private. What is usually a private space (the lift-giver's vehicle) becomes temporarily public, and vice versa (sharing our individuality).[15]

Journeying Scholar-Ship(s)

Over the course of February 1995, I was a minor participant in a motorway development protest on the outskirts of Glasgow at the site of the so-called Pollok Free State. It was a tense time. Many of my friends and colleagues were taking big risks in publically demonstrating their opposition to the 'development' plans of local and national authorities. One of the more fun collaborative community art events that took place was the erection of a large circular henge of cars. In addition to raising protester morale, this creative feat was staged predominantly as a ploy to

[15] In terms of knock-on effects to the environment, it is increasingly difficult to see that any form of travel is free these days (for example, see Hylland Eriksen 2016).

generate media attention. The structure, a series of upright automobiles dug into the gravel of the new road's preliminary layout, was made with the assistance of a convoy of activists from England and Wales who drove up to Scotland with several old bangers. These car carcases could barely move on their own so they were sacrificed to the cause at hand.

And sacrificed they were by keeping to ancient traditions of sending off the dead honourably. In keeping with the ethos of boycotting the construction of the M77, this metal-henge of chrome, glass and plastic upholstery was ritualistically destroyed at dawn by dowsing the vehicles in petrol and setting them alight.[16] In this guise, Pollok's values and the threshold moment that carhenge represented were indeed part of an epic moment in Britain's history of roads. People like Nicola Baird (1998) and Joe Moran (2009) and numerous others have chronicled the repercussions of this case study on the renegotiations of Scottish and diasporic Gaelic identities. One of the main instigators of the Pollok protests, Colin Macleod, captured some of these sentiments with his creative prose. A few months before his untimely death he wrote the following lines:

A Dream
Seagulls fly around
as I fall in to the deep
Swimming beneath the green brine
in the depth I drift
far from the surface

I offer a song to heaven
a song of the Gael
my water logged mobile phone
receives a faint signal
but I cannot reply not ever
except to sing the song
of the Gael heavenward forever.
Colin Macleod, 2005[17]

[16] The dangerous, calculated and complex set of ceremonies are partly captured in the documentaries *Given to the People* (Yuill 2008); *To Pollok with Love* (Ceri Fielding 1995) *Prix d'or* Paris Green Film Festival (described in Baird 1998: 115–116); and the many obituaries to one of Pollok's main clan leaders (e.g., see for example Murray 2005).

[17] Taken from Alastair McIntosh's website: http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/colin.htm.

Such themes: freedom, protest and sociability as well as alienation, dependence and fear—are also part of hitchhiking's subcultures. Indeed, they are key features to the hitcher's lifeworld. In constantly dealing with them, the search for a journey through various landscapes begins with the search for oneself. Over the horizon and towards the future, hitchers see that life on the other side is no longer an extension of the present. They act on that compelling need to live life intensely, to seek heights of physical and mental experience and to do as if life itself was a fleeting voyage. Roads, cars and the gifting of transport are part of this ambiguous opportunity.

As a result, something has to be paused, put on hold or held in some paradoxical stochastic suspense. The stochasticity of movement in this case equally implies a break with the conventions, the normativity if you will, of 'traditional' models of road usage during motorised vehicle transport. Many ways therefore exist—not equivalent in scale—of interrupting or rupturing the average driving journey. These include carpooling for instance or certain hybrid forms of public transport such as park'n'ride schemes. In this sense, hitchhiking is certainly amongst the more radical type of pauses. Its 'otherness', however, will itself vary depending on particular cultural and historical settings, trends, socio-economic changes, road architecture planning, civic surveillance and so on.

In 1984, the historical geographer John B. Jackson proposed 'odology' as a new word for the interpretation of pathfinding, travel and mobility.[18] He formally defined odology as the science and study of roads. From his contemplations on travelling via this medium, he remarked that roads serve to strengthen and maintain social order. He also stated that they tie together all the spaces that constitute a community to one central place—a place where authority is exercised and power is amassed.

In iterating the importance of the road in the political landscape, Jackson points out that as a social animal we strive at being footloose, whereby our political identities incline us '[…] to seek out the locus of action and discourse' (1984: 27). Phenomenologically, we understand from this that roads embody public life in which the best ones foster a communal movement towards socially desirable objectives.

[18] Short for John Brinckerhoff, or "Brinck" for those who knew him well. He took Odology, from the Greek *hodos* (meaning way, road, journey) and ambitiously suggested it would well suit a new scientific lexicon for the study of landscape management (see Zeller 2007, 2012).

Within European anthropology and landscape studies, the literature on human movement, mobility and travel is certainly vast. Even roads, as artefacts and analytical categories, have had some ethnographic cachet (e.g. Selwyn 2001; Harvey and Knox 2015; Dalakoglou 2010). As yet, however, such a body of knowledge often disregards the explicit significance of the hitchhiking phenomenon. Donna Carlson's (1972) mini-ethnography is one of the few studies to directly grapple this topic in Britain. Her research examined the meaning that this method of transport carried for female students in the UK. Through participant observation she sampled the terms that young women used to group their actions as they travelled by this means. Basically, her brief study outlined the plans women make as well as the risks and dangers they anticipated when hitchhiking.

Carlson started by listing the strategies employed to entice people to stop. These included: being able to avoid lifts from threatening drivers; behaving in ways that encourage the longest possible ride—often requiring the hitcher to engage in conversation with the driver; knowing the appropriate times, weather conditions and places to get lifts; appearing clean, pleasant and eager; having the appropriate paraphernalia to indicate that one is really a traveller (such as a sign, a rucksack, a sleeping bag, maps or even books); and finally, attempting to make some sort of personal contact with motorists by standing, smiling and looking into their eyes whilst waiting as well as by being talkative and showing an interest in their lives once one is in their vehicle.

The crux of Carlson's thesis: even if they often do not realise it themselves, those who hitchhike have developed systematic ways of getting around which have emerged within a culturally constituted series of behaviours. She also chronicled how an informal network exists in which hitchers share the cultural knowledge surrounding the act of thumbing a ride, a network that she claimed was gendered and largely restricted to male circles. Though hitching in the 1970s may have resembled a haphazard set of activities, it was actually a complex process which carried kudos and status value amongst students. Indeed, she concluded that such voyages were not simply utilitarian, replacing other forms of less available transportation. Her results are similar to the 'social mimicry' argument put forth by Alcorn and Condie (1975) in the United States around the same time which uncovered a more psychological explanation for why there is often a symmetry between the drivers who choose to stop for certain passengers over others. In her words:

> Rather it was with pride that students recounted their tales of adventure and the strategies they had used to overcome the problems encountered. The freedom to go where one pleased at any time was valued, but even more so when it is acquired by one's own ingenuity. (1975: 146)

Other works to have addressed hitchhiking have generally focused on the different factors motivating drivers to stop (Gueguens and Stefan 2013) or traveller personality. One such study by Abraham Miller (1973) created a typology for the various kinds of road travellers. Again, largely grounded in the American youth culture of the late 1960s and early 1970s, he suggested a threefold categorisation: road and street people; runaways; and students. Although road and street people were lumped together, they differed in that street people were at the bottom of the social hierarchy, dependent on others for food and shelter.

Road people, on the other hand, were those who had rejected the normative status structure of society in order to establish an alternative lifestyle. They were analogous to the modern-day nomad or 'gypsy', who has chosen an itinerant life at a subsistence level. Many of the biographies of road people at the time displayed a continual inability to adjust their behaviours to socially acceptable norms and so their acts of transience were tactics to distance themselves from society (Zielinski and Laird 1995). Contrarily, runaways were often making a desperate attempt to create a home environment that was more bearable than what they have left behind. This could take either of three forms: permanent relocation, homelessness or sufficiently challenging the home situation with the objective of returning if conditions improved. This last point reveals that taking to the road was often a scare tactic on the part of youths or quarrelling lovers. Frequently then, with clear Freudian connotations: 'running away is part death fantasy and part puberty ritual' (Miller 1973: 19).

Regarding student travellers, they tended to view their hitching experience as an adventure. They were making a statement about their independence and ability to survive at minimum expense. Further, the experience was a challenge in which one sought personal growth and the sharpening of wits. Students were therefore seen to be engaged on a quest to escape the constraints and responsibilities of adulthood, a luxurious journey available mostly to educated middle-class youths. This group's romantic vision of roughing it was shown to be quite illusionary, even naïve. That is, their rebellious 'road rage' was a kind of identity crisis:

a desire, sustained by peers, to preserve the fun and irresponsibility of adolescence.

A more hopeful Jungian influenced study on the psychological profile of hitchhikers challenged the approach behind these types of 'surveys'. Stephen Franzoi is also critical of the findings provided by the scant qualitative studies at the time, calling them 'not systematic or empirical in their approach' (1985: 656). Though this is highly debatable, he makes several important points in his conclusion by suggesting that a type of symbiotic relationship between the driver, hitchhiker(s) and landscape exists. This is especially the case when with one's thumb is a deliberate form of 'non-touristic' athleticism—thus akin to an extreme test endurance. Such a framework, allows us to see it as a ritualistic initiation, a rite of passage—an in-betweener means of mobility.

Pushing such analyses even further, Beverly Butler's (1996) research borrows some of the principles described above in her study of motorway protesters. She writes about contested landscapes in which art functions as a barricade to both the automobile industry as well as to the conventional definitions of material culture and the dominant museum culture. The people who inhabited the motorway protest space of her field site and the rituals they performed there acted as an auto-critique of everyday life. Here, iconographic images become tangible tools for action. The art, artefacts and landscape itself were purposefully (re)-created to display and confront this potential. This is reminiscent of one of J.B. Jackson's concluding statements: 'Always, in short, a reminder that the motorist does not own the streets but merely shares them with others' ([1957] 1970: 112).

Buried beneath layer upon layer of material resistance, Butler has uncovered a world of inversion, subversion and perversion—where the everyday is turned on its head. She has ventured into the ontology of protesters and has revealed the eclecticism of late modernity inherent in their cultural, spiritual and philosophical justifications. Her theoretical underpinnings draw upon fairly recent critiques of space, landscape and the debates concerning everyday life. Her goal is to connect phenomenology with exploration in order to broaden the understanding of alienation. This experiential way of understanding domination and resistance creates a contrast in projecting the critical consciousness of everyday life (Durman 2000).

Hitchhikers are frequently part of, and help sustain, transient communities of need, dependence and subversion. By searching for the meaning

behind or encoded in hitching, one might suggest that this activity approaches a wandering form of folk art, whereby it is grounded in social and philosophical significance as well as in the materiality of the landscape (Brunvand 1981; Ryden 1993; Thomas 1996). In such terms, the study of hitchhiking provides compelling biographic ways of analysing both our own and other cultures, including their various marginalised subcultures.

By its ubiquitous social presence, the car not only helps shape the way we live but even moulds our interpretations of the past and the future. It is a material statement to who and what we are. Automobiles and their related concrete networks of roads are readily apparent in our landscapes—standing as monuments to our history. Even the atmosphere is not safe from their pollution and scrapped vehicles have created a whole new refuse problem. Further, the act of car travel has managed to alter perceptual faculties. The landscape as seen from a motor vehicle is experienced as a set of hyper sequences. Objects appear to move quickly, they alter in colour, shape, size and texture. Compositions form, dissolve and fade. And we perceive change, constancy and motion with heightened speed—which in itself may be exciting, frightening or simply tedious (Aiken 1976; Tomlinson 2007; Virilio 1977).

Indeed, James Clifford reminds us of the connection between storytelling and the act of journeying (1988: 167):

> But a voyage must be told. It cannot be a heap of observations, notes, souvenirs – the pieces are displayed in a sequence. A journey makes sense as a 'coming to consciousness'; its story hardens around an identity. (Tell us about your trip!)

So let us consider tales about journeys to provide further examples. Journeys do not just provide the content of the story. Instead, the very structure of narratives replicates the journeying structure. In a prosaic and immediate sense, stories grow out of the patterns of our movements in the everyday world. For instance, going forth, returning, searching and stopping are easily contrasted to beginning, repeating, clarifying and ending. Equally, there exists the more epic travels of the human lifetime: the movement from birth to death through various stages (Árnason 2010).

The sociologist Richard Quinney alludes to such epic voyages when he writes: 'the road is a homeplace in which we may live in eternity. The journey is inward to an unknown place. Home is where I have never been before. Here, now, in this place as I travel, I am at home' (1986: 28).

Again, it is the theme of moving that imposes a precognitive disposition that finds expression in stories where conceptual and moral transformations take place from one mode of being to another (Jackson 1996). The tact of landscape scholars is thus well suited to revealing the power latent within the layers of the roadscape itself. In other words, we should search for what hides behind the experience, imagination and representation of mobility:

> Where it [the Path] begins is easy enough to establish, for it is the place where the stranger first disembarks. You may object that this can be almost anywhere, but the average stranger still arrives by bus or train or truck, and even if he [sic] arrives in his own car he is likely to try and park somewhere outside the more congested downtown area. (Jackson [1957] 1970: 95)

Jackson's historical observations still hold considerable veracity as we approach nearly three quarters of a century since he noted them. This is possibly because he had relied on actual observations of human movement. In so doing, he uncovered a pattern to city transport that was not obvious from the layout of the transportation network. In essence, Jackson was revealing the traveller's path—a path of embedded power, not accessible or noticeable to all.

Along the road people are developing therapeutic communities where certain passenger-ways can act as a communal space: not transient or in-transit but transcendental. For the 'maladjusted' or the marginalised, some journey-scapes may be as cathartic to the society as to the individual. One cannot ignore that there exists a poignant social commentary in the telling of such road protests and hitching quests. As this discourse progresses, we will likely gain ground in our approach to answering the riddle of how the landscape embodies knowledge and performance (Olwig 2004). Whence we will begin to pose fresh questions, probe new problems and propose creative alternatives to the way we move through the land.

We should try and remember this when analysing the roadscape and attempting to propose comprehensive transport policies. Indeed, should we not be attempting to encourage smaller scaled methods of movement instead of promoting transport systems that leave hordes of passengers whinging by the wayside? Complaining about the traffic yet compliant to the paths most travelled by—motorway, freeway, runway—the one way of the everyday. Perhaps our infatuation with mobility has meant that we

have swayed from the path of socially responsible transport planning. So maybe then it's time to devise new travel slogans for this millennium?

Lost? or Dreaming of Affective Adventure Capital

Observations about the behaviours of hitchhikers and drivers are plentiful. Some state that single drivers (mostly men) look for a companion when driving on moderately long trips. In more recent conversations with motorists, many have said that they often look for hitchers and unlike before they are difficult to find: 'You're a dying breed' is a common theme to come out of these discussions. They also mention that they are choosy when looking for a hitcher. Hence, appearance and performance are critical deciding factors in a hitcher's success. Interestingly, enthusiasm as well as cleanliness rate quite high on the driver's list. As one of them states: 'If a hitcher looks bored I often think *he* must be boring, so I pass by'. In his popular survey of European hitchhikers, Ken Welsh (1988) recurrently asserts that attitude and body language regularly helps or hinders the hitchhiker. Likewise, Simon Calder (1985), who has made a career out of writing travel columns and guidebooks, started out early on by documenting the best tactics for travelling on a shoe-string budget. His manual for travelling across Europe is expertly crafted with suggestions on navigating through an ever changing 'post cold-war' landscape—from where to wait when swapping lifts, through to how to prepare for the weather and what to pack for camping out under the stars.

Risk is an ingredient that needs to be thrown into the mix at this stage. Like many other conceptual commodities connected to adventure, it is a type of resource that can expire or be contagious; it can be financially managed, sold, marketed, branded, exchanged and traded. Adventure, however, manifests itself through more mediated types of (eccentric) capital. Some anthropological studies of European peripheries refer to adventure as 'an intense exploration in which we move away from a centre, going East, going South, going off, breaking through, and feeling the adrenaline rush from "being in the edge"' (Martínez 2019: 6). This is an approach that challenges, or in more specific terms, directly confronts the idea that we should erase errors, failures and frailties. It is itself based on an assumption that any innate innovative imagination (which could provide solutions in times of crisis) will flourish in the correct edgework settings—on the margins of the normal—where some people are prepared to wander, explore and learn.

Hence, in attempting to expose some of the blind spots of what it means to journey,[19] this project attempts to dive headlong into the transience of 'freeloading' travellers. By opting out of everyday environments and processes of travel, hitchhiking (as a phenomenon with particular cultural specificities) develops new contexts for the expression of community, trust and social acceptance. This occurs not only in relation to the mutual tolerance or affinity that develops between hitchers and motorists, but also by the sharing of collective experiences of hardship and joy between hitchers, travellers, protesters and so on. Indeed, the activity of hitchhiking often establishes friendships and moralities of the moment. These fleeting alliances are the bonds of transient communities. They are relationships that do not necessarily extend beyond the confines of being on the road. Yet they are nonetheless genuine and renewable. From them we understand hitchhiking journeys as liminal. That is, as existing both in and out of society, where a potential for individual as well as collective enlightenment exists.

Hitchhiking thus coaxes its performers to embark on more than a spatial journey through linear time. Instead, it directs them across different time zones, onto a more fluid riverine pathway of multiple possibilities. Drifting past eddies of conventional social structure, hitching enters the adventurous realm of the unknown, a placeless utopia. Once within a fuel propelled metal-sheeted cocoon, one heads towards places where speed, comfort, risk, duration, morality, routes and perhaps even the final destination cannot clearly be predetermined prior to, or even during, the voyage. As a method of travel, we are therefore dealing with a means of creating transient sociality. Human contact is solicited by the hitcher who is making a plea to the generosity of motorists (Garner 2008; Schostak and Schostak 2007).

Simultaneously, however, the process of hitching is somewhat anarchic in the sense that it undermines, *inter alia*, the social domination of transport infrastructures. Ergo, such journeys are subtle forms of subversion. Rather than being a straightforward form of travel, the hitching voyage is a method of social displacement. Indeed, even as the passenger enters a world which is dependent upon mechanised mobility, he or she—at the same time—engages in a process of rebelling against the subservience to modernity, whilst nevertheless believing and trusting in the humanity

[19] A processual verb, as well as a noun, originating from the French *journée* and thus referring to the work or travel incurred within a day or more.

of ideals. In consequence, the sociality extends beyond the journey itself given the place that this type of activity holds at the margin of society, the centre of protest communities as well as in-between reality, fiction and the poetic artistry of movement.

Intellectually, such a project extends the studies that I've undertaken on risk-sport since many types of adventures share concerns for alienation, dependence, fear, mobility, protest, gender, sociability, time and thrill seeking as core themes. The starting premise is that everyday forms of vehicle travel structure many of our spatial perceptions and experiences. This project therefore questions how breaks of convention, such as those which exist when hitching, impact upon road/car-scape encounters, the sensing of place and the building/contestation of nationalism.[20]

Hitchers often adopt a rather marginal, liminal and 'Othered' position within society. They are represented to some degree as social outcasts or anti-social misfits who are best ignored and described through psychopathic stereotypes. And yet such a form of travel harbours many ethical concerns for environmental awareness, whilst reinstating into society the importance of some core values that pivot around such issues as trust and sharing. The contribution that I hope to make to anthropological theory then comes through considering the dimensions by which *l'auto-stop* can be used to unpack the Self/Other relationship.

This project thus serves as a reflection on how to overcome simplistic interpretations about hitching-scapes and the cultural attributes of this purposeful method of travel. Indeed, the development of the shared economy has this strange consequence that it brings forward the vanishing of hitchhiking as it once was. Yet to what extent does it not carry the same links to border crossing/international encounters? People in the shared economy choose with whom to meet and share. This is much less so with *auto-stopping*. Choice is possible, but perhaps less available since not much is known about the next travel companions. In this sense, new technology has brought down some of the purist forms of hitchhiking. And in Eastern Europe hitchhiking was rarely free of charge, so its replacement with car sharing did not change much from this point of view. Such tensions form part of the rationale for this study.

[20] See Monica Heintz's (2001) work on the 'citadel' motif for Europeaness; and/or similar arguments that invert the scenario of fixed boundaries/mobile people (e.g. Heintz and Kaneff 2006).

Hence, one of the main challenges here is to both question and give meaning to the affective experience of 'European' hitchhikers.[21] My work within the scholarship dealing with the 'affective turn' is eclectic. For our purposes though, it can perhaps be summarised in one specific attempt to understand regional sets of spoken and gestural idioms that reflect how people in a 'peripheral' setting build a directional sense of place. If two main influences stand out above the rest, I'd say it was the theoretical frameworks put forward by Christopher Tilley and Barbara Bender when they talk of 'material metaphors' and 'political phenomenology'.[22]

One approach in which to apply these stances in this volume could be to deconstruct how grassroots hitching colloquialisms have become culturally acquired resources. The main idea, however, is instead to expose some of the practical and poetic complexities solidified within the eccentric mode of transport that we know as *auto-stop*, hitchhiking, *trampen* and so on. The main goal is to set some conceptual groundwork for a topic that remains elusive—not taken seriously, even ridiculed as something of practical value but little intellectual worth. And so, this impressionistic journey is about considering both facetiously and seriously the dimensions of what is implied by the joke: Why Did the Anthropologist Cross the Road? That is, what does it mean to use hitchhiking to get to the Other? Whose Other? Indeed, who's Other? Which side do we mean? And which rides are meaningful?

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[21] See Anika Keinz and Pawel Lewicki (2019) for a collaborative discussion on alternative enactments of embodying the EU.

[22] (e.g. Laviolette 2012). After all, this is the anthropology of landscape schooling that I was initiated into via the material culture group at UCL (see Bender 1998; Tilley 1994, 2019).

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CHAPTER 2

Dividually Driven

One of the times when an actual hitchhiking journey was directly related to both the world of fiction and the highly personal space of individualism was when, on a visit to Cornwall in 2002, I was first introduced to Harry Potter. During the early summer, many months after I had finished my fieldwork and when I was officially meant to be writing up, I yearned for a break from London. I went to Falmouth, the town that has become my adopted home in the field. After spending several weeks there surfing and hanging out with my friends, I eventually realised it was time to resume some writing. So, on a warm afternoon after a long bank holiday weekend, I decided to hitch back to the capital. I did so from a large roundabout near the town of Mitchell on the top of the moorland area between Truro, St Austell and Newquay.

Taking the bus to this somewhat remote spot 10 miles Northeast of Truro was motivated by the idea of catching different sets of traffic heading on to the A30, the 'emmets way' as it is known locally. The idiom emmet is a derogatory word meaning 'ant infestation'. It refers to the excess of tourists in Cornwall who jam-up the A30 with an abundance of cars, camper caravans, etc. (Laviolette 2011).

This route is the main trunk-road towards the Tamar Bridge which then joins the A303 to Exeter. Feeling some regret for not being able to stay longer, I started to sing some song lyrics as I prepared psychologically

P. Laviolette, *Hitchhiking*,
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for what could have been a long wait. They were evoked from the rolling hills and wind turbines[1]:

[…] and the cars
lost in the drift
are there
and the people that drive
lost in the drift
are there […]
'Driven Like the Snow'[2]

My intuition on this being a good place to wait was confirmed. Within less than half an hour a young woman in her mid-twenties, with blonde curly hair and spectacles, pulled over. She was driving a fairly new looking white Volkswagen. I didn't have a destination sign with me but this hadn't deterred her from stopping. The window on the passenger side was already rolled down so leaning through slightly to be understood audibly I told her that a lift anywhere East would help since I was trying to get to London. 'Sure thing, hop in' was all she initially said, with no obvious indication of what her own destination was. After a few minutes of brief introductions and chit-chat she asked if I liked Harry Potter. Reaching into the sleeve of her door, she pulled out a large cassette casing. It contained several audio tapes. I replied that I didn't really know it, having heard about the story vaguely but having never actually read any. 'Do you mind if I play it?' she asked politely, 'I'm hooked'.

Before the recorded narration started she mentioned having read the books already, but found the audio tapes equally enjoyable. She was very much looking forward to seeing the films. Even with so much enthusiasm, I don't think that she would have anticipated at that point just how successful the books and films would eventually become. It wasn't until she had to change tapes that she mentioned she was going to Sutton, a Southwestern London suburb in Surrey. I could easily get the train into the city centre from there. It is likely she had kept that bit information to

[1] Subconsciously, this recollection is likely due to a place-name association between the neighbouring town and a friend's surname of who died in 1996. An Aberdonian living in London, he was a central figure in a fan base who toured around Europe to see The Sisters of Mercy at gigs and music festivals.

[2] Taken from '*Floodland*' (1987), SoM, Lyrics & music Andrew Eldritch (Merciful Release, EMI Music).

herself until finding out if I'd object to spending five uninterrupted hours listening to J. K. Rowling's creation. Or perhaps she was just waiting to see if I was a weirdo. This ride still remains somewhat difficult for me to understand, not only because of it being a younger woman accepting to pick up an older man, but largely since the driver had her own source of entertainment readily available, to which she was un-distractedly devoted. Maybe her mission was to seek converts, as an employee or shareholder in the increasingly fashionable Harry Potter enterprise.

Yet what this ethnographic vignette does demonstrate nicely is the willingness that some people still have to share their own private space in order to assist a complete stranger. This is of course a feature that is integral to how hitchhiking and other forms of car sharing function. This chapter explores some of these issues in relation to both hitchhiking's decline in the neoliberal age of individualism and to its survival, even its recent revival, in many parts of Europe. As Danny Miller writes: 'Irrespective of whether people live within highly individualizing or a highly socialized environment, we still have the task of understanding them as individuals' (Miller 2009: 1).

Incomplete Identities

Now in terms of contextualising such an encounter, let's start at the beginning. Not, of course, at the beginning of all things. This is the domain of physics and theology. Nor do we start with the source of human evolution, the concern of anatomy and physiology. Nor even at the beginning of society, civilisation or culture, which is covered by archaeology, history and philosophy amongst other disciplines. Certainly though, one place where we can claim as a good starting point would be at the beginning of our individual and collective human lives as well as our first socialised collective memories of encounters with people, environments and objects. This is a realm of investigation within the humanities and social sciences which anthropologists share with psychologists, linguists, sociologists, human geographers, lawyers and political scientists, to name but a few fields of study. To begin with then, it might be interesting perhaps to ask what the key terminology 'individualism' refers to and where it originates from.

By inquiring into the etymology of individualism, it might be especially interesting for a social anthropologist to set the scene by recalling the ethnographic moment of first contact with the identities of 'Others'. This

has largely been our territory for just over a century now, especially in the more recent stages of that historical moment when post-colonialism and post-socialism, as well as the reflexive deconstruction of the Other, has become so paramount to modernity. Within the framework of the global economic system of postmodern capitalism, we've learnt from the influence of Marxist scholars that the things of most value or relevance are not always those which are most obviously life-shifting or affirming. Moreover, from certain of these Marxist axioms about making history or the repetition of time, we've also learnt that in addition to mattering significantly, the past is somehow inescapable. Hence the importance of any issues dealing with identity, individualism included.

So, I'm suggesting then that there is an important time element to such questions. Not only 'where' but 'when'. Hence, my first attempt to grapple with this theme of individualism is to suggest that it starts and ends at different points, depending on the context in which I (or we) find myself (ourselves). My own identity in Estonia for a time, was slightly larger than in Cornwall. And this was considerably larger than when I was in Berlin or London, where I'm largely anonymous in terms of the identities I assume for myself in such mega-metropolitan cities.

Now in Estonia where I worked for eight years from 2010, I was one of the more senior amongst a handful of card-carrying anthropologists in a country in which this discipline has only really existed for a decade or so (ethnology excluded). There my identity as an outsider was equally made quite obvious by my ineptitude with the language and an inability to progress with it with any ease or grace. I would suggest that such an in/deflated identity carries less possibility to have control, or to hold any absolute rights over. So in short, the modern conglomeration of the Nation-State has considerable influence on where the rights to our identities begin and end. I wouldn't have had the possibility of acting out my professional career-identity as an anthropologist had the Estonian Education Ministry never allowed me to work in that country.

I appreciate that in the context of Human Rights for instance, such introverted concerns are not the priority. Within the 'politically correct' lingo which characterises our time, we should of course be reflecting on the obvious: the right to my identity/individualism effectively ends if it infringes upon the ability for someone else (be it individual or group) to assert or celebrate their own. Now as principled, moral, righteous and perhaps even self-effacing as that might be, an obvious opposition arises: how do we measure up competing identities? Who should sacrifice the

rights to their own on behalf of someone else? And maybe, an even more complicated issue, where or when does my right begin in such contested situations?

One possibility here follows the reasoning of Bruno Latour in a book controversially entitled '*We've Never Been Modern*' (1993). We can infer from his main arguments that our claims to self-expression can begin only once scenarios of discrimination, inequality and abuse have been addressed and corrected. That is, he argues, not quite yet. Since both communism and capitalism have failed to meet the basic requirements of moral and social justice on a global scale, identity is a luxury—a thing of the future—an abstract, utopic construction, a non-entity as it were. So our constructions of individualism are effectively not our right but our privilege. There's nothing wrong as such for us to assert them. But let us not deceive ourselves with legalistic jargon, with ideological discourses that take morality, ethics and judicial models to justify a need or desire to systematically generate processes of commonality, distinction, belonging and recognition.

Be that as it may, let's be more practical for a moment. We might think that our individualism starts with ourselves. Actually, the rights to our identities start with our parents, once they've chosen to have us. And legally those rights pre-date us in that they are created and exist independently of us, at a structural societal level. Such rights post-date us as well. The idea of dying alone might be true biologically and existentially but not quite accurate in terms of the cultural construction of mortality (Laviolette 2003).

Early on in the formative years of the discipline of anthropology, we find the cross-cultural considerations of individualism as described by Émile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss. Even at the time these were contested formulations. Yet they were also highly influential on Louis Dumont's (1986) anthology of essays dealing with the very same topic. His was an ambitious goal of placing individualism as a modern ideology into a broad anthropological framework. Dumont starts with religion before moving on to consider the political philosophy of Hobbes, Rousseau, the *Declaration of Human Rights* and other legal systems as well as cross-cultural examples. By the end of his comprehensive volume, he homes in on anthropology as well as on more contemporary ethical codes/value systems.

His predecessor, the French anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1985 [1938]) contrasted consciousness of the self—an individuality

compounded of an awareness of the body/spirit—with the social concept of 'persons'. The person, he claimed, was a union of rights and moral responsibility. He later recognised the archetypes in the classical Greek perception of 'the actor behind the mask' and in the development of Roman law, in which the distribution of personhood was initially diluted within clan genealogies and then re-constituted on the grounds of a citizen's role within the Republic. The later development within Christian institutions of religion and morality leads to the emergence of a model of conscience and consciousness, in which the status and characteristics of one's personhood connect to inner principles of surveillance, domination and control (Macfarlane 1993).

Total Social Fractions

Now these were good starting points. It would be odd indeed for a contemporary anthropologist to leave it there. That is, to reflect on such a question without mentioning the concept (discovered by ethnographic fieldworkers in Melanesia in the ninety sixties and seventies) of the 'dividual', that is—the divided individual—an idea that people are imagined to be composed of distinct qualities and multiple entities. Here we encounter a perception of individuality which is markedly different to our own as devised by Western philosophy (Strathern 1988). Deleuze (1992) developed this concept of the dividual further to explain the mechanisms of a 'control society'. This he opposed to Michel Foucault's (1975) 'disciplinary society'. The main feature is that the idea of the *individual* means *indivisible*, the smallest unit in which society can be reduced. So if people are not whole self-contained 'units', but instead may be broken down (divided), then these non-self-contained units could be referred to as dividuals.

Such a notion has been employed and popularised by various social anthropologists to explain contradictions within the formation and conceptualisation of identity. Some good examples of this occur in a collection of essays edited by Joanna Overing & Alan Passes, *The Anthropology of Love and Anger* (2000). This volume argues that many of those societies based on an 'aesthetics of community' cannot be understood through Western philosophical prisms. Dualisms like public and private, political and domestic, individual and collective, even male and female,

these vary culturally and historically. Hence, persons cannot be understood or create meaning apart from the social relations in which they are embedded. We shape and are a significant constitutive part of the spheres we inhabit.

So where does that leave us in trying to think through the question of where the rights to our own identities and individualisms begin and end? It seems difficult to provide a satisfactory answer which is universal for all times and cultures. That's not to say the question itself isn't valid. Nor it is a waste of time to play with various attempts to answer it, or more accurately, the sets of many questions that it implies. Quite the opposite actually, this makes it all the more important to consider. Perhaps these questions are too big a detour in this kind of exposé. I nonetheless take it to be the task at hand, but appreciate that many people find anthropology frustrating, or at least find it infuriating when anthropologists are so reluctant to draw firm conclusions. They get annoyed, in some cases quite rightly, because they are often confronted with variations of illusive statements like: 'Well you see, I appreciate such an interpretation carries some validity… [pause], but you do know it's much more complicated than that, right?'

This is not always helpful. Simply then, in an attempt not to evade answering the question completely, I'd break it down to three levels. Rights to identity/individualism begin and end in: (i) collective sociopolitical institutions, including laws, religion, settings of higher education; (ii) in everyday, vernacular social relations as well as communal imaginaries (this is a bridge between the point above and the third); (iii) the specific behaviours and actions of every single one of us.

As Franco Berardi points out:

> The technical transformation has changed the conditions of mental activity and the forms of interactions between the individual and the collective sphere. In the age of Voluntary action that we call Modernity, these two spheres – individual and collective – could be seen as distinct, externally linked, and interacting on the basis of an effective intentionality. […] Now the distinction between individual and the collective has been blurred. (2013: 9)

In terms of hitchhiking as a hybrid form of semi-public/semi-private transport, dividuality is significant for a number of reasons. Most obviously, drivers sacrifice their own individualism and take a certain risk over

their safety in order to assist an unknown fellow traveller with a lift. Likewise, hitchers dilute themselves into a system of constant risk taking and within a set of fleeting interactions with a variety of random encounters. The dividuality of such a system is further found in the multitude of texts, films and other representational forms of depicting this phenomenon as well as the communal spaces in which participants are increasingly coming into contact together (i.e. hitchgatherings/racing competitions, artistic events, online forums and so on).

Hitchhiking is often articulated as a flight of fancy, a search for freedom and adventure. Its history runs parallel to that of the motor car and like this object of capricious consumption, can be seen as a manifestation of supreme individualism. It certainly holds dividualistic properties in being about opening one's mind and increasing our levels of mutual tolerance by meeting people more or less on their own terms. Or about trust, conviviality and other shared experiences. Yet despite all this, hitchhiking is often a solo form of travel which is hyper driven by the participant's ego, by their curiosity, their determination and their stamina. Likewise, its decline in the West can be attributed to the perception of living in a world of increased individualism. Amongst other things, drivers are less likely to stop because of a lack of willingness to share their personal space and/or their time. Potential hitchers are less likely to attempt this form of transport because of the desire to travel alone and in a more predictable manner, in the comfort of relatively cheap coaches, trains or planes. Neoliberalism is a main culprit here.

In its strictest definitions then, hitchhiking would simply be an amateur's pastime. One cannot, it would appear, make money through this activity, at least not in the sense of making a living from it. And so *auto-stopping*, or *trampen* is defined as a hobby—a labour of love—a practice for dilettantes. Would it not seem rather nonsensical to speak of a professional hitchhiker? The exception would of course be 'trades-plating', but most would probably agree that this is a whole different topic. Trade-plate drivers are people who professionally take out a contract to drive a car to or from one location to the next. The plates they use for such purposes indicate to others that they are driving an in-transit vehicle as part of the duties of their work. They then, whilst holding the registration plates out to demonstrate their profession, solicit a lift back home, saving any public transport fare. It is in this last sense that they behave as a sub-set to hitchhiking. Yet the overall format, values

and experiences incurred during these types of journeys are so different that both groups identify as distinct from the other.[3]

There is much excellent work on travelling countercultures and even on the experience of motion slowness (O'Regan 2012; Boyer et al. 2015). Yet few accounts exist of the affects and effects of hitchhiking in contemporary societies. Michael O'Regan (2016) provides one excellent thought-piece grounded in ethnographic study of hitchgatherings. Here he allows us to clearly see how hitchhikers are *bricoleurs*—masters in piecing together the many intricate puzzle pieces required to travel fairly long distances with only meagre resources. Constantly being open to adventure is part of what gets them to adapt readily to unpredictable circumstances. These findings chime with the ideas of Miranda July, an artist, writer and director of the film *The Future* (2011). She has said in one of her performance lectures—a type of public talk humorously self-described as a 'sermon': 'take a moment to connect with a stranger'.[4] Such words are apt indeed in times like these. And they encompass an essential part of hitchhiking. In a world where many feel we need more trust, not less; where the combination of walls and xenophobia equate with 'alternative facts', we seem to be increasingly heading towards social loneliness.

When the absurdity of alternative facts leads directly to post-truth or fake news, it is maybe more important than ever to better understand forms of random trust building; and/or things from our past which once seemed to hold elements of altruism. In such an age when we seem to be on a one-way 'road to unfreedom', as Timothy Snyder (2018) calls it metaphorically, would a credible extension ever arise to push such nonsensical thinking into the realm of the Maussian notion of total social facts? Now reminding ourselves quickly that for Mauss the total social fact was an activity that could stand as a microcosm for explaining the whole of the society from which it stems. Gifts and reciprocity in terms

[3] Indeed, the short BBC reportage by Steve Carver based on a week-long experiment with this form of work, only briefly mentions hitchhiking in terms of nostalgia (16 mins. 20 sec) as well as in passing when in a tricky spot near Coventry: "I'm tempted to hitch… but these days, you could be waiting so long, it's just not worth it" (12 mins. 10 secs).

[4] See https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2011/oct/23/miranda-july. This idea of taking a moment to communicate with a stranger was also encompassed in the Urban Hitchhiking project at HAM (see Malla et al. 2017).

of their *Hau* (spirit) amongst the Māori was one of his classic examples. Through understanding gifts, exchanges and the obligations that they entail because given objects embody an ethereal essence that carries the kinship structure of their origins. Hence by scrutinising the system of reciprocity in Aotearoa, one can begin to form a more comprehensive overview about values, economics, gender and generational relations or whatnot. That is, to form a better holistic knowledge of Māori culture in this case. Many more contemporary examples of total social facts exist—car consumption and crash cultures in the West at the turn of century for instance (Huttmann 1973; Arthurs and Grant 2003; Vidal 2010, 2013).[5]

What, then, would it mean to ponder over the potential and political significance of an alternative total social fact? Perhaps in such cases the consideration is not as absurd. If we posit that the act of hitchhiking in its heyday during the 1960s and 1970s was close to being a total social fact, with reference to how the ideas of individual and social mobilities were relating to the growing capitalistic fetishisation of car culture within late modernity, then hitchhiking can be seen in such light. If so, its rapid decline during the turn of the millennium might suggest it has become an anti-total social fact. Or at the very least, we would have to fit it into some alternative category—a total social fiction so to say.

Indeed, the idea of the total social fact is no longer such an apt terminology in this case, if we feel we've been left with a practice that, at present, best exists as a representational form. If not so much an active pastime on the ground in the contemporary moment, hitchhiking continues to capture the public imagination in various fictional forms. Once a ubiquitous phenomenon of modern societies most of the world over, hitchhiking now seems to be nearly extinct. At least in the Western world, it's seen as a dying-out phenomenon. Yet in many parts of Eastern Europe or the former Soviet Union, this activity continues unabated (Fig. 2.1).[6]

[5] Huttmann even demonstrated that some young hippie hitchers had fallen victim to social pressures for auto-obsession, refusing lifts unless they were in posh cars. Rinvolucri (1974) observed this too in the UK.

[6] Musician Franz Nikolay (2016) makes this point in the introduction to his book where he talks of becoming a 'professional traveller' through being a touring musician.

Fig. 2.1 *Mundstück*/Mouthpiece in the field, Ant Hampton & Rita Pauls (duo-selfie by Hampton)

Earth, Wind and Hire

From Airbnb to Zipcar, we are flooded with online sites offering the opportunity to co-share anything from bikes, work spaces, repair skills and street scooters. This is indeed a lucrative industry, much of it relying on little more than App platforms that allow users to hire out some excessive feature of their lives and then profit from someone else's need for it (Baptista et al. 2014; Chan and Shaheen 2012). Cynics would likely say that this is just another form of capitalism dressed up in a twenty-first-century fleece. Alternative interpretations talk of the waste and entropy involved in not sharing certain things; of fighting 'fire with ice' (Zuckermann 1991). Or changing the system from within. Adam Weymouth summarise the main debates of these polar views well:

> BlaBlaCar, the leading car share website in Europe, has been gathering 10 million users. Last month they secured another $100 million of funding. Drivers post their journeys, passengers search for journeys and

> contribute to the petrol costs. A million journeys are made every month, from which BlaBlaCar pockets two euros per ride; it is not possible to offer a journey for free. Along with many other websites and apps now proliferating across every continent, it is being called digital hitchhiking […] The sharing economy is hip right now. Airbnb, Zipcar, Taskrabbit, Poshmark, the internet is awash. Sharing bikes, sharing rooms, sharing skills, sharing cars, sharing, as the New York Times has reported, illegal handguns. The industry is valued at £15 billion, much of it little more than platforms that allow users to rent out and cash in on the excess in their lives. Their manifestos buzz with words like 'community' and 'trust', of cutting out the middle man. "It's like the UN at every kitchen table" said Brian Chesky, Airbnb's CEO. But as his company floats on the stock market and Zipcar is bought by Avis, it becomes harder to suspend disbelief that this is not just capitalism dressed up, once again, in sheep's clothing. Breathless editorials speculate that the sharing economy has the power to do anything from liberating workers from the nine-to-five bind, to creating a slow-burning revolution that could overthrow the current economic system. (Weymouth 2015)

Starting from the beginning of the twentieth century with the invention of cars and later fast smartphone development to support new and innovative start-ups, various different types of ride-share systems have evolved rapidly. Ride-sharing itself is not actually a new invention. In the early 1910s Jitney culture starting from California spread rapidly throughout the United States and Canada.[7] Private automobiles were used as rivals to street railways, typically treated in histories of American urban transportation, either as an historical aberration, or at most, as an incident which inseminated the engineering design of early buses.

This was mainly the result of a triumph in car manufacturing. The moving assembly line first implemented at Ford's Model-T plant at Highland Park, Michigan, in 1914, increased labour productivity tenfold, allowing exceptional price cuts in producing ready-made cars. The standardisation of a product and manufacturing for the masses meant that commoners could increasingly afford to buy one or even two family vehicles.

[7] The word 'Jitneys' was common slang for a nickel, which was also what these lifts typically cost. Many cities across the U.S. scrambled to regulate them. But jitneys did not last long as regulations for transportation made it illegal for them to continue (Eckert and Hilton 1972).

For a number of years I would justify to people that this hitchhiking research would serve as a reflection on how to overcome commonsensical interpretations about hitching roadscapes. If this means of transport was purposeful, then surely the cultural attributes were worth identifying. The problem more recently has been to single out the (sub)culture, or the ethno-historical particularities. Indeed, recent adages that shared economies are new things leave in their wake strange 'shock of the new' ripples. In flattening much cultural history and bypassing non-Western world views altogether, it's easier to follow the ever-present grand narratives than to turn our backs for a moment. Foregrounding the importance of hitchhiking's vanishing values, as they once were before excessive automation now seems to be a valid task—if rather nostalgic of course.

So can we ask, without being trivially academic, to what extent does this practice not carry important links to border crossing/international encounters? In the shared economy of travel, for instance, people usually have a greater control over choosing with whom they share their journey, at least insofar as extended communication goes. This is much less so with *auto-stopping* however. Choice is possible, but perhaps less available since very little can be known about the identities of the following travel companions. In this sense, new technology has brought down some of the purist forms of hitchhiking. And in Eastern Europe hitchhiking was rarely free of charge, so its replacement with car sharing did not change much from this point of view. Such tensions form part of the rationale for this study to critique the restraints placed upon hitchhiking by neoliberalist thinking.

Cars are prime objects of fetishistic possession. They are also relatively easy to share. And as Catherine Lutz points out, they are significant objects that allow us a glimpse into many facets of modern society:

> The car system has local, national, transnational, and international dimensions and as the central commodity of the modern world, the car provides some unique perspectives on where an anthropology of emotional life can take us in understanding contemporary global issues of central importance. (Lutz 2015: 602)

Now one of the main key informants of my *auto-stop* research is highly individualised as a subject. I take Nigel Rapport's (1999) point that individuality and individualism are distinct things. Yet in this case the two issues overlap considerably in quite a unique character who participates in

this type of individualistic displacement with the deliberate intention of being self-sufficient.

Miran Ipavec is proud of saying that he has hitched a distance equivalent to reaching the moon or circumnavigating the earth ten times over. After writing and self-publishing a book on his hitching adventures around Europe in 2013, he decided to set up an exhibition of the things he collected along the way. This would be the platform to allow him to sell more books, now translated into six languages.[8] He has run his Hitchhikers' Museum for six years (Fig. 2.2).

Each summer he has taken his interactive exhibition space on the road and set it up in six different locations. Initially he designed and tested it in his home town of Kanal in 2014. He then took it to the capital city Ljubljana in 2015. The following summer in 2016, when I first had the opportunity to visit the exhibition despite having read his book two years previously, he went to the tourist town of Bled by a large alpine lake and nature reserve. In 2017 he undertook a double feature, displaying the museum in both the neighbouring seaside towns of Piran for a month in July and in Koper during all of August/September. He had plans to retire the museum after the summer of 2018, where its final destination would have been in Trieste (some 10 to 15 miles from Koper/Piran), the first time it would feature outside Slovenia. In the end, during the early days of September, he took it to the Italian town Gradisca d'Isonzo, situated halfway between Udine and Trieste, close to the Slovenia border and just inland from the ancient sea side city of Monfalcone.

The museum exhibition comprises a diversity of interactive games and objects/images such as a collection of ice-cream spoons, table-tennis balls picked up at various tournaments, football scarves, newspaper and magazine articles about his achievements. There are participative games to identify the population, flags, celebrities and beers of several European countries, as well as to trace the route across the borders from one end of the continent to the other.

Miran used to be the mayor of his home town of Kanal and has organised countless events to promote the Soči River valley region of Western Slovenia. He is a lively storyteller with lots of energy. Rarely does he close the museum before 10 p.m. and in many cases has slept in the exhibition space for four or five nights a week, only to open again at 10 or 11 a.m.

[8] One can get a copy in Slovenia, Serbian, English, German, Dutch and Italian.

Fig. 2.2 Eric Lancon/Ayu Santana & MI cut out, HH Museum in Piran SLO, by Miran Ipavec, 2017

And when not doing this, he had to drive over 90 minutes to get back to Kanal, where he still lives in the family home with his brother, mother and their dog Bonnie. Perhaps what is most unique about this charismatic person is that he loves meeting new people through the arduous process of solo hitchhiking long distances. And he seems to have an insatiable desire to set new challenges for himself and even though he rarely drinks, I'm sure he's been inspired by Guinness.

In April 2015 his record was to have crossed through the borders of 31 European countries in 11 days.[9] When I first met him in Bled he'd said that before retiring himself from the practice, he'd attempt more in a shorter period of time, which he achieved on 1 April 2019 by attempting 42 countries in 15 days. In October 2017 he wanted to hitch to all the European capitals starting with the letter B within four days. He calls this his 7Bs project and it involved quite a journey with a few failed attempts. The journey's taken him from Bucharest to Bern via Belgrade, Budapest, Bratislava, Berlin and Brussels. After 18 months of trying, he finally managed in May 2019.

Most informants and participants such as Miran from my modest sample of the more heroic type of hitcher are fully aware that in order to accomplish individual plans and projects they have to remain flexible and mobile. They are living in the times of individualistic discourse that set personal development and self-realisation in the very centre of attention. The discourse of individualising modernity, which promotes a certain belief that you are the one who makes your own destiny, thus you are the one responsible for successes and failures. They clearly follow this path, trying to gain the socially valuable education and experience combined with personal life. Noel Salazar and Kiran Jayaram (2016: 3) suggest that contemporary capitalism and globalisation, through increasing amounts of diversified types of mobility—the movement of people, goods, ideas, values—has a diversity of sociological antecedents in work that ranges from Ulrich Beck to Anthony Giddens, from Zygmunt Bauman to John Urry.

By treating mobility as self-evident, such perspectives contribute to the increasingly clichéd understanding that it is central to cosmopolitan modernity. As Nowicka and Rovisco (2009) argue, this perspective of

[9] His postcard for the Hitchhikers Museum from its *séjour* in Bled in 2016 when I first met him chronicles the journey as starting in Helsinki, going straight South. By the end of day one, he had reached Vilnius. On the second day he was already in Romania. By day five, he'd done Bulgaria, Greece Albania, etc. His shortest distance within 24 hours was to cross through the Balkan coast into BiH. Then, not so many miles when passing through the alps, but scoring lots of small nations. By day nine, he'd gone through the North of Italy, Switzerland, France, Luxemburg and Belgium. After that, the Netherlands, North Germany, Denmark on the 10th day, crossing from Copenhagen to Malmo on day 11. He covered the distance of 7450 km in 88 cars and trucks. In Jan 2020 he asked me whether it would make sense to approach the Guinness Book of Records for a trip involving all 47 European countries in a month. He wishes to start that on 1 April, but I'm sure he's serious.

understanding cosmopolitanism and mobility relies on capital as normative—a taken for granted feature of life and as a general rule that does not require closer examination or justification. Introducing Bauman's (2000) 'liquidity' metaphor allows us to move away from a heavy and solid, hardwired-focused modernity, ruled by a strict rationality. Instead we accept more porous, un-graspable, loosely defined, flexi times. The problematic aspect of Bauman's view of liquid, constantly mobile modernity is that such modernity is deprived of reachable structures. It creates a guise for the free world without borders or limitations, but at the same time wide open and de-territorialised.

Such processes treat mobility as a social norm. Hence, on the one hand for them, mobility becomes an embodied knowledge, part of our *habitus*—something routine, automatic, that bodies and minds know how to deal with. It causes values and practices occurring in embodied know-how to sediment if they are supported by a participative learning. Rather than merely reproducing them, it produces environments. On the other hand, it is socially and sometimes even economically expected from people to be mobile. As noted by the anthropologist Vered Amit (2007: 1) to say that privilege is relative 'is a tired truism'. A perspective becomes valuable only when we see the particular socio-political context and importance of relating the issue of relative advantage or power. It is easy to agree with Amit's more abstract points because individual ethnographic examples are subsequently added to give life to the theory.

By following the perspectives of people living transnational movement lifestyles, through the analytical lens of upward mobility, I equally hope to reveal some of the relative complexities embedded with the privilege and constraints of a loosely bounded ethnographic context. The accounts of my informants show many interesting paradoxes regarding their 'adventure capital' capacities for flowing through quite rigid fields of possibilities.[10] Simultaneously living in an age of cosmopolitan values, where mobility becomes self-evident, nonetheless requires abilities to galvanise resources—to be both *flâneur* and *bricoleur*.

[10] 'Adventure capital' is a hybrid category wedged within Bourdieu's (1986) four main types and including varying levels of each ingredient: financial/economic, socio, cultural, symbolic. It is more specific about the idea of valuing risk. Hence our innovation imaginations can grow in certain edgy settings where the adventurous occasionally escape to. See previous Chapter (pp. 22–25) and Chapter 4.

It is perhaps not too surprising that my ethnographic fieldwork narratives reveal convergence between the notions of mobility with cosmopolitanism. The latter usually relates to broad perceptions of 'openness' that do not add much value to the usefulness of the term. The anthropologist Ulf Hannerz has convincingly argued that cosmopolitanism is rooted in practice—rehearsed skill, cultural competences, which enable more or less easy movement through the system of meanings and meaningful forms (Hannerz 1990: 23). Hannerz asserts that we now inhabit a one-world culture, whereby all the structures of meaning and expressions of belonging are increasingly interrelated. Despite not being totally homogenised, the world has become one network of social relationships and between different regions there are now comprehensive flows of meaning as well as goods and services. From this perspective, cosmopolitans are those for who diversity is valued as such, despite remaining out of reach for most.[11]

Ulf Hannez once asked me during a seminar if I would encourage students from around Europe to hitchhike to Tallinn for the next EASA conference in 2014. He'd also admitted to having never hitchhiked himself, but to picking up the occasional hitcher as a driver. Such questions might evoke some form of structural divide between those who do, those who don't, and those who slip between easy categorisation. I'd even be tempted to draw a cautious analogy with David Goodhart's recent book '*The Road to Somewhere*' (2017) at this point. In his introduction, Goodhart divides the British public into two main categories; those who are 'Anywheres' and those who are 'Somewheres'. That is, those with excess cultural capital versus those who prefer to be sedentary (or who happen to have been victimised and thus 'left behind'). Now this is a book about democracy, Brexit and perceptions of the EU. At stake in his observations and discussions are judgements about how and why people in the UK seem to increasingly be ambivalent when it comes to simple class systems and how this relates to the European project. These much wider political implications indeed touch on more essentialising/stereotypical perceptions of the stranger/the Other—as well as the character of individuals with divided loyalties.

[11] (i.e., "Somewheres are more rooted and usually have 'ascribed' identities — Scottish farmer, working class Geordie, Cornish housewife — based on group belonging and particular places, which is why they often find rapid change more unsettling" (Goodhart 2017: 3).

Nearly two decades ago already Vertovec and Cohen (2002: 7) had provided some synthesis to the rapidly expanding literature on cosmopolitanism. They proposed that the notion contained at least six elements to its understanding:

> (a) socio-cultural condition; (b) a kind of philosophy or worldview (c) a political project working towards building transnational institutions (d) a political project for recognising multiple identities e) an attitudinal or dispositional orientation and/or (f) a mode of practice or competence.

These formulations give a certain structure to the notion of cosmopolitanism, avoiding the looseness of approaches advocated by many researchers of mobility. My ethnographic context best follows the sixth category of cosmopolitanism mobility. That is, hitchhiking is above all a mode of practice or competence. Global trends are not simply internalised, they also have effects and affects in the cityscape. The idea here is that in a world of increasing domination by the space of flows and which sees the traditional power of identity diminished, people engage in new mobile activities from which they derive new forms of identity.

This postulate is reminiscent of Nigel Rapport's ideas about the cosmopolitan 'Anyone' (2012). In Rapport's understanding, cosmopolitanism is a window that allows individual emancipation, human expression and personal becoming. Anyone appears as the actor who has the capacity to create their own identity above his or her membership in social groupings and cultural traditions. Such chameleons of identity make use of as many accidental and temporary attributes as possible to fashion themselves as distinct style of their own. As he suggests, this 'anyone' is to be differentiated from 'everyman' in order to describe, ontologically, how a person feels, interprets and searches for meaning in the context of their own life. They thus become 'typical individual', simultaneously universal and personable. One could compare this to Margaret Mead's 'everyone is unique' mantra. This would, however, be a bit too simplistic. Perhaps then it should be peppered with some new spices—a pinch of the 'Jane of all trades, masters of none' ingredient that went into Lévi-Strauss' theories of the '*bricoleur*' in relation to hot and cold societies.[12]

[12] See Michael O'Regan (2016) for an insightful analysis of hitchhiking and backpacking as activities in which those practitioners who are proficient can demonstrate sophisticated levels of adaptability to ever changing, unpredictable situations.

Ride-share systems, which aim to bring together travellers with similar itineraries and time schedules, may provide significant societal and environmental benefits by reducing the number of cars used for personal travel (Agatz et al. 2012). It has also become more beneficial in economic terms. New companies provide similar services and the competition is only growing. Thanks to the rapid development of info-technological solutions, it's really easy to create new mobile Apps to provide such services. Waiting and trust are often significant parts of travel. One of the singularities of hitchhiking is to throw a significant amount of adventure and newness into the mix, so that boredom is rarely a feature that is spoken about.

Newness in the sense that every travelling companion is a stranger. Adventure in that the control over driving is usually handed over. Hitching exists as a mutually reciprocal form of embodied trust between driver and passenger, as well as between humans and technological infrastructures. Trust occurs in the process, in the laws and transport codes, as well as in the implicit rules of the road. That is, in an understanding of the roles and good faith of provider and recipient. Trust is generally accepted to be an abstraction of the mind (Krawingler 2013). A notion that exists to explain the sort of blind confidence that people have in each other, or in the ineffable workings of systems. What if we turn this view around, however, to suggest that there are situations in which it is better to imagine how trust can exist as a pragmatic feature of the body.

This chapter has implicitly dealt with the intersection between the shared-economy and the mobilities turn within the humanities/social sciences. The analysis has focused on motor vehicles and road/transport infrastructures, specifically in relation to a cross-generational overview of European hitchhiking. Driving is a hugely important part of most people's everyday life. Things like driving culture, local and national infrastructures are significant in shaping our contemporary lifeworlds. Not everybody who has gained driving knowledge sees it as a privilege. Setting standards for the development in infrastructure and implementing new technologies have given us many upgrades to old, well-known systems, or the recent interest in new shared services (Widlok 2017).

Anthropology is perhaps one of the better places from which to examine the cultures of ride-sharing and hitchhiking for a number of methodological and conceptual reasons. Indeed, this discipline has traditionally been concerned with societies and behaviours that are not just eccentric, but which are often heading towards extinction, or a radical

transformation that effectively signifies the end of their authenticity as unique topics worthy of investigation for their own sake. If one of our tasks has been to rescue some cultural meaning from activities, events, peoples and practices that are disappearing, then it is certainly time for a concerted anthropology of hitchhiking to manifest itself in more than student projects. It is actually quite fascinating to note that there have been dozens of English language BA and MA dissertations on this practice, yet still few doctorates. Such a sustained project has consistently been shun by researchers, supervisors, institutions and funding bodies.

Thumb Games

Few hand gestures are as 'universally' recognised in the occidental world as sticking out one's thumb to attract a ride from passing motorists. Somehow though, hitchhiking has gone largely unnoticed, or at least uncared for, by many in academia with aspirations for being considered professional. Yet scholars and hitching have gone hand in hand for as long as gossip, chit-chat, or a good yarn have been sought—specially to alleviate the seriousness of a Western education system that traditionally puts emphasis on logic over emotion.

It has become a hitching truism, perhaps, that hitching is a numbers game (Mewes 2016). For sure this makes sense in terms of understanding that charity is indeed a human feature; the more options the better the chances. But in the context of a world with increasing psychopathologies, the 'numbers game' argument is exactly what has fuelled the culture of fear angle that ultimately shows how hitching will always feature some element of danger. Vehicle transport is dangerous and well, let's face it, not everyone out there has charitable intentions. For this reason, we need to find a way out of this logic trap when thinking through (or more appropriately) when feeling through the factors that make hitching different.

It is worth pointing out in the context of non-verbal communication that hitchhiking is not just a one-way process. Indeed, drivers equally use their hands to communicate with roadside travellers—indicating that they are getting off at the next junction, or that their car is full. They occasionally toot their horn, or shout out of an open window. Sometimes the communication is rude, directing anger, even insult at the person soliciting a lift (Schmauks 2003). The process of waiting is crucial here, reminding us of Orvar Löfgren and Billy Ehn's ethnography *The Secret*

World of Doing Nothing (2010). To pass the time, hitchhikers often write in notebooks or imprint graffiti on lay-by objects such as placards or road ramp barriers. It is during such moments that they have some analogous connection with being 'fast forwarded *flâneurs*'—accelerated loiterers. Yet the street poetry that such waiting affords is not always that benign. When intended as 'vandalism' it indicates a frustration with not getting anywhere. Or an annoyance with oneself for poor planning; or even with sheer angst, directed at the world, when losing trust/faith in the goodness of people if they no longer appear to care enough to share their time, space, experience. In such a way, the freedom associated with being by an open road conceals a shadier side of the human psyche, where rejection is the norm. In such half-light, how can we define urban motorised *flânnerie*?

If we begin with the premise that such a group consists of loiterers with intentions to disturb—as the trickiest of tricksters—showing solidarity for those larger causes worth fighting for, then we need to rewind and reframe what gaming means in a world of endless running. What then happens in the twenty-first century to this two-way process of hyped-up loitering once we introduce mechanisation/motorisation? If the answer is a new form of 'Loitering with Intent', then I would argue that such notions as: chaos, mayhem, panic and stochasticity need to shake up those 'systems' that have ceased to be efficient/self-sufficient.

Jeremy Packer provides one type of postmodern Foucauldian social history of America's fascination with cars and driving. He is amongst a select few to directly unpack the flaws and infelicities of previous social histories of hitchhiking in his book *Mobility Without Mayhem* (2008). He notes that there are a minimum of four time phases to the survival or rejection of hitchhiking. These he posits are radically distinct from one another. Paraphrasing his actual terminology, they are akin to: (i) the goodwill of the modern citizen; (ii) the killer on the road; (iii) highway romances; (iv) victimisation. His classification falls under a wider rubric of what he labels 'disciplined mobility'. It shows that the longest period by far is the first, spanning half a century from 1910 to the early 1960s. On the second page of his chapter dealing with 'media hysterics' and the 'politics of youth' he says the following:

'It was the cumulative effects of insurance companies' public relations campaigns, an FBI crackdown, widespread anti-hitchhiking legislation, and news stories decrying the dangers of hitchhiking and of picking up a hitchhiker that over the years conspired to make the practice nearly

extinct' (Packer 2008: 78). This captures well his layered analysis of those who have been typecast as dangerous road users; those oddball strangers who create civic unrest by their very distinction. It's a persuasive case for the conditioning of social fears. Packer is quite critical of one particular sociological take on American hitching, Walter F. Weiss, whose research in the 1960s and 1970s is clearly a product of its era.

What is funny in the little academic game played by an historian a generation younger is the attempt to almost wipe out Weiss's findings from the history of hitchhiking. This is done by striving to show how the work is almost completely *passé*. Indeed, the methodological flaws of what might otherwise seem like an unprecedented project are deconstructed in detail so there's no need to rehash them again here. Save to say, perhaps, that it is indeed surprising how gender issues did not feature in Weiss' book, especially since the women's rights movement was well underway and particularly vocal in the intellectual landscape of North America. Similarly, does it not cross our minds now to accept that the real values advanced by such a movement were not well enough understood, or fully embraced at the time? The toolkit available in those days for a male sociologist was definitely not as diverse as it is today.

Leaving such details aside, what is interesting are some of the similarities between Packer's four categories and two other classification schemes: (i) the threefold socio-psychological one put forward by Abraham Miller (1973); and the human geography one advanced by Christopher Salter (1979). For a start there are synergies because he concludes with reference to the author Paul J. DiMaggio who published *The Hitchhiker's Field Manual* in 1973. Miller's is of course the type of epic explanation on the topic that Packer's very argument relies on deconstructing. The latter appears as a more humble assessment of what drives the desires for taking to the road; the existential search for freedom that we find ever since Jack Kerouac (1957). Packer mentions this Beat Poet's divided legacy as both a saviour and trickster, quoting an exchange between Dean Moriaty and Sal Paradise to demonstrate the callous laissez-faire attitude of exploring America's Western frontiers. He does not, however, explicitly acknowledge these other two scholarly influences. It is another devil in the detail enigma in travelling this particular 'Highway to Hell'. How can we not ask why an investigative historian fails to draw on these sources more clearly in this chapter? One possible triptych answer: (a) he's not really interested in hitchhiking that much; (b) he's got too many vested interests so has left them out intentionally because they got in his way; (c) he's

run out of time. Don't we all run round in cycles after a while, leaving, or forgetting things behind at some point?

As a good Foucauldian historian would, Packer reaches the end of his daemonic freeway by relying on DiMaggio's external explanation for how hitchhiking is controlled by cyclical forces. What we're left with as sceptic predictions for the activity's future is a masked structural argument of boom and bust, taking as a point of departure an ethos of freedom reborn under the very neoliberal principles that killed it off. How ironic that only four years after this 'Highway to Hell' chapter is published, film director and author John Waters would challenge Packer's drawn out historical efforts, already dating them with a tour of pop-mimicry that showed the world a new type of car sickness.

Hitchhiking—Crushed by the Neoliberal Thumb

Hitchhiking is both historically important whilst equally having validity in the present. It matters in the twenty-first century not just because it highlights alternatives or symbolises difference, but because it is the embodiment of alternativeness and difference. In an era when the normative does not always or especially encourage imaginative ways for bettering society and the environment, difference needs to be more than merely accepted or tolerated. Rather, it is such types of radical differences that need to be celebrated, encouraged and propagated. As a social statement that applauds randomness and adventure, an activity which is effectively an instantiation of pure trust and trusting, hitchhiking inverts the logic of succumbing to the cultures of fear, individualism and neoliberalism. It stands as a retro survivor to the counter-culture movements of the 1960s and 1970s. As such a residue, it should carry on questioning the status quo. It should maintain its critical, marginal, liminal edges and continue to challenge social dogmas.

Of the many fascinating paradoxes embedded within hitchhiking, this chapter has sought to identify a 'NIL' button and then foolishly pushed it, too often. This button connects the wires of neoliberalism with individualism. If too often we point out their similarities, origins, meanings—hammering on about them can cross the wires and stands to confuse the argument. Even though the loving ethos of individualism that celebrates self-development, identity formation as well as the expansion of personal experience and freedom, ultimately the demise of hitchhiking started in the 1950/1960s with the increasing victory of

neoliberal values over those of socialism, collectivism and the co-operative movement (Portis 2015). We can indeed speak of the guiding neoliberal hand as being responsible for squashing the lifeblood out of the practice of hitchhiking, at least in the Western world. As the anthropologist Catherine Lutz points out in relation to car culture more generally:

> Sprawl and car culture – particularly where the most common number of people in an auto is one – do not just separate people from each other, but encourage a psychological encapsulation which is a form of hyper-individualism. Solutions like carpooling or mass transit come to feel deeply uncomfortable, as does the option of getting on mass transit to sit or stand close to others. (Lutz 2015: 597)

A set of perplexing and indoctrinating questions arise out of such a neoliberal framework: why waste time waiting for lifts (which then usually require a commitment to hold a conversation) when you can rest? Or even more neoliberally, when you can work and/or be entertained in a public transport setting that provides free Wi-Fi? Neoliberally again, why pick up a stranger by the road when you can offer your lift in advance online? This reduces the anonymity and the randomness of the encounter since you can arrange a mutually convenient meeting point. One is also able to charge a fee for petrol. This privatisation of a once 'free' gift means that drivers can now make a profit by collecting several individuals for the same lift. And if you're really opportunistic, you can always request that your passengers drive some of the way. It's a ride-share after all, so why not share the driving? To be fair though, the request to drive some of the way is of course made of hitchhikers as well, especially on long-distance drives.

Hitchhiking is anomalous in relying on road infrastructures just like any other means of automated transport. Indeed, in some cases hitchers rely on more different dimensions of such infrastructures than your average motorist, despite not necessarily contributing to, perhaps even resisting, the ideological core of large-scale transport schemes. Thumbing a ride is thus by its very character liminal, anti-structural and peri-urban (people don't usually hitch in inner cities). Hitching overlaps with many facets of stochasticity, sousveillance, gender, trust and the uncanny, whilst still being a complex multimodal form of 'carporeal' displacement (see the next Chapter).

Moreover, this type of travel demonstrates telling features of non-places, placelessness, borderlessness and the stateless (see Chapter 6). In terms of interpersonal relations, potential problems and challenges can arise, especially when the hitchhiker(s) and driver have very different notions of state hegemonies and subversions. Bizarre or even dangerous misunderstandings may occur. Alternatively, such encounters may trigger crucial insights precisely because they take place in a state-free vacuum. And such properties are precisely why the phenomenon of hitchhiking features as a hybrid act of dividualism/individualism par excellence.

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CHAPTER 3

Carporeality/Carhesia: Whereupon the Road to Erewhon

(with contribution by Judith Okely)

Ever since its publication in 1872, much amusement and controversy have circulated around Samuel Butler's novel *Erewhon*. Even when he was still writing in the early twentieth century, critics directed their attention towards the later chapters, those dealing with machines. Readers continue to make various connections and interpretations to evolutionary theory—some even speculate over Butler's prophetic abilities. These are indeed the most relevant facets to ponder over in this present volume. Indeed, as an anagram for 'Nowhere', one should take utopia as an implicit concept given that the intention is to draw out many ideological dimensions connecting humans with cars. Incidentally, it is remarkable to note the similarities not just between Butler and William Morris (1890) in terms of their ambivalence to our increasing reliance on complex technologies, but of Butler and Tickner Edwardes (1910) who provides what is arguably the first account of hitching a motorised vehicle.

Just like many other means of automated transport, hitchhiking relies on road networks. It is nonetheless anomalous in that hitchers rely on more different dimensions of such networks than your average motorist, despite not necessarily contributing to, perhaps even resisting, their normative ideological core. Drawing on material that is both multi-sited and cross-generational, this chapter explores ideas pivoting around the utopian characteristics of embodying 'non-places'. It does through certain duo auto-ethnographic considerations for transport infrastructures,

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fieldwork intimacies and methodological liminality. The aim is thus to expose some of hitchhiking's socio-political features and paradoxes.

Such utopian/dystopian reflections call to mind the haunting lyrics of PJ Harvey's duet with Thom Yorke at the dawn of a new millennium:

Impossible dream
And I have seen
The sunrise over the river
The freeway
Reminding of […]
'This Mess We're In'[1]

The practice of hitchhiking provides a particular form of mobility whereby freely acquired journeys, solicited via the roadside, take on anthropological and historiographical significance. Thumbing a ride is thus by its very character liminal, anti-structural and peripheral. Indeed, this type of travel demonstrates telling features of non-places, placelessness, borderlessness and the stateless. It equally overlaps with many facets of stochasticity, sousveillance, gender, trust and the uncanny, whilst still being a complex physical form of corporeal displacement. In his novel *Absolute Beginners* Colin MacInnes captures the important historical shift when thumbing rides began to decline in Western societies:

> […] And you, child? I hear all you brats are hitch-hiking across the Continent these days? — 'No longer', I said, firmly. — 'Why no longer?' she asked, coming into focus. — The hitch thing's out. We're tired of being molested, and arriving at destination we didn't mean to. We pay our own fares now, like everybody else, in fact a lot of the new travel panders depend of teenage travellers'. (MacInnes 1959: 68)

Travel, adventure, exploration and freedom—not to mention place and utopic nowhere—these are all fairly loaded, even at times quite abstract concepts. Hitchhiking on the other hand, is celebrated as an adventure into pragmatism and experience. Based on a recent collaboration in progress of duo-autoethnographic memories and fieldwork findings, this chapter explores some of our own cross-generational experiences with

[1] Taken from the album *Stories from the City, Stories from the Sea* (P.J. Harvey, 2000). Produced by Rob Ellis, Mick Harvey & P.J. Harvey. London: Island Records/Virgin EMI Universal (International).

'auto-stopping'. These are mainly drawn from our respective adventures in Europe (i.e. Britain, France, Benelux, Spain and Slovenia).

Now the classic ethnographic travel memoir *Tristes Tropiques* begins with what are fairly outlandish polemical comments about what anthropology is not. Or at least, with what Claude Lévi-Strauss felt it should not involve:

> Travel and travellers are two things I loathe […]. Anthropology is a profession in which adventure plays no part; merely one of its bondages, it represents no more than a dead weight of weeks or months wasted en route; hours spent in idleness when one's informant has given one the slip; hunger, exhaustion, illness as like as not; and those thousand and one routine duties which eat up most of our days to no purpose and reduce our perilous existence in the virgin forest to a simulacrum of military service […] That the object of our studies should be attainable only by continual struggle and vain expenditures does not mean that we should set any store by what we should rather consider as the negative aspect of our profession. (1961: 17)

Despite providing some fascinating food for thought, there is also much to disagree with here. The idea in starting with this controversial assertion is not to engage in a critique of Lévi-Strauss, however. Rather, it is to contextualise some mnemonic recollections of hitchhiking journeys in order to consider how anthropology can intellectually benefit from a concerted effort to better understand the adventurous 'carporeality' of impromptu ride-sharing. The carporeal here simply starts with exploring the premise for how cars become more body-like (social, smart) and how the human form increasingly becomes vehicle-like (hybridised, mechanised, durable, repairable).

We embark on that journey with reference to the famous French social anthropologist Marcel Mauss [1872–1950]. Mauss is especially pertinent to the study of the human body even though his exceptional work on the gift and reciprocity overshadows it. He introduces the concept of the 'total social fact' in the 1920s; *l'habitus* in the 1930s; and in his famous essay of '*Les Techniques du Corps*' (1934) (techniques of the body) he proposes that our biological bodies are not only subject to evolutionary principles. Instead, they have complex tripartite relationships with social and psychological elements whereby these dimensions cannot be isolated or separated from each other. He starts off with what is now

quite familiar, taken for granted material, such as the social construction of the way we learn to swim, for instance. Providing generational and cross-cultural comparisons allows him to make the point that our bodies learn to perform some tasks differently given the differences of our circumstances.

His examples are mostly pedestrian, however, quite literally since he tackles walking and displacement as well as eating and several other mundane chores of everyday life (Ingold 2004). Belonging to a certain intellectual 'pedigree' means that 'class' and hierarchy are also things he is sensitive to, as well as risk aversion. So on the whole, the idea that bodily encounters with danger should prove useful to his generalisations is glossed over quickly. By focusing on pedestrian strolls and several other habitual activities of everyday life, Mauss guides the reader through a complex maze of what might normally seem to be regionally specific material or convoluted theory. Instead we can relate to his subject matter because he also describes instances from our experience. In short, bodily techniques are corporeal ways of being that become natural or internalised, but which are also contingent, malleable and allow for a creative physicality. In his own words: 'This is evidence for how a trick can only be learned slowly. All technique, properly called, has its own form (1968: 42)'[2]

The processes of describing such techniques of the body as only subject to stately forms of discipline—as some researchers see in Michel Foucault's (1972) now classic accounts, suggests that modern bodies encounter risk unintentionally. Any such argument would have us as dupes, however, portraying people as uncritical, surveyed, patrolled and thus never more regulated. In certain political regimes this may have been the case historically. After introducing Georg Simmel's comparisons between the adventurer to the artist, however, something changes even more dramatically:

[2] Mauss quoted in Cazeneuve (1968) (trans by PL). If one were to downplay that any of his examples involve risk pursuits it would be possible to make a bad pun about the genesis of non-danger Mauss theory. Yet the more interesting word game would be the idea of a Mauss-Trap because reading his essay closely reveals several nuances. We see, for instance, body techniques such as how we learn to swim are very difficult to unlearn, meaning that when we're in the wrong context, danger is ever-present. Indeed, his own personal descriptions of inhaling/exhaling underwater when trying different swimming stokes is almost suffocating.

> A fragmentary incident, it (the adventure) is yet, like a work of art, enclosed by a beginning and an end. Like a dream, it gathers all passions into itself and yet, like a dream it is destined to be forgotten; like gaming, it contrasts with seriousness, yet like the *va banque* of the gambler, it involves the alternative between the highest gain and destruction. (Simmel 1997/1911: 5)

Hence, risky techniques of the body can also exist as therapeutic and emancipatory—vehicles for transporting the imaginary. Hence, we need to ask whether corporeal regimentation is the only result of modernity, the only framework in which to consider adventure and danger. Or is there something else that is possible, perhaps via more experimental methods? Multi-sited, collaborative, auto-ethnographic, phenomenological and pluri-disciplinary ethnographies are all candidates.

Research on adventurous pursuits provides such a scenario in which the hazardous use of landscape, when linked to positive encounters with danger, allow extreme acts to exist beyond the levels that deal only with restraint and power, to a more creative position where some of them can be understood as existential acts of the social imagination (Laviolette 2011/2016). In this sense, the body itself can be a recording device for sensual data. That is, affects, feelings and emotions embody the surrounding environment and embed themselves in our flesh, muscles and bones to be recalled later. Indeed, as mnemonic devices in their own right, our bodies remember, demonstrating that memory is not only a mental or cerebral process.

The cognitive psychologist and developer of 'affect theory' Silvan Tomkins (2008) identifies six to nine primary bodily based affects: interest–excitement, enjoyment–pleasure, surprise–startle, distress–anguish, fear–terror, shame–humiliation, contempt–disgust and anger–rage. Affective knowledge is of course central to the understanding of spontaneous events and experiences such as auto-stopping. There is, however, an immediacy to affect which means it must often be translated into words quite quickly after that fact. Otherwise it risks getting lost, distorted and embellished into heavily refined or self-censured narratives.

These are some of the quagmires of researching accelerated, compressed and condensed events, the phenomenology of now as it were. Hence, instead of Lévi-Strauss' limited view of adventure, we find much more sympathy in Marcel Griaule's (1984) early analogy between our discipline and that of the sporting world:

> This study of traditions, customs, techniques and rites, which is the object of ethnographic sciences, doesn't separate as much as one could think, its dedicated researchers from the sportsmen. Isn't sport itself made of traditions, rites and techniques. (Griaule 1984, cited in de Heusch 1984)

These are much more suitable words from which to postulate a framework for sensual anthropologies and the comprehensive developments of embodiment theory (Fourcade 2010; Allen-Collinson 2017). We would nonetheless be inclined to echo the social theorist Anne Witz (2000) by stating that we must be weary, mindful, cautious even of establishing an anthropology of the body at the expense of embodying the socio-cultural or the anthropological, as it were. And given the significant autobiographical nature of our own research material, we accept and endorse Clifton Evers' definition of affect as well as his general methodological approach:

> Affects are how bodies feel and what motivate us […] I evidence the possibility of a shift from research about bodies to a way of researching through bodies. By positing my body as part of what it researches, it will become clear that feelings are the fundamental basis by which […] affects leap from body to body. (Evers 2006: 230–35)

'Carporeality' *et Les Techniques du Car*

In terms of embodied interpersonal relations, potential problems and challenges can arise in hitchhiking, especially when the passenger and driver have very different notions of state hegemonies or subversions. Bizarre, even dangerous misunderstandings may occur. Alternatively, such encounters may trigger crucial insights precisely because they take place in a state-free vacuum. By dipping in and out of various ethnographic vignettes, this chapter sets out a vision rather than an argument—a vision for outlining what hitching can teach anthropology.

Both conceptually and methodologically, a phenomenological approach is crucial to this project due to the significance of the body in framing risk and lived experience (Kusenbach 2003; Le Breton 2010). Indeed, when it comes to *auto-stop*, there are poses, body techniques in relation to location and prosthetic devices such as a bag, signs and maps which allow the hitcher to convince drivers of certain things such as safety and their legitimacy as genuine travellers (Laviolette 2016).

Fred Keogh is a writer who earned a Ph.D in anthropology (1995 Michigan). In his 'biographical memoir' *Dream Weaver* (2011) on counter-culture America in the 1970s, it's not so much the hitchhiker's human body that captures the driver but his or her own uncanny ability to direct intention. Or shall we say, the mental and psychic energy that they project at passing motorists with an overpowering stream of cognitive vibes screaming out 'please stop for me'. Keogh talks of this cerebral play with drivers as a lure. That is, as some type of baited hooking device:

> the word 'hitch', as in "hitch a trailer", coterminous with 'hook'. In fact, that is what I believed I was doing – hooking a ride with the hooked thumb. But, like fishing, it took a certain state of mind (or so I believed), a quiet Zen presence that reached the target without conscious effort. Again, hitching acted as a mystical teacher, often harsh, seldom dull. (Keogh pers. comm 2016)

The anthropologist Roy Wagner died just over 42 years after publishing *The Invention of Culture* (42 is of course particularly significant in hitchhiking circles). He justified the anthropological fascination with the Other in prosaic terms: '[…] it is worthwhile studying other peoples, because every understanding of another culture is an experiment with our own' (Wagner 1975: 19). It is the word 'experiment' that is especially compelling here, particularly when it comes to a topic that anthropologists and other social scientists have largely ignored.

In his introduction to the edited volume *Car Cultures* (2001), Daniel Miller invites the reader to observe the Earth as if we were an alien species. By doing so, he indicates, we would have a rather twisted understanding of this planet. From space, it would appear to be inhabited by boxes of steel, glass and rubber, in their hundreds of millions, moving along thin networks of tarmac and being invaded by bipedal parasites. It is a remarkable thought experiment to get the reader to think in such terms—reminiscent perhaps of Oliver Sacks' *An Anthropologist on Mars* (1995).

It is also remarkable that in a 245 page book comprising 10 chapters covering such diverse topics as race and ethnicity debates (Gilroy 2001), Pauline Garvey's (2001) analysis of Norwegian women who perform driving pranks and Gertrude Stotz's (2001) interpretation of brands as part of the colonisation processes in Aboriginal Australia, that there is only a single cursory mention of another form of 'parasitic' car travel—hitchhiking. And this is the norm

for most books dealing with automobility (Leivestad 2018; Lipset and Handler 2014). To be fair to Miller though, in a study not related to mobility, but which focuses on the global trend for wearing jeans instead, he does briefly mention hitching to music festivals in Britain as a youngster in the 70s. 'As a teenager Miller hitchhiked around free rock concerts, wearing blue denim flares and flowered shirts' (Miller and Woodward 2007: 344). So his edited collection at the turn of the millennium was indeed a sign of the times—*auto-stop* travel was both too old and too new to warrant attention.

There is arguably a sea change, however. Indeed few hand gestures are as universally recognised as sticking one's thumb up to attract a ride from a passing vehicle.[3] As borders transgressors or 'spatial hackers' so to say, hitchhikers provide anthropologists with a privileged access onto the unknown quantity of European awareness and identification. An anthropology of hitchhiking is a means for exploring and challenging marginal everyday European identities and negotiations. As an ethnographic study, hitchhiking across Europe's changing territories provides a novel take on the fundamental Self/Other relationship. In thinking about a Maussian 'carporeality' (a form of haptic embodiment related especially to how hand gestures connect to a nexus of interactions involving body, environment and transport technologies), we are curious about the human mind/body as a dialectical trapping device. This research explores the 'two-way' risk encounter, voluntarily undertaken by passenger and driver, as understood through the playful acts hitchhikers impose on road infrastructures.

One issue to consider here is that hitching does not always involve linguistic exchange, body language and music compensate on such occasions. When talk does occur, and it is a main reason for drivers to stop—to be entertained—the discussion is often quite banal. Such small talk or chit-chat occurs in this somewhat unique unidirectional space (without much eye contact, or many physical moments for releasing 'driving tension'). This offers the opportunity for musing on the intensity of short exchanges as a research tool in grasping immediate intimacy. It can help with confidence and trust building, as well as rapport and

[3] One notable exception is found in an 'anthropology of religion' paper set in Israel, whereby the author, Nehemia Stern (2012), discusses hitching as a necessary method of travel when buses aren't available on the Sabbath for example.

mnemonic longevity because such up-close talks have the potential to act as a 'confessional'/pseudo-psychoanalytical interviewing technique.

Hitchhiking's 'carporeality' is therefore linked to a certain freedom found because of the open road. It exudes sexiness, anonymity, trust, fear, loneliness. Moreover, hitchhiking has the potential to bring people together in a world of increasing 'disconnect' created by virtual experiences. At the end of the twenty-first-century's second decade, we enter the age of the shared economy—a notion that is all the rage at the moment (Widlok 2017). Indeed, the sharing economy is both topical and prosperous these days, as we've seen above in Chapter 2.

Much more of a pervasive and ubiquitous total social fact in the Western world since the early 1940s has been the phenomenon of hitchhiking. Yet since the end of the twentieth century this activity too has started to disappear. So where will this dwindling practice feature in this new historiography about sharing? Largely existing outside academic concern, hitchhiking nonetheless obtains its analytic framework at the interplay of many important socio-political themes such as adventure, expectation, gender, mobility, risk, sociality, trust and waiting. It is also an act of sharing *par excellence*. This activity occurs within a shared micro-landscape, in (bodily) interaction with the surroundings of a driver (possible co-passengers), a vehicle and a roadscape network. Anxiety, risk and trust, as well as reward and experience allow for both an embodied and cognitive process of mobility that is somewhat spontaneous but not haphazardous in its regulation by certain social norms of behaviour for interactions between strangers (Krawingler 2013).

In an age when we absurdly speak of fake news and alternative facts, would a credible extension ever arise to push such nonsensical thinking into the realm of the Maussian notion of total social facts? What would it mean to ponder over the potential significance of an alternative total social fact? Perhaps in such cases the consideration isn't as absurd. If, for instance, we posit that the act of hitchhiking in its heyday during the 1950s through to the 70s was close to being a total social fact, with reference to how the ideas of individual and social mobilities were relating to the growing capitalistic fetishisisation of car culture within late modernity, then hitchhiking can be seen in such light. If so, its rapid decline during the turn of the millennium would suggest it was an anti-total social fact.

Or at the very least, we would have to fit it into some alternative category—a total social fiction so to say. Is this not an apt terminology in this case since we've been left with a practice that at present best exists as a

representational form (Fig. 3.1). If not so much an active pastime on the ground in the contemporary moment, hitchhiking continues to capture the public imagination in various fictional forms (Laviolette 2018).

Consider, for instance, one work by the famous artist David Hockney *Hitch-Hiker: Hollywood and Steering Wheel* (1985). The famous fashion magazine Paris Vogue had a tradition of doing a special December 'Super Vogue' issues with invited artists. In 1985, British artist David Hockney created his own entire issue, taking control of every facet of the magazine so that he later referred to the entire printed product as an artwork. This is at a time in his career when he is at the height of being fascinated

Fig. 3.1 Tallinn/Olafur Eliasson, 2011

by photography and photo collage. Praised as a masterclass of this latter medium which he termed 'drawing with a camera' and 'joiners',[4] *Hitch-Hiker: Hollywood and Steering Wheel* features a hitcher travelling towards the Beverley Hills district of Los Angeles with the white legs and feet of the driver (Hockney himself) behind the wheel of his VW. He sports his white socks and slippers. The traveller is presumably gay judging by his pose, clothing and due to this being one of Hockney's favourite subject matters. There is also the use of 'reverse perspective' in the image since the rear-view mirror allows for some gazing back. Yet the main focus here, from the passenger seat on the right side of this American car, is a view of a hitcher in tight shorts and an unmissable fire-engine red t-shirt. The driver's seated view is reserved for signs (in this case the Hollywood letters on the hill and an abstracted self-representation).

Hockney explores these games of perspective even more deliberately a year later in 1986 through a work that is part joiner, part painting, in which every picture of the large-scale panorama is taken from up close. Here he inverts the weight of the image so that the heaviness of human-made objects are on the right, except the debris by the roadside. In *Pearblossom Highway* (*Hwy 138*), he leaves the left side of this collage of a Californian roadscape empty for the scenic elements and the right side is cluttered with road signs. He made this work as a commission for the magazine Vanity Fair. It was meant to illustrate the story about Humbert Humbert in *Looking for Lolita*. The mood intended to capture the monotony of the road in the Southwest of the United States.

And before thinking that this is just opportunistic art, without any personal experience of the actual activity, consider how he describes his own participation:

> I hitchhiked down to London to see Jackson Pollock at the Whitechapel in 1956. It was a period of transformation. I was still interested in French artists like Dubuffet and Yves Klein and more interested in depiction – depicting what the world looks like. I hadn't really been interested in Pop Art as such. But there's nothing like looking back at a period and seeing it much clearer later. (Hockney n.d. RCA online interview, para 13)

[4] His joiners (which he relates conceptually to Cubism through capturing time, space and narrative) were initially with instant Polaroid snaps and the later Pentax versions took days to complete, simply in terms of taking the photographs, let alone arranging them.

Self Rediscovery

Judith Okely draws on her own auto-ethnographic experience of hitching during the late 1960s. Her recollections are now broad and flowing. Yet, with the aid of old photographs, she has been triangulating her own memories with those of her sister's. Judith's first experienced hitchhiking, aged 18, which was then both commonplace, yet also risky. Car ownership was relatively rare. She only learned to drive when living with the Gypsies. In keeping with the ethnographic ethos of emphasising the auto-biographical voice of the researcher, she continues describing the accounts that follow with the use of the first person (Okely and Callaway 1992).[5]

I'd been 'incarcerated' in a boarding school for years of totally invasive restrictions (Okely 1996). I escaped to the Sorbonne. My younger sister Elaine enrolled at Ealing Technical College. Next Easter, we met up in the Netherlands, a hitherto foreign land, but with reliable youth hostels for hitchhikers. Those days promised total freedom for mind, body, spirit in open space. Far from the school chapel.

The adventure was spatial liberation and artistic pilgrimage. Studying art history had opened enchanting vistas beyond school. Alongside Dutch landscape painting, I was obsessed with Van Gogh, especially his painting of cypress tree with swirling sky. My favourite book in that institution was Wilson's (1956) *The Outsider*, exploring Chekhov, Dostoevsky and Camus.

What better than to travel freely in search of Van Gogh originals, Ruisdael, other celebratory Dutch landscapes and Vermeer's Delft. Our movement between towns offered direct glimpses of the very land which inspired these painters. We visited the Rijkmuseum, looked for Vermeer's Delft then tracked down the Van Gogh collection, not yet in its special museum. *En route*, two young men gave us lifts on their bikes. They asked curious questions as to how we seemed impervious to risk. Two teenage virgins seeking free rides from strangers, depended entirely on mutual trust. All but one of the drivers spoke English. My artistic passion even provided imagined security. I had bought a gallery poster in a cardboard tube container. When one driver appeared threatening, I reassured my sister that we could defend themselves with this unanticipated makeshift weapon.

[5] It should be remembered that a jeep being pushed out of a gully features on the cover of this anthology.

Having obtained a place at Oxford, I returned temporarily to the Sorbonne. Staying at the same student hostel I met another English student, Margaret, who was preparing for her studies at Cambridge. Her 'left-wing' parents had always encouraged freedom, including hitchhiking alone, through Britain. I suggested Brittany where, thanks to a French student, I had stayed at a nunnery guest house in complete rural isolation.

Speaking French, Margaret and I took to the road. Sitting next to the driver (always men), I began to get the feeling of often being treated as outsider therapist as drivers narrated personal secrets. Precisely because we were aliens, the driver offloaded the hitherto repressed to those he'd never meet again—not seeking wisdom from *ingénues*. It was a compliment being subjected to French monologues. Confronting one dangerous encounter, we whispered to each other in English, seeing the driver slowing down to take a rural side road. As he slowed down, we grabbed the door handles and jumped out, safe again, albeit in 'no-man's-land'. Hitchhiking in those settings also entailed the unexpected. *En route* to Brittany, hostels were rare. Free-born Margaret sought out barns with hay as bedding. Yet now there is no recollection of encounters with farmers.

The isolated beaches were a distance from the nunnery guest house. No tourists. I discovered that the young female visitor I had befriended the previous year was now a novice in this enclosed order. We communicated through the visitor's glass window. I was the first visitor since the young trainee nun's family had disowned her. She asked about the surrounding landscape, wildlife and especially the sea. Only senior nuns were occasionally allowed out. Monks in the nearby monastery enjoyed greater freedom.

The intermediaries, nuns managing the guest house, were fascinated by English outsiders and suggested we try on the traditional Breton costumes that they had to abandon. This unfamiliar locality would involve far more melodrama when frolicking amongst Atlantic waves. Margaret's parents had encouraged nude swimming. On this lone beach, Margaret tore off her clothing and ran into the sea. I followed. Bodily untrammelled, we swam and splashed. Suddenly, on the clifftop, we saw several monks gazing at these naked travellers, lingering for a moment but then departing.

Months after this trip, before our studies in Cambridge and Oxford, Margaret and I were offered a car trip by some friends driving to Spain. Hitchhiking through non-places, the unexpected, and non-social, helps trigger and extend the experiential. And other-cultured humans penetrate

these spaces. Once there, we reverted to hitchhiking. We had no Spanish language skills. Spain was new to us, including Franco's fascist rule and relatively limited tourism.

Perhaps this explains one lorry driver's naivety when he drove to the beach. He offered us a modest corner of the lorry to change into bathing suits. He changed. He could only doggy paddle as we swam into the deep. Returning to the beach, he kept pointing to distant houses then tried making advances. Next, he pointed to the lorry interior. Gradually we realised he presumed we were prostitutes, game for some cheap hotel or the back of his lorry. He interpreted our inaction as price haggling. Margaret found our travel dictionary. Eventually declaring: '*Nostros biennas senioritas*'. He understood the broken phrase, shook hands saying 'Ahah!' He quickly returned to his vehicle and drove off. Here then, under fascist rule, two young women holding out their thumbs, by the roadside were interpreted, not as mere hitchhikers, but hookers seeking gentlemen kerbside crawlers. This short vignette illustrates a number of important themes when it comes to embodied displays of gender stereotypes, (mis)communication and adventure seeking through a sporadic form of travel.

* * *

Roads and rapid technological developments have enabled us to travel longer distances in less time than in those days. Public transportation systems like buses, planes and ferries usually shorten our travel time and getting from one point to another is often more efficient than ever. And time is essential in our era (Tomlinson 2007). In the fast pace society we currently know, it is important to be up to date with everything around us. This equally makes car culture modernisation more valuable, as better systems and quick access to different services make waiting and the waste of time less painful. We should equally not forget that road culture has many layers and that these play a big role in modern urban environments.

In this sense roads have changed our understanding about everything. Richard Sorenson (1972) has argued that roads have the power to profoundly change society. The power of the road is hard to overestimate. They are great arteries where only restricted capillaries have existed before. Down these arteries came a flood of new goods, ideas, peoples and, above all, excitement. Although our interests are only to cover a small part of road culture and mobility, in our research we strive

to bring out some examples from other cultures to compare services and practices in other countries, thus supporting our understanding in this development overall. Mimi Sheller (2004) has stated that for mobilities researchers today, it is not a question of privileging flows, speed, cosmopolitanism or even nomadic subjectivity, but rather of tracking the power of discourses, practices and infrastructures of mobility in creating the effects of both movement and stasis. Mobilities are of course the *sine qua non* of globalisation; without extensive systems of mobility—and globalist, or neoliberal claims for opening markets and states to external flows—social processes could not take place at a global scale, nor be imagined as such.

This perspective is an important part of this project. New technological approaches to ride-sharing systems have developed recently, as this field has grown since the rapid development of smartphones have made their way into the market. This new way of providing services has been popularised through development and needs to be looked into deeper. Over the years there have also been many conflicts between different groups that have demanded intervention from the government in order to regulate ride-sharing systems (Deakin et al. 2010).

* * *

Judith Okely's recollections above have provided a challenge for how I think back as to when my first ever hitchhiking journey was? It would have been in March 1991. In that spring I hitched around Western Europe to see the tour of one of my favourite bands The Sisters of Mercy (SoM). They played Freiburg Stadthalle in the black forest on Marx's birthday 5/05/91. It had been a strange journey because I'd flown into Zurich airport and got a train ticket to Fribourg, Switzerland. Halfway there, sensing that he was travelling in the wrong direction because of the sun, I spoke with a conductor. Together we worked out quickly that my intended destination was the German city, not the Swiss one. He coached me into jumping off at the approaching station and take the next train in the opposite direction, changing a couple of stops later to get on any of the trains going North to Basel. Scribbling something on my ticket he said that if there was to be an inspection, I should show the ticket and explain the misunderstanding to the conductor, avoiding a penalty fine. This worked, but I was still on a limited budget as an undergraduate student so the next day, after meeting a few friends at the gig, I only

bought a weekly railcard instead of one for the whole month. After that, I'd consider my options.

Together with a few dedicated travellers and loyal members of the band's UK following, we would sleep on night-trains going across Germany. During the day we'd see some sights, get a few drinks and find the next venue. There was a very cold shower in a run-down concert/sports hall in East Berlin. A few of us killed the wee hours of the morning at Zoo Station. Indeed, we occasionally had to crash out in some parks, train station entrances, anything to stay warm during the humid spring nights. Sometimes sharing hostels and pension rooms, we would often dodge whatever public transport fares we could get away with.

After 10 days or so of roughing like this, there was an open-air festival and I bumped into Joe who'd travelled from Gourock, near Glasgow. He wanted to share some vodka so we made friends quickly. We knew each other vaguely so after a few drinks came up with a plan to hitch around to a few of the next concerts and festivals. We ended up doing much of the remaining tour dates this way. We witnessed a minor car crash on our first day hitching together and camped by the roadside. Instead of actually hitching together, however, we would go one at a time, aware that two tall men by the side of the road would be intimidating to many drivers. In a time before mobile phones, we agreed on certain *rendez-vous* spots along our route. We 'survived' by building little fires at camping spots along the *autobahn* services and used everything available in our kit-bags to stay warm at night.

A few months later, after the winter, SoM was on tour again. I joined another leg of the band's European tour dates. After the Hamburg Open Air Festival in 1992, I acquired the nickname 'blanket man' by getting caught sleeping on some stretched out deck chairs in a field covered with a large flannel. Blankets are like towels of course, essential in the hitch-hiker's arsenal of equipment. As Douglas Adams remarked in the 1980s: 'any man who can hitch the length and breadth of the galaxy, rough it, slum it, struggle against terrible odds, win through, and still know where his towel is, is clearly a man to be reckoned with' (1986: 31).

During this second season of hitching in Germany in the early 1990s, I met lots of different types of hitchhikers; for instance, a chap from Frankfurt whilst we both waited at a petrol station. He would go up to people and ask drivers for a lift. If they said yes he'd ask, can this guy join too? We ended up travelling together for a few days. I have never really got into the habit of asking strangers for lifts, especially overseas. My limited

German, especially at the time, made it impossible and even now, it's not my style. This chap eventually let me crash over for a day once we reached Frankfurt. We met again the following year, when I dropped by his flat unannounced simply to say thanks.[6]

Streetcars of Desire

Now in thinking about how gender issues relate to automobiles, identity and culture, the lyrics of *The Car Song*, written and performed by the Britpop indie band Elastica, might spring into the minds of people of a certain generation:

> Up my street to nowhere
> You know what detours are
> Here we go again and it's gone way too far[7]

This is surely not a love song. Or is it? There's a microcosm of many issues here: free love, free roaming, the sensuous relationship with a material symbol of power which is indicative of class or wealth—and of course a circularity of kitsch, an irony of desire. Such themes are clearly present in the controversial automobile imagery in David Cronenberg's film '*Crash*' (1996), itself based on the novel written by J.G. Ballard (1973).[8] Although in a much more explicit way, both novel and film similarly use cars as vehicles for sexual fantasy. What's more, the freeway culture of the untamed wild West is controversially un-romanticised by graphic 'in your face' images. Such can be the fate of an auto-fetishism. Masochistic and narcissistic images led to capture a rendition of the dream

[6] This story will be familiar to followers of many other bands such as New Model Army. Musician Franz Nikolay (2016) has written a lively account of DIY punk band touring in former Communist countries where hitchhiking features, as does the weariness of constantly being a stranger on the move. See also Sam Knee (2015: 20), for an image reproduced by kind permission of his parents Mr. Robert & Mrs. Janet Knee.

[7] Off the eponymous album Elastica (1995). Written by Justine Frischmann Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, Warner Chappell Music Inc.

[8] Ballard's two previous dystopian novels were *The Wind from Nowhere* (1961) and *The Drowned World* (1962). The former, his first book is perhaps reminiscent of Gaston Bachelard's (1964) portrayal of the four earthly elements (air, fire, soil, water) in many of his works; the latter book anticipating the effects of such drastic climate change that the inhabitability of the world would be in question.

for a roaming pursuit of happiness in a way which meanders into the narcosis of a postmodern nightmare (Sachs 1984).

It is exactly this exasperation of power that many women assert they are trying to regain control over when they take to the road. They emphasise personal motives over social ones. This is not to say their self-image is unrelated to the roles which society creates for them. Instead, it is simply to say that at the reflexive level of self-awareness and self-perception, women generally do not equate the rationale for their road journeys as originating from larger social forces. At the surface then, it seems the gender difference is quite remarkable since men mostly see their travels as a result of the options provided by society. In contradistinction, women iterate a narrative whereby life on the road can sometimes be cathartic, a reposeful time to heal personal wounds. They would thus view such journeys as a temporary hiatus from personal problems (Miller 1973). Removing themselves from the problem-ridden environment provides a literal and figurative spatio-temporal distancing which can allow for a heightened sense of individual development. From this quasi-liminal experience, they are able to return home and attempt to resolve the most pressing troubling issues.

Whether these gender generalisations remain true or useful is perhaps uncertain. In attempting to expose some of these motor travel conundrums, we delve into the transience of being on the road. By removing themselves from everyday environments and processes of travel, hitchers develop new contexts for the expression of community, trust and social acceptance. This occurs not only in relation to the mutual tolerance or affinity that develops between hitchers and motorists but also by the sharing of collective experiences of hardship and joy between hitchers, travellers, protesters and so on. Indeed, the activity of hitchhiking often establishes friendships and moralities of the moment. These fleeting alliances are the bonds of transient communities. They are relationships that do not necessarily extend beyond the confines of being on the road, but are nonetheless genuine and renewable. From them we can portray hitching as a liminal journey that is both in and out of society, and where the potential for individual as well as collective enlightenment exists.

Simultaneously, however, the process of hitching is somewhat anarchic, at least in the sense that through stealth, it undermines the social domination of transport infrastructures. Herein lay subtle forms of subversion, embedded in journeys that are not completely invisible yet camouflaged, hidden, shadowy. Rather than being a straightforward form of travel, the hitching voyage is a method of social displacement. Indeed, even as the

passenger enters a world that is dependent upon mechanised mobility, he or she—at the same time—engages in a process of rebelling against the subservience to modernity whilst nevertheless believing and trusting in the humanity of ideals. In consequence, the sociality extends beyond the journey itself given the place that this type of activity holds at the margin of society, the centre of protest communities and, as L.P. Hartley [1953] (1961) might have said, in-between reality, fiction and the poetic artistry of movement.

'Carhesia'

Heterotopia denotes a 'place of otherness'. Following Michel Foucault (1984), I also feel that it is best defined by being juxtaposed with the concept of utopia; that word that is used to describe scenarios which are imaginary rather than real. Contrarily, heterotopias are a type of 'fallen paradise', 'decentred', 'found in no place in particular' and 'associated with deviance' (Blackshaw 2010: 137). Heterotopias, in other words, stand against the utopian. They are actual compensatory places, spaces 'without geographical markers', existing in all cultures or societies (Foucault 1984: 5). Firstly, heterotopias are imaginary communities that exist outside all other rational places, whilst nevertheless being located in culture and society. Secondly, heterotopias are collective (and therefore social) spaces where like-minded individuals come together to engage in leisure activities that are often less acceptable or tolerated in the everyday world.

Leisure is invariably both social and individual, however, since people can find their own individual sense of meaning in the heterotopia. As such, they cannot be purely collective spaces. As Foucault (1984) has suggested, heterotopias challenge the hegemony of a single space as they can juxtapose several spaces that are perhaps incompatible and contradictory in one single real space.

Heterotopic social spaces are additionally 'something more' in that they are a type of home which have to be shaped carefully. This means that hitchhiking is about being part of something that feels comfortable, as though belonging to something and having a collective purpose were even more crucial than with non-heterotopic communities. Hitchhiking is made up of like-minded people who have similar vested interests. This results in the formation of heterotopic spaces that must be shared and invented together to safeguard their authenticity and community-like

qualities. Obviously, this type of non-traditional 'community' demands a feeling of belonging made temporarily real by the contributions that have gone into creating it. That is, all heterotopias harbour only a precarious kind of order that defy instrumental forms of rationality and reasoning.

The year before his death, in 1983, Michel Foucault delivered a set of lectures in Berkeley. These were entitled *Discourse and Truth,* and in them he introduced the concept of *parrhesia*. This term is crucial in his genealogy of criticism, originating in Ancient Greece to refer to a person who 'says everything'. In other words, someone who speaks truth freely, without recourse to rhetoric. 'The *parrhesiastes* speaks the truth, not because he is in possession of the truth, which he makes public in a certain situation, but because he is taking a risk' (Raunig 2007: 221).

The *parrhesia's* truth takes the form of the speaker making a dangerous statement—one that is different from what most people think or believe. Truth here is not demonstrative. It is not to inform someone of something unknown in a factual sense. Rather, it manifests itself as a reflexive critique of the interlocutor or even of the speaker him or herself. This usually originates from below and is directed above, towards the powers that be (hence, one can find it analogous to the position of the court jester or trickster).

In Foucault's etymological chronology, the shift taking place in the game of truth is that the ancients considered it necessary for someone to be brave enough to tell such truths to others. The change to occur is that for moderns, the *parrhesia* game consists of being courageous enough to reveal one's own truth. This mutation thus means that the public sphere shrinks and the private one expands; critique becomes less external, less a type of accusation. Instead, it moves into more complex and comprehensive forms of self-criticism. What can be more pertinent in terms of auto-ethnography. And since we're dealing with Foucault, what could be more relevant as a starting point in terms of considering the ways in which hitchhiking is connected to surveillance, and *sousveillance*, this latter being a form of countersurveillance, whereby the gaze of an emancipated public is returned back towards stately powers.

To illustrate this point, I start with a pop-culture example. In 2015, a television series was made in the UK under the title *Hunted*. The premise of this Channel 4 reality show is quite simple: ten 'fugitive' participants attempt to resist capture in Britain for 28 days in order to win a share of £100,000. Their hunters consist in a team of dozens of professionally trained police officers, military personnel and special surveillance agents.

Towards the beginning of the second episode of the second series (S2E2 9 min 20") we are shown a sound-bite interview with one member of the team of experts behind his desk in the HQ investigations office. In providing an overview of that particular season's fugitive teams, he says the following: 'So we've got Anna and Elizabeth. We think we understand their MO very well, sporadic hitchhiking. I think we just need one more bit of luck, one more little bit of nougat of intelligence and I think we can really pin them down'. A bit over 30 minutes into the show he says about this duo from Yorkshire: 'Keeping things completely erratic is their tactic and so far it's worked' [31':15"].

At the time Anna May (aged 25) was a court clerk office administrator. Her fugitive partner was Elizabeth Garnett (aged 20), a stockbroker assistant. In this episode we hear from them their motivation for hitchhiking. 'We're just gonna rely on the good will of people and hitchhike. We're not gonna use any public transport at all'. 'I think members of the public are more likely to help out people, girls, of our age'. 'Two smiley little girls who kinda appear quite vulnerable'.

In a later episode, after the hunters have decided to use the media to advertise a financial reward for information leading to the successful capture of the girls, Elizabeth Garnett says (31:55) 'you can't really, truly 100% trust people. It's kinda like, were you really really alone? And this is a relatively new feeling because we've been placing a lot of trust in people over the past 11 days. And it just shows how people change when there's money involved'.

After surviving 26 days on the run without capture, they made it to being amongst the last four people on the loose, before getting caught on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales. They were two days from safety and thus less than 48 hours away from being able to collect £25,000 each, since two other people had managed to fully escape the team of hunters.

This vignette seems a fitting way to draw a link in pastiche form to some of the power dynamics related to hitchhiking transport themes. That is, to remind ourselves of the confessional, sexualised and power-laden overtones of the carscape—what we could, for convenience sake, refer to as *carhesia*—the potential of vehicles to allow non-rhetorical forms of truth to be spoken or enacted.

On- and Off-Road Rituals

Roads and the powerful sense of mobility that they promise to carry us along take us back and forth between the sweeping narratives of globalisation and the specific, tangible materialities of particular times/places. Indeed, despite the fact that roads might, by comparison with the sparkling agility of virtual technologies, appear to be grounded in twentieth-century industrial political economy—they could arguably be taken as the paradigmatic material infrastructure of the twenty-first century, supporting both the information society (in the ever-increasing circulation of commodified goods and labour), and the extractive economies of developing nations on which the production and reproduction of such goods and labour depend (Dalakoglou and Harvey 2012).

The currently lively interface between transport geography and mobilities research has the potential to stimulate transformative research agendas that intervene in public policy debates which will reshape modes of transport decision-making and investment in the future (Packer 2008). This can be seen in the changes that have already happened in our society regarding ride-sharing systems and road culture (Fig. 3.2).

But hang on, the sceptics reading this would be correct in mentioning that many of the examples in this chapter are historical, from the 1960s to the 90s, before hitchhiking was quickly abandoned in the Western world.[9] Yet on a journey during 27 June 2019, when in the back seat of a Bla-Bla car, a paid ride-share from Reading to Plymouth, a young man mentions hitching within minutes of a discussion about traffic congestion. He was on his way to his first Glastonbury Festival. In his mid-twenties, he'd recently finished management studies at Bournemouth Uni. He's hitched quite a bit in rural parts of the UK and the Netherlands, where he lived for two years and where his girlfriend is still based. He was adamant that people still stop for hitchers, even if the practice is now seen as 'really quite eccentric'.

The day after this encounter, an assistant at a hostel says, prompted only by the simplest question about travel options out of the city, that it would likely be easy to hitch once one got out of Plymouth into Cornwall.

[9] Commenting on an uncaptioned photograph in his book about the British fashion and music scene from the 1960s to the 90s, author Sam Knee says the following 'here's the pic of my beatnik dad Robert Knee, hitchhiking in France circa 1960, taken by my mum Janet Knee' (see Fig. 3.2).

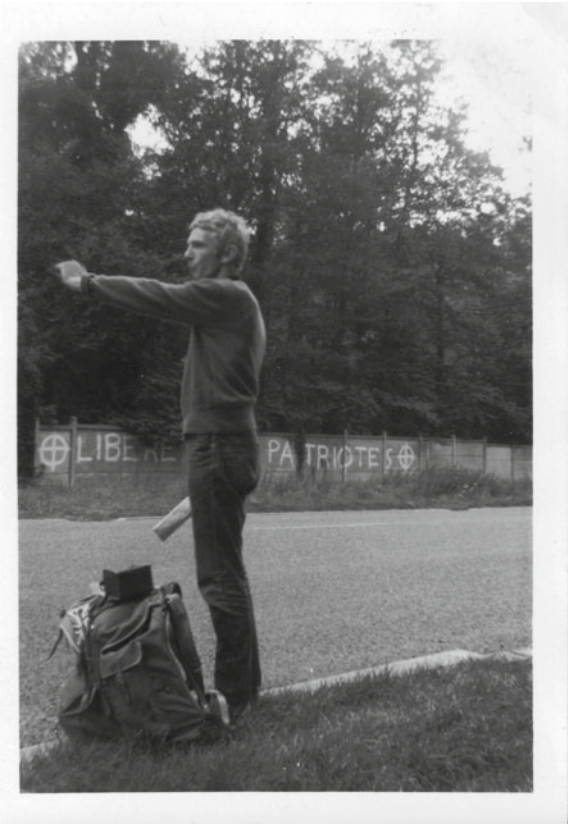

Fig. 3.2 Mr. Robert Knee, 1960s in France (Photo by Janet Knee. Courtesy of their son Sam Knee, reproduced from *The Bag I'm In* [2015: 20])

As if to prove this point, I managed to hitch a lift for a couple of miles, after walking two-thirds of the way on a small B-road from the outskirts of St Austell to the Eden Project. It was around 5:00 pm and I was on my way to see The Chemical Brothers perform at the Eden Sessions, one of a set of evening concerts that this now famous botanical garden hosts every summer. A woman in her mid-forties returning from work stopped for me, it seemed, without hesitation. Her pale blue nurse outfit was a clear giveaway as to her profession; her less than tidy car, an indication that she has one or several young children.

Once in Falmouth a few days later, on 1 July, a friend of mine put on an old episode of the crime series Inspector Morse from 1988, *The Last Bus to Woodstock*. This episode is based on Colin Dexter's first novel of Morse published in 1975. In the opening scenes, a woman hitches a lift on a stormy winter night at a bus stop. She is found dead moments after being dropped off in a pub car park.

It is of course often true that when researchers are involved in a project, they end up seeing the topic of their study everywhere. Some people might put this down to the importance that selective attention theory plays in much social research. Nevertheless, this vignette into the recent travels of one anthropologist suggests that hitchhiking is still present in the land, mind and mediascapes of the twenty-first century. In the following Chapters we shall dip into further contemporary examples.

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CHAPTER 4

Motorised Flânerism

Simone de Beauvoir is a model reference point for anyone seeking an intellectual guide through life's trials and tribulations. Choosing another autobiographic passage, in which she admits that travelling had always been one of her 'most burning desires' would equally be apt when pondering over the notion of the *flâneur* in the age of post-mechanical reproduction. Of course, there is little new in underscoring the significance of mobility for human societies. Yet even since the 1960s there are drastic differences in the scale and pace of our geographic ranges, resulting in ecological transformations and grave social justice implications. More and faster-moving people, across greater distances creates certain bottlenecks—a two-way set of opportunities to travel beyond what was once only possible on foot—as well as a heavy congestion in the increasing number of global centres.

Indeed, in the early 1960s, the song by Marvin Gaye simply titled HitchHike[1] captured these elements of freedom and possibility, as well as the social stigmas surrounding class and ethnic mobility. The live performances of this track by the Prince of Motown even generated its own unique dance craze. There is perhaps some irony in that the song was

[1] Thanks to George Schöpflin for putting me on to this song during the *9th Annual Lotman Conference* in Tallinn.

P. Laviolette, *Hitchhiking*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-48248-0_4

recorded in Detroit, a city not at all known for its associations with hitchhiking, yet clearly identified as the hearth of the American automotive industry.

[…] I'm goin' to St. Louis,
but my next stop just might be L.A
(Hitch hike) Now what'd I say? (L.A.)
Got no money
in my pocket so I'm gonna have to
hitch hike all the way […]
'Hitch Hike'[2]

U-Turns, Roundabouts and the Mobilities Spin

In academic circles and debates, we can identify the onset of the 'mobilities turn' to a time around the mid-1990s. During this epoch, one could witness a great deal of optimism about the processes of global change. One important publication, written by Kenichi Ohmae (1990), explored the idea of a borderless world. This involves the free-flowing movement of knowledge, information, people, labour, resources, investments, industries and so forth. The significance of the mobilities turn literature within the humanities and social sciences is vast. This area of scholarship is still developing rapidly, in many interesting ways and it certainly has important connections to the development of 'landscape-isms'. The intention in this chapter is to provide an overview of this body of literature as it relates to the comparative context of Western versus Eastern Europe in terms of hitchhiking's survivability. It explores the idea of im/mobility in more detail, especially as a conditioned possibility of existence.

The theme of mobility has seen yet another explosion of interest in contemporary ethnological and anthropological theory. Indeed, many scholars have regularly spoken of a mobilities return. Yet perhaps it is more appropriate to speak of a spin—or maybe even more apt still, to consider this trend as a u-turn—emphasising the utopian dimensions of this body of literature. Grounded in ethnography conducted within Western Europe, this study will nonetheless span wider cross-cultural and spatio-temporal spheres when considering mobility: from the

[2] Released on the Tamla label from the album *That Stubborn Kinda Fellow* (1962) produced by William 'Mickey' Stevenson/Clarence O. Paul/Marvin P. Gaye. Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC.

fleeting movement of hitchhikers in the Baltics which may last only for moments (or a lifetime), through to the fairly regular movement patterns of uber-taxi drivers; from the pseudo-pilgrimage ascensions of abandoned post-industrial or Soviet-era buildings by urban explorers, through to the existential *longue-durée* trope of 'free travel', as it occurs in the textual depictions of certain Eastern European poets as well as in the region's audiovisual representations made by other important cinematographic auteurs.

I have thus begun to uncover some of the hermeneutic significance of hitchhiking as a physical practice and compare this to how it occurs in different genres and fields. Some of the recent lessons about mobility from phenomenologically influenced conceptualisations and approaches are that the complexities and dialectics of transient environments grow in terms of dealing with concerns for the embedded or embodied (Fischer 2014). Delineating mobility in a phenomenological framework is thus a deliberate attempt to map out the life-paths of human beings as a progressive move from 'home' to 'world', or from hearth to cosmos as the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1996) would say. With time, people grow into larger worlds. Not to do so is often seen as to live a stunted life. According to anthropologist Michael D. Jackson, the human's stages of maturation are celebrated in all cultures, because at each stage one enters into larger spheres of activity, responsibility and mastery (Jackson 1996). A significant judgement against patriarchal societies is that women are made to stay in the domestic realm. Similarly, a judgement against hierarchical societies is that members of the lower classes are confined to limited spheres of interaction and subjected to forced migrations, whilst the elite have the possibility of enjoying the world without the fear of forced displacement. They are privileged in being both cosmopolitan and grounded (de Beauvoir 1960). The ideals of the auto-stop community generally seek to extend this privilege to more and more members who once suffered constraint, but eventually no longer need to feel that the edge of their home is the edge of their world.

This link, which I'm arguing exists between an ethos at the heart of hitchhiking and a phenomenological approach, is one that emphasises empathy. It highlights a concern for being sensitive towards, and thus drawing attention to, people's negative experiences. In thinking in terms of embodiment and agency, the notions of alternative mobilities such as narrowboat or barge living, caravanning as well as traveller settlements

are all relevant (Aiken 1976; Okely 1987). It is very much in this context of striving to understand the social significances of alternative travel schemes that the present work situates itself.

A recent example of highlighting potential inequalities and injustices in the sphere of travel comes out of considerations for the surveillance or panoptical effects of so-called technologies of well-being. Under these auspices, mobility becomes a site where the ego is not only produced but is also contested. Moral subjects are forged, represented, enacted, pathologised, witnessed and judged. Also under these auspices, the focus of interest shifts towards what is taken for granted, the mundane. Not only is the everyday a site of social importance but so too are the objects that are discarded, not noticed or ridiculed as trivial and meaningless. Here cars and road infrastructures are heralded for their primal cultural significance. They have as much potential to act upon us as do artefacts said to be powerful, spiritual or special in some way or other (Fig. 4.1).

Several social scientists consider that mobility is one of the more stratifying factors of everyday life. In such a context, it works as a model, mirroring class, position, cultural capital and similar indicators of social strata (Bourdieu 1984). Spatial mobility thus functions as a tool, exposing

Fig. 4.1 Innsbruck (home of Douglas Adams' HHG2tG), summer 2017 (Photo by PL)

the social and individual dimensions of privilege, whilst uncovering short-term transnational displacement. One of my objectives in playing with *flâneurism*, at least in terms of the stop and go motion of hitchhiking, is to provide a descriptive and analytical portrait for how some erratic travel can slow down time (Zinganel 2013). By occasionally grounding the hectic mayhem of everyday twenty-first-century living, the non-linear narratives embedded in hitching adventures are full of potential; to free up our stifled imaginations and to unclog the silted up gutters of privilege. Consequently, accounts of what we may label 'adventure capital'—a subcategory of socio-cultural capital, should be genuinely destabilising—guiding us in the direction of hopeful futures, but equally harbouring a darker side. Yet the latter, the more sinister horizon for travel capital, is hardly new itself. It has existed for over a hundred years now—a murderous hand-axe to engineering's exploits of progress. Dialectically, however, we should nonetheless be open to concealed flashes of inspiration in order to point out alternative directions, or ways for rediscovering unnarrated messages from the past. Or to re-invent those horror stories that the media and analogous spheres of audiovisual/literary entertainment have glorified with the sensationalistic shock-horror techniques so vividly illustrated in *A Clockwork Orange*.[3]

At the turn of the century, in parallel with a significant shift in the humanities and social sciences for an about-face in considerations towards the realm of mobilities (itself seen as turning, perhaps spinning around incessantly these days), such authors as Kaufmann et al. (2004) introduced the holistic idea of 'motility'. With the assistance of such qualifying notions as access, competence, appropriation, surveillance, subversion and so on, motility describes both the individual and social capacities or potential for achieving mobility. This term provides the opportunity for a set or nexus of notions to illustrate with nuance the setting of a situation's relational levels of mobility. It thus depicts forms of capital that may be linked with, exchanged for or repressed by other forms of capital. Compared with Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) definitions of capital from twenty years

[3] See Anthony Burgess (1962) or Stanley Kubrick's film of course. I refer to spin, spinning and time loops here to denote the influence of hyper-modernity in producing a body of literature that is increasingly fast paced, somewhat circular and often grotesquely 'out of control'. These may equally be useful in terms of showing the dangers of empty rhetorical manipulations and word-play games that have made their way into mobility debates, especially in the realm of politics.

before, motility is a broader, vaguer and flatter (less hierarchical) term that some authors would even suggest acts as an umbrella concept. Due to its holistic character, however, motility claims to be more existential, allowing for the potential to adjust individual perspective to the changing dynamics of hyper-mobile modern societies. It offers pertinent methodological and analytical approaches that permit researchers to expand the range of capitals without abandoning other insights from studies on spatial and social mobility.

Focusing on the spaces between the discourses on spatial mobility, the composers of this new term argue that social structures and dynamics are 'interdependent with the actual or potential capacity to displace entities such as goods, information or people' (Kaufmann et al. 2004: 745). Their perspective entangles understandings of mobility as strictly structuring dimensions of social life. Rather, movement acts as a spatial way of linking individuals to social relations and everyday practices regarding production, consumption and leisure activities.

Within such a framework, the agencies and free choices that privileged mobility take place within unfix ways of organising our lives, through the possibilities available via systems and technologies that provide virtual, physical and communicative mobility. Motility, as a hyper-hybrid notion, thus allows us to combine the spatial mobilities of social and individual experience. This is then reminiscent of Bourdieu's 'field of possibilities' as being ever regulated by structural dispositions, hence the range of one's capital and ultimately their *habitus* (Bourdieu 1984: 10). Such intellectual circumnavigations allow Sven Kesselring (2005) to claim that mobilities cannot exist in the realm of pure freedom. Instead, they form ways in which individuals adapt their personal needs, wished and demanded from the collective conditions for the mobile. That is, from the options for creating one's life through movement whilst being influenced, not to say shaped, by rules and structures.

In terms of many of my own participants and interlocutors, their ages range as such does their interest in long-distance travel. They embody a sense of flexibility and fluidity. Several of them are still studying, do not have a permanent job, are not in long-term relationships and are ready to remain mobile in order to meet and eventually settle with a partner. They generally see long-distance relationships as something temporal and agree that such distance relations take a lot of investment in time, finances, trust and emotion. As Kaufmann et al. (2004) point out, the relation between flexibility and the ability to carry out life projects or long-term plans are embedded within the very notion of motility.

Here's an example to conclude. In her *mémoirs* Simone de Beauvoir recounts a near-death experience of falling down a ravine when hiking alone in the Maritime Alps of Southern France. What's interesting in terms of her recollection of the events is that she nevertheless adds the details of her trek home, thus adding yet another narrative layer to an already harrowing story:

> It astonished that I had felt so little emotional reaction when I believed myself on the very brink of death. I picked up my rucksack, ran back all the way to Lauzet, and thumbed a lift from a car, which took me across the mountains as far as my chalet-hotel on the Col d'Allos. As I fell asleep I remember saying to myself somberly "I've lost a day!". (de Beauvoir 1960: 141)[4]

Flâneurism on Four Wheels

The urban cityscapes of the Parisian arcades were perfect examples of an imaginative 'panoramic architecture' devised to orient the individual's movements through the market-place. In light of all the social changes brought on by the French Revolution, the most significant of these were the result of budding capitalism which involved the need to create new social spaces for vending and purchasing purposes. These were passageways through neighbourhoods that were covered with glass roofs and lined by marble panels so as to shape a sort of ambiguous interior–exterior environment. Through the literary inspiration of Charles Baudelaire [1821–1867], this generic space was populated by the character of the *flâneur*, a marginal occupant and eccentric user of such a space. These ideas were initially theorised by Walter Benjamin in the 1930s and published posthumously (1980). Both authors wrote about the growth of a new upwardly mobile class as one of the key groups to embody the public experience of modernity:

> The street becomes a dwelling for the flâneur; he is as much at home among the facades of houses as a citizen is in his four walls. To him the shiny, enamelled signs of businesses are at least as good a wall ornament as an oil painting is to the bourgeois in his salon. The walls are the desk against which he presses his notebooks; news-stands are his libraries and

[4] PL's translation from the original French text of *La force de l'âge*.

> the terraces of cafés are the balconies from which he looks down on his household after his work is done. (1980: 37)

Inevitably men, *flâneurs* would stroll through the city to kill the time afforded to them by wealth and education. Their tendency for nonchalance meant that they would objectify the masses, treating the other passers-by and the surrounding architecture as riddles for interpretative pleasure. The act of the *flâneur* symbolised privilege and the liberty to move about the city observing from a distance, not interacting; consuming the sights through a controlling but rarely acknowledged gaze, directed as much at other people as the goods for sale. An anonymous face in the multitude, the *flâneur* was free to probe for clues that were unnoticed by other people, simpletons, caricaturised as domestic beings. In making apparent the spatial inversion between public and private, Benjamin brought the outside in and placed the inside out. This inversion was intended as a social subversion whereby leisure became one of the main tools behind creating an enduring persona for the *flâneur* as someone not confined to an increasingly State-manipulated domestic sphere but who had the capacity, freedom and cultural capital to live within the world.

Mobility is of course central here, as is the kinaesthetic dimensions of movement and ultimately the physical experience of the urban. Benjamin defined modernity as a break from the past, focused on the gaze and liberty of movement. We should also note that mobility and movement are inherently connected to the phenomenological project. It is through such an emphasis that certain anthropologists have come to think through and conceptualise the idea of being *At Home in the World* (Jackson 1996) or how migration can be a form of identity creation (Rapport and Dawson 1998). In this sense, the emphasis is not on the formulation of identity as necessary being focused on where someone is from, but more importantly on where they are going.

A notable feature in this regard is that the *flâneur*, this supreme being of leisure, was the personification of in-betweenness, especially in terms of a perambulating demeanour which was halfway between sleepwalking and an intoxicated consciousness of reform. This characteristic of course lent itself well to the surrealists who captured the *flâneur* as a kind of mascot for moving poetry. For Benjamin, dreams were indices of freedom, whereby our socially constructed dreamscapes could be tapped to provide visions for utopian change.

Flâneurs were therefore a form of transcendental presence who encompassed what Thorstein Veblen (1899) had later labelled as 'conspicuous leisure'. Veblen's musings were heavily influenced by the populist movement in America which was prominent from 1887 to 1908. With some socialist influence, they divided the world between those who were producers and those who were not. Populists were antagonistic to the values of the dominant leaders of the business community and shared a sense of urgency and an edge of desperation about the demand for reform. And it is this connection between a desire for change, increased leisure and the ability for movement through different spaces that connects the *flâneur* to adventure. But despite being mobile in a number of senses, this urban type of trickster is nonetheless the embodiment of idleness, at least with regard to the production of socio-economic value. So we need to introduce another component before we can apply the relevance of this category to the topic of adventure. This additional element, also a product of modernity and the industrial revolution, is acceleration, rapidity, speed.

The contemporary manifestation of the *flâneur* can perhaps best be understood in our times through the idea of immediacy and therefore as an 'accelerated *flâneur*', facilitated by globalisation anxieties, mega-infrastructures, postmodern architecture and the ruinous decay of buildings, as well as the modern ambition for heightened leisure and freedom from restraint. For attention to the actual social experience of modernity's fascination with acceleration, one must move away from traditional theorists to the sociological impressionism of someone like Simmel. In the background of most of his writings, although never specified explicitly, Simmel was drawn to thinking about the effects and affects that result from the increasing pace of modern life, with the overall result in the global shift from rural to metropolitan existence.

Inspired by his impressionistic musings, French scholars such as Michel de Certeau's (1984) and Henri Lefebvre's (1991) provided some thoughts on walking in the city which are extensions to the former work on the *flâneur*—although theirs is about ordinary citizens rather than the exceptionally educated bourgeois who receive pleasure from wandering around cities gazing at, but never communicating directly with others. One of the lessons from their studies is that urban movement is hegemonically restricted and controlled. Walkers exist within the built environment that they explore. Whilst some possibilities are denied to them, other possibilities open up. De Certeau calls this 'walking rhetorics' which suggests the idea of creativity for getting around obstacles. Now in the

realm of 'buildering' (the climbing of buildings), urban exploration and parkour/free running, such ideas of overcoming the restrictions of urban planning through acrobatics and accelerated movement are part of the core rationale for these practices (Laviolette 2011, 2016).

In terms of examining the links between thrills and rapidity, Michael Balint (1959) has offered a psychoanalytically driven approach. His work reveals the often pessimistically dark association between the dangers, risks and implicit violence associated with acceleration and the typically modern sensual aesthetic experiences it can engender.

> This is a discourse which embraces a range of transgressive and rebellious impulses chafing the smooth surface order of institutional modernity. And out of this is formed a narrative of speed which is 'unruly' both in its orientation and in its expression. Subversive and impetuous, conjoining hedonism with a particular sort of existential hedonism, this discourse constantly teeters on the brink of collapse into violence and chaos. (Tomlinson 2007: 9)

From such a position, the euphoric landscape in which plays the accelerated body is no longer an enveloping sphere of tracts, expanses and panoramas. Rather, it is a beckoning foreground of special sites, niches and locations, each significant for how it technically engages the body in risky play. Indeed, the modern player as sensation seeker encounters the thrillscape as a patchwork of technical possibilities, each to be explored, tested and evaluated with the rules of the game and the singularly trained body in mind. To this attuned and sometimes exceptionally well-trained practitioner, vaguely defined assemblages of natural features transform into distinctly technical spaces and precisely describable arenas that invite exploration, penetration, naming, commentary, repetition and reputation. Whereas the idyllic landscape of the spirit offered the alienated subject the sublimely panoramic envelopment of backgrounds, the ecstatic landscape of the body decisively reverses this symmetry. For the new adventurer, panorama only really provides a setting for foregrounds that, in the game, grounds their body and rivets one's attention.

Nonetheless, late-modern culture is not just characterised by the intensification of technological mediation and of mobilities and exchanges. It equally relies on excesses, on the perspective that faster is better. Accelerated machine movement, such as automobility specifically, has dominated our globalisation era, becoming a seamless and unquestioned model for

transport in most people's experience. If the *flâneur* is a figure that epitomises serious leisure during early modern times, what kind of character is the hitchhicker? Is he or she any different and what will his/her heroic or transgressive features be in the 2020s?

Trans-Sport

As with traditional *flâneur* metaphors, motion continues to inspire our society. It is a powerful force of our mind/bodyscapes, made even more significant this century by the rapidity of mechanical engineering and the virtual possibilities for exploring wider ranges. A fundamental component of social acceleration, as well as a significant part of the contradictions embedded in hitchhiking culture, is that we have to accept the presence of significant environmental undertones. Hitchhiking exists in this in-between and *inter alia* space, betwixt motor vehicles and porous infrastructural roadscapes. It is an activity heavily dependent on cars, vans and lorries, but which somehow opposes, or at least challenges, global obsessions with engine cultures of the petrochemical variety.

The search for the self in travel is a common theme in both hitchhiking and other mainstream road narratives. In this sense, the destination is not always as important as the process of getting there—a process that bathes in the freedom from commitment and responsibility. Mobility thus opens to the esoteric. Movement is the means, the development of a kaleidoscopic self-image is the pursuit and a more satisfying self is the destination. As Salter has eloquently stated just over 40 years ago: 'new paths lead to new images either on the road or in the haven at the end of the junket' (1979: 13).

Ideas of mobility transgress borders concerning the characteristics of modern individuals and modern states. They advocate the notion that private car ownership and domestic car industries are hallmarks for what constitutes modernity (Wolfe 2010). Quinney, for one, noted the importance of the immersion of the self into the immediate moment of movement and travel: 'As with all travel – no matter how near or far from home – every moment is a journey of the soul. We spend our lives travelling' (1986: 21). In this sense, the conscious self loses itself in a larger imaginative world, a world where we are intimately grounded to an unhindered space. We travel the world to discover its secrets and in so knowing we become one with the landscape.

This phenomenological position implies that the restriction of movement is a form of alienation from the world's mysteries. Such a stance hints at the danger of disembodying ourselves from the landscape, for in so doing we deny ourselves and desacralise nature. Kierkegaard wrote of what it meant for the self to fail to become part of the otherness of the world. He called this condition *The Sickness unto Death* and claimed that it denied the nature of the ultimate human reality. As he asserts: '[…] and possibility is for the self what oxygen is for breathing (1848: 42)'.

Many environmentalists ascribe sickness unto death as an excellent idiom for the current state of the Earth's ecosystems. Amongst other things, they point the finger of blame to our automobile addiction and infatuation with mobility. The car has indeed had profound impacts upon the quality and character of city and country life around the globe. It is a major force in the shaping of the Anthropocene. And if even the oxygen we breathe is contaminated at a level that impacts all people in all places, then how are we as a species to realise our full possibilities as selves?

Without doubt, automobiles have evolved far beyond their utility as transportation devises to become, in many parts of the world, the very symbol of the good life and conspicuous consumption. They are status symbols, objects of fantasy, sources of employment and major forces in the income of many countries (Miller 2001). Commentaries about the important shift in car use, from family property to personal property, have existed since the birth of this modern technology. The increasing dependency on the car for the fulfilment of daily activities was accurately predicted as a trend that would continue, imposing greater demands on precarious energy supplies as well as solidifying the human landscape with a 'network of institutions that take limitless personal mobility for granted' (Bogart 1977: 15). It is no wonder then that the automobile holds a primary place amongst those artefacts that have significantly transformed society in the twentieth century. This is so much so, that it is becoming obvious that certain important psychosocial processes lie at the heart of explaining why one's personal vehicle is one of the most significant objects in the age in which we live.

By its ubiquitous presence in Western society, the car has shaped the ways in which people can move. It also quickly became a metallic statement to who and what we are. Automobiles and their related concrete networks of roads are readily apparent in our landscapes—standing as monuments to the past, present and future. Even the atmosphere is not safe from their pollution and scrapped vehicles have created a whole new

refuse problem. In terms of its relation to surfing, car travel has been intimately connected not only because of the bulky piece of equipment involved and the need to follow conditions dictated by weather patterns, but also because of the associations with free roaming and free love. This relationship with hedonism is clearly at the heart of the complex rapport that the surfing lifestyle has had with the need to have access to a vehicle.

The performance artist Laurie Anderson has reacted to the automotive industry's despotism in her rendition of a journey of life. The dark glebe is entered and the straightway is lost. The errancy in Anderson is accelerated as her body becomes a motorway: 'I… I am in my body… I am in my body the way… I am in my body the way most people drive…I am in my body the way most people drive their cars'. These lyrics are from the song *Americans on the Move*, in which she goes on to translate a parable of lost direction into a frightful nightscape of rain and ceaseless traffic where you are '[…] driving through the night to a place you've never been with everything unfamiliar' (quoted in Ezell and O'Keeffe 1994: 232).

The sociologist Eugene Halton (1994) refers to such car fetish symbolism as 'auto eroticism', which places the sports car as America's top symbol of its youth's budding sexuality. Indeed, automobiles embody sex, excitement, and in certain cases liberation, both by the personal privacy that they permit and by the social and financial emancipation that they proclaim. It follows that by incarcerating sexuality, the automobile has the potential of alienating its youthful drivers from the sexuality that comprises them. And so, the elevation of motor vehicles to cultic status conveys malignant control of the machine over individuality. Some authors have even argued that the erotic appeal of the car derives from the combination of such feelings as control, omnipotence and self-enclosed regression. Its inner space is a simulated environment that provides its passenger with a self-propelling womblike capsule. Here 'driving can be a onanistic experience in which the driver extends his power manifoldly' (Freund and Martin 1993: 91).

There is another phenomenon that links car travel and surfing—the way in which each can manage to alter our spatial perception. The landscape as seen from a motor vehicle is experienced as a set of visual sequences. Objects appear to move, they alter in colour, shape, size and texture. Compositions form, dissolve and fade whilst perceptions of constancy and motion, sometimes exciting, frightening or simply boring, become increasingly rapid. The connection to the idea of the accelerated *flâneur*, explored above, is immediately pertinent here. In reducing

our field of vision and limiting the use of our other senses, cars often homogenise the experience of landscape.

Speed and constricted space are not the only factors involved in generating a sense of sameness and flatness to the environment. Commercialisation is a culprit as well. Cars have been the target of the visual pollution of words which increasingly effect urban centres and their hinterlands. In many cases, the information on roads becomes so varied and superfluous that it is unreadable. The upshot is a film-like illusion, where mirage and reality are blurred: 'This mode of apprehending the world constitutes the essence of the postmodern experience' (Freund and Martin 1993: 105).

There is therefore a liminal component to this surreal form of perception. Of course, the postmodern roadscape is not only shaped by driving experiences. The transient images of television equally mediate experiential encounters with the world. Together they provide much of our spatial information: '[…] The mutual dependency of the road and television has changed our architecture. The strip has become the Television Road' (MacDonald 1985: 13). This construction of architecture, space and entertainment for the needs of the automobile industry was one of the instigators in the shift from modernity to postmodernity. Sequentially, the architecture of road commerce grew into its own form of communication. In such a virtual landscape, the urban environment, buildings and architecture move from being forms in place to becoming symbols in space.

The geographer Stephen Daniels (1993) has also attempted to sight iconographical roadscape images by creating a category for imaginative geographies in which texts and illustrations generate cultural histories that foster the narrative genre we have come to know as 'travel writing'. His excessively ocular outlook is limited, however, because ultimately he provides a static way of seeing.

The written recollection becomes the medium of choice for communicating what has been visually observed. The use of multiple meanings surrounded by a variety of discourses is what Daniels advances as the eloquence of images. Surely, however, the landscape is equally a lived-in environment. Images provide one type of reality yet every landscape harnesses a wealth of human potential (Bender 1998). Roads, streets, avenues and boulevards are not simply links between points or corridors for travellers. Concrete and cobblestones literally consume space. In an average city more space is dedicated to the movement of vehicles than to

most other activities. By relying principally on pictorial material, Daniels is able to quickly shift narratives but he does not put into question the observational points upon which he stands. For him, we have historical contexts which explain specific views and vistas. But we do not examine how to move between or change certain platforms of power. By examining the landscape from a static position, the visual analyst only changes his or her vantage point, without connecting or moving between the shifting perspectives. Constructions of historical contexts can be problematic when one is relying on images generated by the elite. In short, such a methodology helps recreate unequal balances of power.

This is exactly where J. B. Jackson (1984) would be up in arms, by pointing out the absence of any vernacular landscape understanding. In essence his mission was to reveal the traveller's path, a path that is latent with power since it may not be accessible or noticeable to all. Jackson therefore reminds us that the tact of social scientists is suited to revealing the power latent within the layers of the landscape itself. This only becomes possible by relying on actual observations of human mobility. In so doing, we can uncover the patterns to city transport which are not obvious from the layout of the transportation network.

It is this notion of what is noticeable in environmental perception that raises many controversies in the landscape literature. Some authors argue for instance that it is not what we perceive but how we feel about what we perceive that is central in our understanding of human behaviour and what it means to be human. Such a humanistic perspective examines human–environment relationships in terms of embodied ideas. It admits that what we see is greatly influenced by our attention, intention and interest. Further it is grounded in history, where events are always present, ever recurring and fused to terrain; where events are, for all intents and purposes, trans-temporal: renewed and confirmed each time that the words of stories, myths and legends are written or spoken (Ryden 1993).

Other scholars, however, continue to strive for objective interpretations of the landscape. They proclaim that noticeability is not a contentious issue since observable phenomenon should be recordable, measurable and mappable. This latter positivistic attitude is at the heart of many problematic transport policies. Yet different views about transportation networks exist. Over a hundred and thirty-five years ago now, John Ruskin wrote that some people can be compared to careful travellers who neither stumble on stones nor slip into sloughs but who have from the onset

of their journey gone in the wrong direction; others are travellers who, however stumbling and slipping, have their eyes fixed on the true way (Ruskin 1885).

There are many other dimensions in which issues about a change in environmental consciousness could be considered. For instance, in a shrinking world of accessible travel options, international surf tourism is certainly comparable to the production of conventional surfboards in terms of the levels of carbon emissions and overall ecological footprint impact. In the popular surfing magazines there have been a number of articles about carpooling and other alternative modes of transport for surfing, including bikes, the train and the less practical, hitchhiking. Let me thus provide a short ethnographic vignette to illustrate this theme whereby adventure and alternative transport come together.

The Ledge Over the Edge

The scene is the Gunnersbury roundabout in Chiswick, London, on the lay-by to the beginning of the M4 motorway heading West. At about half-nine in the morning, I set out to hitch a lift to Cornwall, my original ethnographic field site. The year was 2003 and it hadn't been long since my student days had ended. To be honest, as a teaching assistant looking for research funding, I was probably less well-off than your average undergraduate 'fresher' who had yet to spend all their student grant or loan on beer. As a result, I was hoping to save a few bob by thumbing a ride.

In not much time at all, less than about 15 minutes (or 170 cars), a vehicle pulled up. 'Where ya headed mate?' said a shaved headed man in his early 40s who's shoulders looked quite broad indeed and who must have been well over six feet tall. But he did not seem threatening in the least. In fact, he seemed to be a rather pleasant fellow, casually dressed in jeans and a t-shirt, with a fairly tidy car—not that an excess of precaution, much less comfort, are the most crucial issues when hitchhiking. And this is doubly so of course, when one is about to embark on a little pilot study for a project on adventure, risk-sport and extreme places. 'As far Southwest as you're going really', I replied. 'Perfect hop in boy, off to the West Country I be going' he followed, putting on a thick mock accent. I couldn't believe my luck and this was only the beginning. Within minutes of our conversation it transpired that my new travelling companion was working in West London as a firefighter, four days on and four off. He had recently moved into that line of work because of the extended weekend

time which it allowed, so he could indulge in his favourite hobby and obsession, surfing. Commenting further, he explained that his sudden and radical shift in career path was a necessary lifestyle change. In the past years his health had been deteriorating and he needed to find a way of supporting what he called an increasing 'surf addiction':

> As you can see, I'm a pretty heavy bloke […] it took me three years of part-time dabbling on the odd weekend of good surf just to stand up on a board […] that was really frustrating. But once I nailed it, there was no turning back […] so I spent some time thinking about work options that could give me a four-day weekend.

This was one of those days where I really should have bought a lottery ticket. And things got even better. After a bit over an hour of driving this chap, let's call him Martin, got a phone call from one of his friends who was already expecting him. '[…] what's that mate? Three foot and clean on the North coast […] I'm putting my foot on it, be there by three-ish, I've gotta stop at my sisters in Somerset but I'll keep it to one cup of tea, fifteen minutes tops'.

He hung up and explained that it was a little out of the way but he'd promised to bring his sister some DVDs and he wouldn't be able to stop at hers on the way back, did I mind? Oh, and did I mind if that was the only pit stop? 'No time for lunch I'm afraid" he continued "but you can always borrow a board once we're there if you fancy'. So yes, it was the kind of day that a field researcher embarking on a fairly new project dreams of.

To top it all off was the contextualising of the surf-addiction lifestyle that resulted from the end of our three hour drinking session, which followed two hours of surfing. When we said our farewells, he gifted some precious ethnographic snippets: '[…] guess it's been a pretty crazy day huh? Driving all morning at an average speed of over 100 miles an hour, to then hit the cold sea for a while, and the warm beer for a while longer'. Such sensorial overdrive and distortion is of course a significant justification for risk behaviour put forward by many practitioners of adventurous activities. Moreover, it is frequently this distorted modality of experience that is excessively sought by those participants who engage in extreme or radical practices during moments where they have further altered their states of mind through drug or alcohol usage.

In an elegant and rather rehearsed way, Martin summarised this 'work hard, play harder' ethos by saying: 'but hey, contrary to popular belief, I don't live on the edge, I live on the ledge over the edge'. Pleased with himself, he chose to elaborate even further, more to his mates than me at this point. If it wasn't obvious by then his final boasting provided a conclusive statement about a lifestyle motto that transpired not to be about a type of romantic 'hippy' dream of escaping the pressures of modern living. Instead, it was about something quite different—leisurely excess: 'ya man, we're talking the full combination of sex, drugs'n surf the roll, baby! The ledge way over the edge'.

Phenomenological Stochasticity

Carl Sauer's (1925) work on the morphology of landscapes was one of the founding approaches to an experiential understanding of space. It was conceptual in its ability to capture structural units as well as methodological in its formulation of a temporal framework which embraced the human impact on landscape change and evolution: 'As method, morphology was "synthesis": the identification of changing processes responsible for the creation of different "forms"' (Kenzer 1985: 258). Sauer's focus on cultural landscapes is as influential on anthropology as it is grounded within it, even though he is generally regarded as one of the gurus of historical and cultural geography. As Tilley (1994) and Ingold (2000) have demonstrated, however, spatial phenomenology is inherently *trans* as well as *inter*-disciplinary.

Overall, such a perspective echoes how space embodies humanity. In this sense, landscapes are analogous to the interior of our mind and bodyscapes in that they reveal the ends which have directed human energy. The means to the ends are either rational or irrational but the ends themselves are neither. Instead, they rest on a different plane: 'the realm of the will and of the search for meaning' (Tuan 1971: 183). For the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, our human 'being in the world' equates to a bodily being. Subjectivity is a bodily experience. Our behaviour does not mirror the willingness of the mind in which the body mechanically executes the mind's commands. Instead, consciousness is 'a being-towards-the-thing through the intermediary of the body' (1962: 137).

Mobility is therefore not the transporting of the body to a point in space where we have created an a priori representation. Rather, the

meaning of mobility is in the action of movement itself not given to the action by an external agent. In sum, bodily subjectivity implies that meaning does not invariably originate from explicit verbal formulations or from the conscious mind. Meaning should not be reduced to these mediums since it may exist in the doing of said action or in the manifested accomplishment of that action (Jackson 1996).

Phenomenology's anthropocentric basis leads to the potential of understanding humans and landscape as a single system. Human relationships with space are understood not only as cognitive relationships but as something that permeates our whole being. Similarly, humanity permeates space. The human–environment system is therefore flexible and in flux. It is composed of a multitude of worldviews which are unified into a synergism or *Gestalt* via common experiences, intentions and reactions. This system is also understood through exceptionally selective cultural filters of values (Relph 1970).

In considering the rupturing process of journeying through various transient spaces, additional experiential accounts of 'road-scape' travel emerge from the work of certain phenomenologically influenced authors. Christopher Salter (1979) and Richard Quinney (1986) have provided such descriptions. The former has suggested that four catalysts, each having its own environmental, psychological and spatial consequences, set in motion our infatuation with the road. He labels these: (i) the road as education; (ii) the road as flight; (iii) the road as a source of environmental options; (iv) the road as a source of new self-images. In more detail, Salter's typology denotes:

i. A theme about movement which stands as heuristic and pedagogic sources. Numerous things change as the traveller moves from place to place. And since different landscapes are peopled with different cultural groups, he or she is exposed to a vast extent of new experiences and demands which intensifies social as well as environmental learning. Dealing with this flood of environmental and cultural uncertainty is a lesson provided by few other mediums of education.
ii. In perception studies, the discourse on sense of place frequently overlooks the dynamic aspects of such senses. The sensations giving substance to locales and landscapes are in perpetual flux however. New favourite places can be discovered or old ones abandoned as long as movement remains possible. We often consider the options of movement and relocation to free ourselves from the past. Indeed,

feelings and place are intimately linked and in many cases the act of fleeing somewhere is driven by intense emotion or the desire to start life afresh. Consequently, when we 'hit the road' we are perhaps perceptually impaired given the significant push forces from the hearth. Because of our vulnerability, negative or dangerous images and situations might be ignored but the distortion need not be negative. Periods of mobility can also engender a heightened sense of environmental or cultural awareness.

iii. Environmental preferences have an intriguing role in stimulating movement. People often discuss decisions to change residence in terms of the socio-cultural environment. This is equally true for travel plans. The traveller's anticipation of what to expect derives from numerous sources such as popular travel advertisements, hearsay, novels, films and so forth. Such discussions and information thus heighten our awareness of our own preferences. They blend together with our actual experiences to modify the preconceptions of our environmental information. Based on this information, we create patterns of familiar types of preferred places and panoramas which help guide our movement.

iv. Soul searching whilst travelling is a common motif in road narratives. In this sense, the destination is never quite as important as the process of getting there—a process that bathes in the freedom from commitment and responsibility. Mobility thus opens to the esoteric. Movement is the means; the development of a kaleidoscopic self-image is the pursuit and a more satisfying self is the destination.

As a modern mediator of accelerated movement, the automobile holds a primary place amongst the artefacts that have significantly transformed society in the twentieth/twenty-first centuries (Zuckermann 1991; Miller 2001; Laviolette and Sirotina 2015). So much so that it has become a truism to scrutinise the psychosocial processes which lie at the heart of explaining why the car is 'one of the most significant objects of the age in which we live' (Marsh and Collett 1986: 4). Arguably perhaps, some authors have even suggested that car-oriented transport has predominantly altered our perception of place and replaced it with a rootless or placeless space—Marc Augé's (1995) archetypal non-place. The car is now the instrument through which 'Westerners' express most of the social

bonds linking them to their institutions and to each other (Bogart 1977; Sachs 1984; Widmer 1990). Clear boundaries and centres of exurban-suburban landscapes have consequently disappeared. The claim would thus be about auto-mobility contributing to the dehumanisation of the landscape and to the de-authentication of sensorial experience.

More recently, however, Tim Dant has chronicled a shift in attitudes. He indicates that for the first time in over half a century, at least in the UK, cars are not at the heart of 'broken-Britain'. Having consistently worked on vehicles and maintenance, he reveals evidence for a drop since 2007 in the numbers of both people passing their driver's test and car registration (Dant 2014). Despite not addressing hitchhikers explicitly as a significant category of passengers (which makes sense in the noughties), his account of the typical dichotomy between driver and driven is especially pertinent here.

Wild Vertigo and Other 4 × 4 Metaphors

Hitchers for their part are not typical automobile travellers. Despite using this medium to get around, their journeys are frequently interrupted and shrouded in various moments of exhilaration and vertigo. And, by their very presence outdoors along road networks, they are re-humanising the landscape. The effort involved in finding suitable stopping places, speedy routes and adequate shelter means they are able to physically and emotionally engage with places which many people only glimpse at. Indeed, if nothing else, a hitching endeavour means that one is removed from what most people experience during straightforward car trips. Instead, one is in a position to fully absorb certain elements of the roadscape environment. In so doing, one also learns how to adapt to new and unpredictable circumstances. Hitchhikers thus cause ruptures within the linearity of most vehicle journeys—symbolic of those fragmentations necessary in subverting certain aspects of modern petrol-fuelled transport.

In terms of environmental perception, it might be interesting to propose that the gaze of hitchhikers seeks the horizon in the anticipation of going somewhere. This generates a form of travel sequencing, whereby hitchhikers experience the world in destination stages: progressive blocks of superseding momentary events that combine to create a unique unit of voyage remembrance. Hitchers often glance at the horizon of the oncoming road to evaluate the number of cars approaching and

hence the likelihood of getting a lift. I have found in so doing that the hitcher risks being overlooked by motorists if their attention falters too far away from the motorists themselves.

Once picked up, the experience of shifting from the roadside to the car's inside reveals a unique angle on how the hitcher sees and feels the world. Suddenly, they are less focused on the horizon, the world out there. Instead, sight and sound, smell and tact, are thrust into the confined space of someone else's vehicle, in close quarters with another's presence. The solitude is broken and the continued benefit of a free ride depends on quickly grasping and respecting the driver's rules. The hitcher's image of solitude weakens as the image of the street or motorway, with its oases of rest and lifts, strengthen. So to paraphrase the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, the symbol of happiness moves away from the sound of a kettle boiling at home to become the precious hum of an engine on the open road (Tuan 1971).

Hitchers also differ from the average motorist because they might ride in several types of vehicles during their journey and their conditions as passengers will equally vary. This guarantees them an exposure to different outlooks during the voyage as well as to various socio-cultural settings. At certain times, they will be sitting eight feet off the ground in the front of a lorry. At others, they will be sat in the cargo section of a pick-up truck, the leather seat of a Mercedes convertible, or the floor of a Volkswagen campervan. Additionally, each situation is an exposure to different class, gender and ethnic issues (Plumb 2014). As the cliché goes 'beggars can't be choosers' and so the successful hitcher learns to be accepting of others. This reliance on charity reveals that the hitching process opens its participants to new levels of tolerance and humility.

Undeniably, the roadscape is embedded with the hitcher's performance. In this sense, hitchhikers are not separate from their surroundings. The landscape makes the participant into a part of itself and the landscape's components appear to hitchers as biographical self-reflections (Meskell 2005). As part of the environment, the hitchhiker leaves desirable or undesirable traces that will correspondingly be encouraged or discouraged by passing motorists. It is therefore important for those who study landscape to get an impression of the labour embodied within the roadscape since the notion of 'congealed labour', traditionally applied to artefacts, equally uncovers the rich human investment of creative mobility in the land. This is a reminder that hitchhiking is a political act,

sometimes on a micro scale, sometimes with subtle, but farther-reaching consequences.

Here's a brief example connected to The Stone Roses, a Britpop band out of the 'Madchester' music scene from the 1980s and 1990s. The painting on the cover of their eponymous debut album from 1989 is titled 'Bye Bye Badman', which is also the name of a song on this recording. The lyrics are clearly an expression of the anger felt by political protesters when faced with oppression. Videos, news reports and meeting people who had been involved with the May 1968 riots in France had served as the catalyst not only for this song, but for shaping the particular style of their music, as well as producing a set of visual 'branding' associations that included lemons in their posters, t-shirts and set designs for live concerts. This is fine as a tangent for music buffs, but so what? Well, an online blog posting has explained the reasoning behind this visual symbolism. The guitarist of The Stone Roses, John Squire, the artist who has designed many of the band's visual promotions material, was the one who painted the cover of their first full studio record in a style *à la* Jackson Pollock. We can see the French tri-colours on the top left corner, with three slices of lemon superimposed on the paint. In an interview many years later, he explained the political significance behind the work as such:

> Ian [Brown, the band's lead signer] had met this French man when he was hitching around Europe. This bloke had been in the riots, and he told Ian how lemons had been used as an antidote to tear gas. (Squire 2001)[5]

* * *

On the road, there is no middle ground, or that's how it seems. You either walk or you take. Yet one could say that actually the entire journey is middle ground, balanced on a fine line. The freedom of this medium essentially means that hitchers take charge of their own destiny. Hence, it is not a randomly determined task. Implicit as well as explicit rules exist and the onus of responsibility for one's destination and safety lie largely with oneself. Because of this, we often witness that hitchers keep

[5] See Radio X 'This is why The Stone Roses used a lemon as a logo' (5 May 2019). https://www.radiox.co.uk.

detailed travel logs in the form of journals, books, poems or songs. Either through contributing to online resources or by scribbling messages on lay-by barriers for others, they record the best places to get rides from; the routes they take; the number of lifts and time it takes to get around; and of course, they leave messages of hope and despair—funny, sad or cryptic. Indeed, hitching is an excellent example of a type of activity where the pen remains firmly in the hands of the participant. And it is to this theme of 'creative participation' and intervention that Chapter 5 returns to in a sinuous way.

Auto-stop is an experiment in vulnerability, establishing new connections and disruptions across the public sphere. Moreover, it is not exempt from precarious moments of solitude since it involves a public exploration of both inwardness and awkwardness. Camus' rebel, Baudelaire's *flâneur*, de Beauvoir's mnemonic life stories—all three figures are seekers, slowing down in some places, going faster in others—without ever being quite satisfied with what they find. This is an incessant hunt, revealing an anxiety and despair that some restless people admit to being prone to with such words as: 'not feeling good with the world one lives in – in search of something else that does not exist at the moment' (Martínez 2015: 431). Understanding the movement of people who resist normative and regulated forms of travel is especially pertinent in an age when Europe is experiencing a renewed growth in both xenophobia and populist politics, as well as concerns over mass extinction, melting icecaps, the overuse of plastics, the cost of nappies.[6]

Conceptually and comparatively, we can extend this beyond Europe for a moment if we ever aim to truly highlight some of the key landscape depictions that are implicated in such a vernacular and creative setting for transport. Historically associated with labour emigration and exile, there are many literary examples that demonstrate how the erratic character of hitchhiking journeys acts as a form of resistance to modernity and poverty.[7] Increasingly the case within the framework of global markets, hitchhiking often factors as an exchange of a commodity that is non-transactional.

[6] Name it what you will, austerity, economic crash, cultures of fears—the Anthropocene, Capitalocene, *Chthulucene*—they're here to stay. Like a bee in a bonnet or a prickly pear, it seems impossible but to talk of an uncertain future (Haraway 2016). This has indeed been demonstrated recently through the global Covid-19 pandemic.

[7] See for instance John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939).

I shall explore in Chapters 6 and 7, through my own 'intrusion' into the discipline of social anthropology, how I have traced back a narrative that gives me an identity as an interdisciplinary anthropologist. The European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) 12th biennial conference in Paris in 2012 was when Tallinn University's Anthropology Department won the bid to host the following biennial conference in 2014. For me, it was a personal anniversary: ten years since first attending this organisation's event (in 2002 at the University of Copenhagen). Nanterre marked a decade of unfaltering 'pilgrimages' to this anthropology conference, even when I was experiencing the tyranny of distance in New Zealand from 2007 to 2010. My point is that the *flâneur* type hitchhiker features a mixture of traits from other motilities characters, especially the tourist, nomad and the pilgrim. As such, they certainly illustrate archetypal ways of being a hybrid persona in the typology of mobility (Salazar and Coates 2017). They are captivating metaphors of the embodied imagination, in part because of their links to both the literary and the experiential activity of sensing the world first-hand as it were (Fig. 4.2).

In terms of transport history then, perhaps 2017 will eventually transpire to be the year hitchhiking made its grand scale début on the European art and design stage. During that year there were two artistic exhibitions, each comprising 15 artists—one held in Warsaw in May, the second at ZK/U in Berlin 10 days later. The year also witnessed a day-long practical design workshop in Sydhavnen as part of Copenhagen's City Link Festival in September to build three experimental hitching 'shelters' (see Figs. 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5). The following chapter explores the first two of these events in more detail.

Fig. 4.2 HH Streetfood restaurant, Olso, January 2019, PL

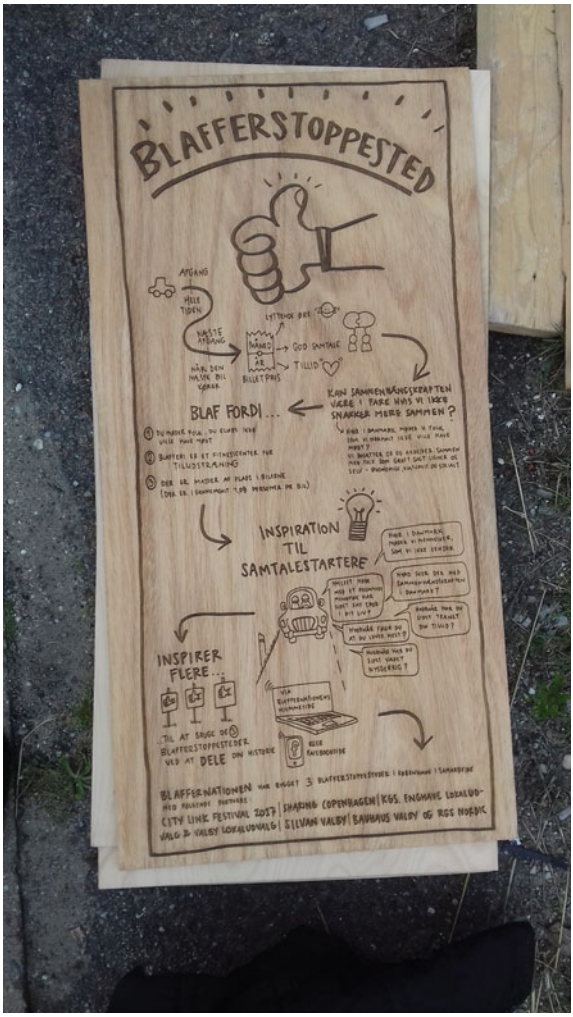

Fig. 4.3 Copenhagen, *Blafferstoppested* project sign for City Link Festival, 2018, PL

Fig. 4.4 *Blaffernationen* waiting spots, thumb shelter, City Link Festival, 2018, PL

Fig. 4.5 *Blaffernationen* waiting spots, statue, City Link Festival, 2018, PL

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CHAPTER 5

Guides to the Uncanny-Scapes

In September 2018, I was scheduled to give a seminar talk on my hitchhiking research in Aberdeen. I took the opportunity to stay with a friend, the one with whom my hitching adventures started in Germany during the early 1990s. He was temporarily renting a house in Lanarkshire—a town called Carluke no less—on the outskirts of Glasgow, but a third of the way to Edinburgh. Greeting me at the door with the usual banter between friends who haven't seen each other for a while, he glanced sideways as I walked in and said aloud so that his partner could hear his joke 'Oouu, that's quite a large bag… staying long are you?'

After settling into a weekday evening's catching up, with a good yarn of drinks and domesticities (the local pub didn't seem to be an option) he enquired about my current work. After a few awkward bits of this and that, he eventually asked if I was aware of the story *Under the Skin*. I had vague memories of someone mentioning the film, but admitted ignorance in never actually chasing up the reference. He reached over to a bookshelf and threw a copy at me, saying something to the effect of 'well you'd probably better look at this on the train then, if you don't want to look like an idiot during your presentation'.

Without wanting to give away too many spoilers for the plot to this surrealistic novel/film, we can certainly say that such a narrative fits into a genre of dark and eerie Scottish fiction. The actual act of hitchhiking, it should be stressed, features much more prevalently in the book than within the onscreen adaptation. This might be a sign of the practice's

P. Laviolette, *Hitchhiking*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-48248-0_5

continued decline in Britain, but probably also results from the whole genre of hitching horror movies.[1] If it were solely due to the decline of hitching, it would then be difficult to explain why only the year before, in another Scottish-based story, four-troubled youth hitch their way into the whisky trade (*The Angel's Share*, Loach 2012). Incidentally, yet staying within the uncanny realm of the strangely familiar and familiarly strange, actor Paul Brannigan[2] who plays the lead character Robbie in Ken Loach's film, also appears briefly in *Under the Skin*.

Got my phone on vibrate
All I do is wait
My night drive loneliness
Comes again and again
'Night Drive'[3]

During an interview, Shirley Manson, the lead singer of the band Garbage, recalled that the song 'Night Drive' was inspired by a fan letter sent to her from someone living in the Russian city Nizhny Novgorod.[4] It is a tune that could easily have been on the soundtrack for the film adaption of Faber's novel, if not for Loach's more upbeat redemption story of 'rags to riches'.

> Isserley always drove straight past a hitch-hiker when she first saw him, to give herself time to size him up […] You'd think a lone hitcher on a country road would stand out a mile, like a distant monument or a grain silo; […] (Michael Faber 2000: 1)[5]

[1] *The HitchHiker* (1953); *The Hitcher* (1986); *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974); *The Hitch Hiker* (2004); *Wolf Creek* (2005).

[2] Best recognised for his roles as Gareth O'Connor in the soap opera *River City*.

[3] From *Strange Little Birds* (2016). Label Stunvolume; produced by Garbage, Billy Bush, Steve Marker.

[4] Manson describes the song's origins as: 'The letter was a beautifully written description of a drive through her city. She was attributing all the moments of sadness and pain in her life to different landmarks. We'd be looking at a bridge and she would tell the story of the role the bridge played in her life. It really inspired this idea of getting into your car and driving mindlessly and ruminating on whatever it was driving you to despair'. Manson Interview *Entertainment Weekly*. https://www.songfacts.com/facts/garbage/night-drive.

[5] These lines open a novel adapted over a decade later into a Jonathan Glazer film (2013).

Death and Near-Death Adventure

The last lines to *Trainspotting's* Chapter 4, Story 4, 'Searching for the Inner Man' are most apt for my purposes below:

> Choose us. Choose life. Choose mortgage payments; choose washing machines; choose cars; […] Well, ah choose no tae choose life. […] As Harry Lauder sais, ah jist intend tae keep right on to the end of the road. (Irvine Welsh 1993: 76)

These words evoke in me a memory that helps explain some of the reason I have felt compelled to become a hitch-spotter. At the close of an early spring day in 1996, returning from the funeral of a friend in the Northernmost tip of Scotland, I exclaimed to my companions that I wished to finish the rest of the journey to Edinburgh alone. The young man to which I refer, in his early twenties, had been my flatmate for well over a year. He undoubtedly had a brilliant mind, both academically and emotionally. Having received five A grades in all his Higher subjects at school, he was also teaching himself guitar and was interested in a range of subjects from literature to biology. He had just finished his degree in conservation ecology and was set to continue a promising career as a marine biologist in the autumn by taking up further postgraduate study in Wales. Through an incredibly unfortunate accident that left his diving buddy injured, he drowned in a loch practicing his passion of exploring underwater environments. We were told by the police that his scuba cylinder had malfunctioned.

It goes without saying that the loss to his family was enormous. He was such a charismatic and proactive person that a huge circle of friends was also left grief stricken, many of whom travelled up to his hometown in convoys for the service. During the drive on the way back, after a couple of days of communal mourning and quite unsure about the directions of my own future, being in that limbo phase of having just finished a formal qualification, I was desperate for some reflection time. We were all emotionally distraught, but in a sense I was fortunate enough to be free of any pressing commitments. So, despite my hazy mind, I somehow reassured everyone in the car that I had enough gear, provisions and stamina to hitch back in my own time. It was a beautiful sunny April afternoon. They must have dropped me off somewhere either side of the Moray

Firth since I had a vague plan to walk away from my confusion in the Cairngorms.

Passing a couple of hours along a quiet roadside with no real desire to catch a ride or speak with anyone, I eventually kipped down in a little pine plantation. I recall spending most of the next morning doing the same thing in similarly glorious conditions. I kept singing aloud songs by Sinead O'Connor and The Cranberries. Why I had chosen to fixate on Irish performers at the time still eludes me. Yet somehow these quite melancholic musicians helped keep my spirits up. Needless to say, this is my hindsight justification for self-therapy—reflecting on a period of mourning.

After a lift or two in the afternoon, I reached Aviemore in time for a pint. Being early in the week, there weren't many people out. But there were some friendly locals sitting around the bar so eventually we got talking. We drank until closing. Given their queries about an itinerary, it must have been obvious that something wasn't quite right. Yet with the drink flowing and the bravado of anonymity, I kept my story close to my chest, explaining instead that I was doing some trekking and would check out the ski resort which had been part of the topic of an increasingly inebriated conversation.

I stumbled away from the town for a couple of miles in the direction of Loch Morlich and crashed out at a roadside lay-by. It was an early hung-over rising but the next day started out fine. The weather greyed over as I slowly walked along a hilly road where there were so few cars that lifts were not really an option. By the time I reached the base of the ski trails just before midday, it was overcast. The snow at this altitude (1800 ft) had long vanished but the ground was nevertheless boggy from meltwater and rain. It was hard to make out the conditions beyond a few hundred feet because mists and low-lying cloud had now crept in, concealing the hills and ravines. Determined, I started ascending on the Eastern side of the ski trails.

As I rose in elevation, the weather got decidedly worse and the drizzle turned to a downpour. A lack of proper waterproofs meant it was time for a break. Finding an overhanging rock with enough shelter to crawl under, I curled up and rested for a couple of hours. I was quite exhausted and pretty much out of food at this point. My drinking bottle was nearly drained and all that remained of my depleted rations was a few biscuits and a can of baked beans. Moreover, my kit bag hadn't been packed with the intention of doing any serious climbing or wilderness excursions.

In fact, it only consisted of some spare clothes, a very basic map and my deceased friend's rain-resistant sleeping bag. With its separate arms and hoodie, this bit of equipment resembled some form of army surplus hunting attire. It was a hybrid, functioning as both anorak, primitive drysuit and bivvy sack.

As Laurence Gonzalas (2003) explains in his popular account *Deep Survival*, this was a classic example of a potentially disastrous scenario. The type where people make split-second decisions that can result in perishing or not. The type that Jon Krakauer describes in his biographical account of the tragic story of Christopher McCandless, *Into the Wild* (1996), when the young man got caught out trekking in the Alaskan bush for sixteen weeks before starving to death. Doubtlessly, it was time for me to turn back. Or at least to stay put. Any rational person would have known that. Funnily enough, despite my troubled state, even I knew it. Somehow though, the agency of the landscape, the challenge of ascent and the ritualistic adventure of mourning, which was initially shared collectively, coalesced into an individualistically driven force to experience something life-affirming in the face of loss.

Instinctively, intuitively, and yes, incredibly naively, I believed in the 'promise' of an abatement of the weather. It was April after all. The days were decidedly longer and the temperature was relatively warm. The rain returned to a drizzle so I changed my sodden socks and, considering that it was approximately 4 p.m., decided it should be possible to easily return to the same rock outcrop for one more night of roughing it. One could say that I was seduced by the setting as well as the journey which now seemed to take on a life of its own. An impulse to reach the snow line, if nothing else, was overbearing. After that turning back would be an option.

Within a short time the drizzle turned to gentle flurries. Another forty-five minutes of slow ascent, being mindful not to get unnecessarily wet, allowed me to come within reach of a plateau. Just as the hill began to level I crossed the threshold of snow. Suddenly everything was still and quiet. In hindsight, it might prove wise to be more attuned and weary of clichés. Sighting some grouse walking on the soft white carpet kept me going instead of retreating back downhill. Some structures began poking out of the smooth ground, indicating the terminus of the chair lifts, power generators, perhaps also a toilet block. Misguidedly interpreting these as signs of safety, I pressed on. From the map I estimated being near the Ptarmigan summit (3600 ft).

I wandered round ever higher, initially with the destination of Cairn Gorm (4084 ft) in mind, a mere 484 ft further up. The adrenaline kicked in from realising it was getting late and would be dark fairly soon. Yet the visibility had improved and at that point things seemed good. Captivated by a spectacular view to the East of a deep crevice and neighbouring summits, the instant camera in my rucksack came to mind. After a few moments pause for contemplation, I turned in the opposite direction, enthralled in being able to make out the glow of a distant sunset through a haze of windswept flakes. It was behind a high rising white wall to the Southwest. Beyond this must rest the Cairn Gorm summit. I searched for a way around the powdery wall which was unclimbable except to an equipped and experienced mountaineer. To the East was a precipice so venturing West was the only option.

This is when things began to go very wrong indeed. Without sensing it coming, the wind began to gust up and a blizzard hit fast. I tried to retreat to the photo spot but was beginning to lose my bearings. Afraid of going too quickly, moving too far and plummeting down the Eastern ridge crevices triggered a most horrible sensation of entrapment. Going slowly uphill in the Northwestern direction would allow me to steer clear of any danger. As I crept along with trepidation, I experienced what was undoubtedly the most frightening experience of my life up to that point and perhaps still. The storm's intensity left me completely snowblind. Panicked, I froze and waited for some moments. After a few minutes the whiteout cleared enough so that I could at least see my hands at arm's length. Still awfully anxious, I got down on all fours and started crawling. The snow was getting deeper so I risked moving down slope. To top it off, it was clear that the light levels were dropping quickly as the obscured Western glow disappeared below the crest of the hills.

Somehow I managed to return the spot where I'd taken a photograph earlier. Famished and frightened, I cracked open the can of baked beans on a rock. Eating them frantically with my last biscuits, I then panicked again. The weather conditions were still severe and it was too dark to risk moving very far. Running for it could work or could result in falling off an edge. So I scampered cautiously down a little gully and found two big stones emerging from the snow. In haste, I dug out a shelter and prepared to camp down.

Foolishly, but it was enough to keep me optimistic, I felt secure that the sleeping bivvy thing, which I had previously borrowed on a number

of occasions from my mate, would do the trick. Layering up and snuggling in, with not much comfort, I began to realise that it was warm enough in this makeshift burrow. It wasn't so much of an igloo-bunker, since it was a pure survival cave, but rather an excavated trench wedged between some large boulders. Struggling initially with whether staying awake was the best option, I began to relax after some time, realising that the night was clearing. Hopeful in not getting completely buried alive, I took heart in still being fairly warm and so allowed myself to drift off. I must have slept for several hours because I awoke just after dawn, relieved to notice a cloudless sky. The morning conditions were clear and crisp, with the threat of severe weather remaining abated. Momentarily reliving the panic of hours gone by, which was joined by taking stock of my increasing fatigue, hastened me to action. Mindful of getting caught in another storm, I quickly found my bearings and decided to both get down below the snow line whilst equally heading towards any sign of help.

At times I ran, desperate to physically warm up and to reach safer ground. My canvas trainers and faded jeans were frozen stiff around relatively dry long-underwear and woolly socks. As I moved on towards the Southwest, I was both pleased and shocked to see that it was the right decision to remain in place during the evening. Faced with steep drops hundreds of feet down, I again had to proceed with caution, not wanting to slip through a small avalanche on a ridge, or twist an ankle on some concealed stones. Luckily the weather was holding. Nothing but blue sky meant I was warming up quickly and seemed to be covering some ground. The main focus was on roughly trying to keep in the same direction, confident at that point of being able to rejoin the main road which runs from Aviemore.

Of course, the lower I descended and the more I sweated from the anticipation and progress, the warmer everything got. My frozen trousers began to soak my leggings and socks. I took a break, had a drink of melting snow and rummaged round for the only dry things left to wear, fresh socks and a large tweed blanket. Removing the damp layers against my skin, I wrapped my lower half and carried on, revived from the water, warmth and surreal humour of what all this must look like from the perspective of anyone who might happen to be watching from a distance. I could only laugh at that point. It was slowly sinking in that I was more than fortunate to still be alive. By then I was low enough that some larger stones were exposed. Ice and snow became softer, slippery. Tiny streams

formed through some gravely bits. Heather tops and vegetation began poking out. With some consternation of breaking a leg only a few miles from the road, I increased the pace, hopping and slaloming down over troughs and scree.

Eventually I did indeed get off the range via the Southwest, passing Ben Macdhui (4296 ft) and Braeriach (4252 ft) and rejoining the A9. It was around midday by then. So with no time to waste, it was back to hitching. Being realistic though, the tramp-like sight I must have been, with drenched trainers, wrapped in a blanket with a sodden jumper and rucksack, in addition to there not being many passing cars, meant that the decision to keep going was an obvious one. If I was correct in reading the map, the next town, Kingussie, was only a couple of miles down the road. After everything I'd been through, I would certainly walk to the next town if necessary. It wasn't. Within fifteen minutes or so, after stopping and trying to look respectable for the few vehicles that did pass, a car pulled over whilst I was walking with my back turned—my thumb in the air and my hope of getting a lift exhausted.

My 'rescuer' was not only an agreeable and tolerant person, he was a real character as well. He came out with some dreadfully funny stuff like: 'What with that kilt thingy, I thought you were a bird (girl), that's why I stopped to pick you up'. He was a great storyteller and within minutes of conversation my own concerns and sorrows were at least temporarily absolved. It turned out that he was also a journalist and an avid abseiler, who was out on a scouting tour of the area to find suitable shot locations. I had never abseiled myself but was certainly drawn further out of my own chasm and seduced into this unfolding narrative which was being led by a spontaneous encounter. There seemed to be a lot more than charm to this knowledgeable chap, with his many intricately woven intentions for adventure.

The journey Southwards was rather stochastic and took quite a while. It was intermittently broken up by some site visits. My guide's photo-snaps, he explained, would hopefully serve as some preliminary material for the promotion and production of a short film he was researching. The locations were therefore paramount. They mattered to him not only because they would be aesthetically interesting 'backdrops' but also because he wanted them to tell something of the region's historic significance. Indeed, the places on his itinerary were genuine heritage locations, some formally, others in a more taken for granted way.

Our itinerary included three notable stops. Firstly, the town of Pitlochry as an emergency break for some quick visits to the post office, newsagents, loo and general road trip provisions. Some coffee and a warm bakery snack were certainly on my breakfast agenda. Secondly, a bridge above the river Tay, somewhere near Aberfeldy. The water landing was not very deep at all, only a few feet. So starting with the simple premise that hitting shallow water at an angle whilst travelling at speed (especially with wires and some bulky equipment) could get nasty, we pondered over a few solutions for sometime. He had in mind various rope angles, support 'gylines' and similar swing harness ideas to absorb the rapidity of downward descent. Our third main stop, a luxurious hotel, refurbished from an ancient castle settlement within the general vicinity of Perth. After we ordered some takeaway tea, my journalist companion inquired as to who he should contact about the possibility of using the roof and one of the high reinforced walls as an abseil platform.

We travelled, talked, ate and scouted together from early to late afternoon. During these many hours we stopped at several other significant places with features not dissimilar to the ones just described. Since at this stage I can provide but the sketchiest of recollections of our route, the clues to uncovering our further conversations, not to mention my tour guide's complex scheme, are lost, save in the material gist of what might be left behind. For instance, whatever might have resulted from his scoping exercise, or some of the basic details of the sites that spring back to memory—two more bridge structures—a freestanding archway of some height above a rail line (or small b-road) and a short pathway cutting across a deep narrow gorge. From this humid, sheltered spot and the misty spray that rose from below, we could decipher a river section emerging from the hills. The water was running fast and must have been icy cold. It was time to part at around 5 or 6 p.m. as he dropped me off at a junction just South of Stirling. I caught one more short lift to the outskirts of Edinburgh, where this excursion ended after a short hop on a local bus to the city centre and a walk home.

One could of course argue that this was the more emancipatory dimension of the uncanny in hitchhiking. But the relationship with the uncanny that this activity has is also manifest in a much more sinister way, through the genre of horror hitching films and other more or less fictionalised narrative accounts. Frank Furedi's critique of the neoliberal development of our current '*Culture of Fear*' (1997) certainly applies to the ways in

which the media and fantasisers have portrayed hitchhiking for a couple of generations now. It is to such issues that we now turn.

A Short Hermeneutics of Hitchhiking in Literature & Pop Culture

Inspired by and inspiring entire movements in literature and the arts, hitchhiking/*auto-stopping*/*trampen* forms a complex hybrid genre of transport. Given the ongoing associations of hitchhiking with danger, the idea of the uncanny is inherent to any in-depth study of the activity. As Freud defines it just over a century ago:

> The uncanny as it is depicted in literature, in stories and imaginative productions, merits in truth a separate discussion. […] in the first place a great deal that is not uncanny in fiction would be so if it happened in real life; and in the second place that there are many more means of creating uncanny effects in fiction than there are in real life. (Freud 1919: 18)

By hermeneutically uncovering the significance of this action as it occurs in travel writing and the 'mobilities turn' literature, the more literary studies elements in this chapter are meant to complement the years of auto-ethnographic findings illustrated throughout the work. Perhaps mirroring the format of auto-stop travel itself, as often brief and occasionally erratic trips, the genre of storytelling that quintessentially befits hitchhiking journeys seems to be the short story. So let's first consider Milan Kundera's essay 'The Hitchhiking Game' for instance, one of seven short pieces in the anthology *Laughable Loves* (1974). Here we find two protagonists, a couple, who indulge in a tongue-in-cheek game of pretence. Yet they soon discover that role play can, in reality, reveal more about themselves—their hidden selves—and their partner, than it purports to conceal. What begins as a whimsical indulgence into an innocent bit of 'sport' soon spirals out of hand to threaten the dynamics of the relationship, increasingly hampering their ability to grasp the distinction between fact and fantasy.

What happens in this game is that the girl gets out of the car at a petrol station after the couple have agreed to pretend that they no longer know each other. Her boyfriend proceeds to get some snacks and fill up. She walks over to the exit ramp and stands by the curb with her thumb

out. After getting back in the car he sees her so drives off and stops to offer her a lift. They role play to the point of uncomfortableness. They've trapped each other into this game that neither is prepared to spoil, to the point where the relationship becomes fundamentally challenged and nearly breaks.

Now Snyman and Crous (2014) contend that this story benefits from being read in terms of game theory. Amongst others, they draw on Roger Caillois's work dealing with taxonomies of play, which differentiates between competition, chance, mimicry and vertigo with respect to the attitudes people develop from playful instincts. This initial theory had been expanded by Wolfgang Iser (1993), who relates these four categories to the analysis of texts, introducing the concept of textual games. Employing mimicry—the chance binary seems particularly apt for this story as it highlights the unlimited potential for sustained imagination, as opposed to the limitations imposed by the finite nature of the text and the characters' eventual disillusionment. In this tale of erotic love, the laughter hinted at in the title of the anthology is revealed to be rather wry, personal identity is shown to be ambiguous and love often appears to be tainted by uncertainty. What is possibly missing from such a text-based reading of hitchhiking, however, is the element of vertigo present in Caillois' more ritualistic theories (1964).[6]

Consider also the description of Michael Fish, the kleptomaniac 'finger-smith' (master pickpocket) passenger in Roald Dalh's (1977) short essay 'The Hitch-Hiker'. This anarchistic protagonist is a deviant character whose very features (including his long slender fingers) stand out like a sore thumb. An unorthodox traveller, this trickster actually cultivates a *modus operandi* for deceiving people, but not always or evenly with

[6] Rituals as they relate to the experiential in terms of adventurous recreation. By comparing the corporeal camouflage necessary in the 'concealed' act of urban exploration with the 'public' waiting game of luring a car as a hitchhiker, or the vulnerability of 'hidden' moments when confined as an unwitting passenger, I question what happens when those people who are perhaps more prone to taking risks than others get hooked, or are even ensnared, into a lifestyle which propagates danger for its own sake. Of course, there are important ethical and methodological considerations here. Yet maybe it is less obvious and thus just as significant to untangle such issues/themes as social contagion, the potential for behavioural mimicry or even the reaches of undesirable cultural infection. As a tangible material artefact with affective sensoria, the potential for unpredictable synaesthetic crossings and many emotional idiosyncrasies, the human form is a critical instrument for such outcomes as well as other such trapping techniques (see Huizinga 1970).

everyone though. Certainly he is not especially deceptive to his new driving companion, who has stopped to assist.[7]

Here there's a mutual element of trust and respect through the shared experience of travel and in getting caught by the police whilst attempting to push the speed limit of the driver's new sports car. Yet the hitcher's act of thumbing a ride to navigate North around London should be interpreted as someone putting up two fingers to society. It is a deliberate act of perverting certain norms, the status quo, the selfishness of the social world which results in most people not being prepared to stop. Such roadside gestures thus allow the hitcher to experience first-hand, sometimes even quite angrily, an existential immersion into fragmented loneliness. So such tricksters, such subversive figures, who perhaps are so by default of their character, push for an extreme form of potential isolation and an intense dependency on being rescued by the goodwill expressed by only a limited number of other people who have had similar deviant or marginal experiences.

Uncertainty, uncanniness if you will, is a key motif in hitchhiking. Now in Tom Robbin's novel *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* the traumas of uncertainty are pushed beyond psychological explanations. They reach out to encompass physical/physiological distortion. In this story, the main protagonist Sissy Hankshaw has so many problems that she has two therapists. One of them, Dr. Robbins, defends her desire to hitchhike as a reaction against the restraints of modern normativity.

> […] Growing up is a trap. When they you to shut up they mean stop talking. When they tell you to grow up, they mean stop growing. Reach a nice level plateau and settle there, predictable and unchanging, no longer a threat. (1976: 275)

This growing up meme reveals that it is not just the body that can trap and be trapped, but rather various of its phases (and techniques) such as age, size, form and its deviants which all end up feeding a body-trap

[7] The story, it should be noted, is nearly identical to Alfred Hitchcock's episode 'Hitchhike' in the '60s. Moreover, it was itself turned into a short film with a more sinister ending in the 13th episode of *Tales of the Unexpected* (2000). This is introduced by Dahl with a seemingly personal anecdote of having his car stolen by two bushy bearded, long-haired men outside Oxford. The storyline is the same as the written version, with the exception of the final scene in which Mr. Fish-fingers sets off with the driver's (Paul Duveen) new BMW.

dialectic. Similar to Fred Keogh's descriptions (2011),[8] Sissy feels that through her body and her unusually large thumbs, she can catch drivers. In the film adaptation we hear her recite the following lines:

> With me, something different and deep, in bright focus and pointing the way, arrived in the practice of hitchhiking. I am the spirit and the heart of hitchhiking, I am its cortex and its medulla, I am its foundation and its culmination, I am the jewel in its lotus. And when I am really moving, stopping car after car after car, moving so freely, so clearly, so delicately that even the sex maniacs and the cops can only blink and let me pass, then I embody the rhythms of the universe, I feel what it is like to be the universe, I am in a state of grace. (Sissy Hankshaw from Robbins 1976: 53)

Only moments after she's lured over a lift from the sky. The preceding scene in the film is a dreamlike sequence whereby she waives around the roadside with sexually suggestive gestures as well as a motioning of her arms and hands; they rise up towards the heavens, a plane passes overhead. Framed through the movement of her opposable digits, the pilot seems caught in a trance as the plane pivots around, indicating that it will come and land for her.

I'm reminded here of how the Estonian ethnologist Art Leete told a group of us at the SIEF 2015 congress in Zagreb that he's even managed to hitchhike a helicopter whilst wandering through the Siberian tundra. My own experience with areal hitchhiking is less spectacular. In winter 2016, on my way to Berlin from Tallinn on a flight at 6 am, I had to run to a hotel taxi rank to get a ride since the city buses hadn't yet started. A pilot was waiting there too, looking slightly irate. I noticed he was wearing an Adriana uniform so I joked to him 'if a taxi doesn't arrive soon, I might miss my flight, unless of course you're my pilot, then how could I be late'. He laughed too and replied that he'd booked a car last night, but it hadn't shown up. His route was to Munich, but added that all the scheduled departures were running fine and that there were no delays or long queues at the airport. We agreed to share whatever taxi arrived first. He went inside his hotel; I walked to the other street corner

[8] See also Chapter 3 and the Conclusion.

to flag something. Two minutes later, having had no joy on the street, we met again at the taxi rank. He said another driver was on his way.[9]

Tom Robbins' book and the subsequent film for *Even Cowgirls* constantly use sexual innuendo (as one can see from various cover designs of the book, the symbolism is overt, in one case featuring a naked woman riding a stork—an endangered species in the story which eventually provides the catalyst for the conclusion's dramatic climax). This relationship between the sexualised body and hitching has of course been intertwined since the earliest days of auto-stopping. A further pop-culture example is the narrative inspiration behind Roger Waters' 1984 record *The Pros and Cons of Hitch-Hiking*, where the main character of this concept album has various surreal fantasies of committing adultery with a young traveller he has picked up along the way.

Human bodies, in the cases of Keogh or Robbins, that is, distinct special bodies or ones demonstrating altered states of mind/perception, have the potential to host certain 'super powers'. This is also the case sometimes, in terms of body error. Here the human agent, caught in some accelerated moment of flow, heightens the possibility of danger and calamity… we cast our baited lines, our decoys, our nets, our hooked ambushes. But sometimes the result is that we only manage to catch ourselves. Tom Robbin's large thumb motif is found also in the Mighty Boosh's representation of a recurring character occasionally known as The Hitcher or the Cockney. This comic-psycho has a massive green thumb artificially created from a hornet sting (see below). And in the 1985 film *Pee-wee Herman's Big Adventure*, Paul Reubens takes out a prosthetic rubber thumb to try improving his chances of getting to Texas.[10]

Film director John Waters has recently written an interesting semi-fictional account of hitching across America from his home in Baltimore to San Francisco. The last third of *Carsick* (2014), consisting of 21 chapters, describes his real life, week-long adventure. He starts in the rain, stays in a range of roadside hotels and gets a lift with an indie rock band from Brooklyn who is on tour. During the ride they Tweet about the encounter with Waters, an announcement that goes viral on social media

[9] When we arrived, I offered to split the cost, but he insisted that his company was covering it. He was from Ljubljana. To my knowledge, this had been my first and only hitch with a pilot (excluding a notable ride-share).

[10] Other images of 'famous hitchers' include Marilyn Monroe, Madonna and Mr. Bean, but not because of their thumbs.

and eventually gets picked up by various other news outlets such as music magazines and his local newspaper. Perhaps the most unusual lift that Waters gets, also the result of his celebrity status, is from a young man who returns after a few days to pick him up again and drive him further towards the Californian coast, despite the ongoing distress that this seems to cause the driver's own mum.

The book is all the more remarkable, not just because of John Waters' level of fame, which means that he was often recognised whilst on the road. Rather, the book strikes many relevant chords within the genre of hitchhiking writings because the volume is structured in such a way that the first two sections are entirely fictional. Indeed, they were written before Waters even undertook the journey, although he does admit to having many years of experience as a hitchhiker to draw upon from his youth in the 1970s. Hence the first 13 chapters consist of what he calls the best-case scenarios for reaching San Francisco. The following section then deals with the most dystopian trip he can imagine. And the concluding third is a description of the actual journey that he managed to undertake in a week. This includes fairly banal tribulations of him having to rough it in shabby motorway motels, as well as a few bizarre occurrences once it transpired via social media that he'd been recognised as attempting this twenty-first-century Jules Verne feat.[11]

Hitchhiking with Larry David is similarly an autobiographical experiment in writing about chance encounters. After a breakup with his partner, the author Paul Dolman (2010) decides to spend the summer with his parents on the island of Martha's Vineyard, off the Eastern seaboard of the United States, just South of Cape Cod. In addition to using his pushbike, his favourite form of transportation is to hitchhike. The text is not about this type of travel as such, but Dolman does offer several observations about the significance of charity and trust in an age of 'workaholism' and mass consumption.

Returning to the more obviously 'short story' motif, I would also like to briefly examine:

[11] This adventure by John Waters possibly served to inspire actor Shia LaBeouf to hitch around the United States for a month with two mates. Tweeting his comments and coordinates for new fans to come and collect them. It became an art project and documentary using new media with support from the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art; MediaLive 2016; and The Finnish Institute in London (LaBeouf et al. 2016).

> *Panic* (1978, 17mins). Directed by James Dearden (who later directed *Fatal Attraction*) this dark, eerie short film was played in theatres before feature films in the late 1970s in the UK. In it, a young model gets a call late at night for some work. After a small tiff with her boyfriend because of this, she drives off into the wintry evening. Stopping at a red light near a pub she is accosted by two drunk geezers whilst she waits. Moments later she stops again during the storm and picks up an old women at a bus shelter. After getting suspicious, the driver pretends the car is having an issue and gets the old lady to get out to check the back tyre. She then drives off, leaving the woman on the common in the rain, realising a minute later that she still has one of her bags in the car. She rings her boyfriend who she's woken up and he suggests that she brings the bag to a nearby police station. Once she's there the phone rings. The boyfriend has called the station and says he will drive over to help comfort her. Upon opening the bag, the officer on duty discovers a large cleaver. The next scene is the boyfriend Paul, stopping for the lady who still has a handbag with her. His car pulls up to a traffic light, she gets out and the car never takes off again.

Another British short with an identical theme called *Left Turn* was produced in 2001 (14 mins, dir. Sean Ellis). Now in some reviews of these shorts, it is suggested that the old lady is hitchhiking, but this is not quite the case. In *Panic* she simply steps out a little from beneath the bus shelter to see the car as it passes. And when Paul arrives later, she's walking with her back turned to the car as it approaches. In *Left Turn*, the old woman does indeed indicate with an arm, but it's more of a distress signal with her right arm rather than a hitching gesture, which would occur with the left hand. The driver even acknowledges this by telling the police that she had been 'flagged down'. And in this case her boyfriend is not rung by telephone, but simply decides to follow a few minutes later in his own car and happens across the old woman, who in this version of the story is lying in the middle of the road.

In 1960, one can watch an episode of *The Twilight Zone*. The plot is that a pretty 27-year-old blond woman called Nan Adams drives cross-country from New York to Los Angeles. After a minor accident at the onset of her journey in Pennsylvania, she notices a hitchhiker who she does not assist. She becomes ever more frantic when the same man on the side of the road keeps reappearing, thumbing for a ride. No matter how quickly she drives, he is always up ahead. She describes him as:

> Just standing there. Not menacing really. If anything drab. A little mousey. Just a shabby silly looking scarecrow man. […] I don't why it is but I'm frightened. A fear just about as vague as its object. Maybe it isn't a fear, it's more a sense of disquiet. A feeling that things are a little wrong. It's vague because that's what that hitchhiker is, he's vague. I wonder why it is he's always there. I wonder why I can't shake him.

One interpretation is that she has suffered some mental/psychological trauma after the accident. Another, that this character is her guardian angel. Or the soul of a lost traveller that she should perhaps help because she's been lucky. Instead, she reads the situation the other way, that he's someone beckoning her to die. A third of the way through the episode, he gets close enough to the car to tap at the back window and ask 'heading West'? To which she replies in a panic-stricken denial. After running out of petrol in the middle of the night halfway across New Mexico, she meets a sailor returning to his ship in San Diego. Offering him a lift they discuss her theory concerning whether it would be possible for a fast hitchhiker to outrun a steady moving car.

The hitcher then appears a couple times more. Again, she's the only one who sees him. During the second sighting, she attempts to run him over but is stopped by her passenger who now fears for her sanity and his own safety. After considerable pleading the sailor nevertheless leaves her by the roadside. She continues to Tucson and rings home to find out that her mother has been hospitalised after a breakdown caused by the death of her daughter in a road accident.

People of a certain generation might easily recall a master of audio-visual symbolism that went by the nickname Hitch. In 1960 his famous TV series Alfred Hitchcock Presents dedicated, perhaps unsurprisingly, an entire episode to the dramatic psychological mind game of considering the insider/outsider dilemma. This he did under the auspices of a broadcast entitled 'Hitch Hike' written by the American author Ed Lacy [Leonard S. Zinberg]. It is an episode in which nobody dies. Hitchcock morosely introduced the programme as one in which Hollywood's guild of actors had just walked out on strike because he had the habit of turning-over his characters too quickly. Because, so to say, they were being killed off so fast they were not really gainfully employed and thus wanted longer working hours as Union members.

This screening of A. Hitchcock Presents (SE5 EP21) aired on 21 February 1960. It featured Anthony Hopkins. The plot is as such: Charles

Underhill, a prim conservative civic leader in his early 60s, goes on a road trip to collect his niece Anne who's just been released on bail from getting caught with a car thief. Upon stopping at a street-light, his horn gets stuck. A young man who was hitchhiking nearby, later calling himself Len, appear to provide mechanical assistance. He then asks if they are going in the direction of San Francisco and then pries Mr. Underhill for a lift. After passing some inmates he reveals that he's recently been released from a youth detention centre. Len is obsessed with the relations between insider and outsider. And his cell mate's fascination with knives.

His stories turn Mr. Underhill to becoming quite paranoid to the point of speeding through a town. He gets caught by a police officer who gives him a ticket. He explains that he was frightened by his knife-wielding passenger who then gets searched. Len provides his release papers so the officer leaves. Mr. Underhill continues to threaten Len by reporting him to the station when the young man produces the officer's infraction book. Len then tells him that he was incarcerated for pickpocketing when he was without work for weeks.

As mentioned above, this narrative closely mirrors Roald Dahl's short story in which another strange passenger ends up rewarding the kindness of the driver by assisting in circumventing the enforcement of the law because they have excessively contravened the permitted highway code speed limit. And yet the media and fictional representations in particular often associate hitchhiking with danger or fear, pathologising its participants as social outcasts.[12]

One of my personal favourites when it comes to pop-culture references, is that of 'the Hitcher' in the BBC series *The Mighty Boosh*. This unearthly character, created for the aptly named 1999 stage show 'Autoboosh', is the product of his performance creator Noel Fielding. The Hitcher later appeared in the 2001 radio series, in three episodes of the television series and the 2006 stage show. He is a green psychotic cockney, accompanied by his own song that features his evil accomplices the Piper Twins.

In episode eight of the first series of *The Mighty Boosh*, first aired on BBC Three on 6 July 2004, the Hitcher describes a version of his own genealogy. He does so when picked up by the lone driving zoo assistant

[12] Driverless vehicles are apparent in a number of episodes of the recent series 'Black Mirror' (e.g. Crocodile and Hang the DJ, both 2017). Hitchhiking features three times, in Nosedive (2016); Arkangel (2017); Smithereens (2019). I explore these in more depth in Laviolette 2020.

Howard Moon, who has just had an argument with his best mate Vince Noire whilst driving. Evicting Vince from the car in anger, he leaves him in the middle of nowhere and drives off alone. Intimidated by the eerie surroundings as night falls, Howard spots something by the roadside:

> Howard Moon: (performed by actor Julian Barratt) "What's that?… a hitchhiker. Ya right, I'm gonna stop for you in this dark wood. I don't think so".

In the next scene, Howard's stopped to pick up the hitcher. He looks over at the unflinching green witch-face next to him as his passenger stares straight ahead. He's clinching a large chest covered in Polo Mints which match a white mint over his left eye. He tries unsuccessfully to engage the surreal looking character in conversation with some standard questions:

> "so you going far?" No answer. "Do you live around here, do you?"

The Hitcher doesn't even blink. Quite uncomfortable at this point, he then adds:

> "Shall we have some music, y'know to ease the tension?… let's have the radio". Howard (HM) turns the radio on: [Jim Morrison's voice is heard] "If you give this man a ride, sweet memory will die. Killer on the road". [HM switches the radio off]… "too much music in the world, you know?"

The Hitcher slowly raises his arm over and rests it on his box, revealing a massively oversized green thumb. Howard can't help but notice and seems forced into asking:

> "Quite a thumb you've got on you, there. Bet there's a story behind that, isn't there"?

In his thick South London Cockney accent, the Hitcher (played by Noel Fielding) finally sparks into action and replies:

> "You wanna know about my thumb do ya boy? Intrigue you does it boy? My thumb? Let me tell you about it. I come from a long line of hitchhikers. All with bleedin' massive thumbs. You see the thumb is a tremendous boon to the hitchhiker, helps with work. You know what I mean? The only problem was, when I was a child, my thumb was tiny.

> Not just tiny like a single sugar puff. Disgusting. Even me own mother would reel back in horror. Like an anaconda. "Ohh what is it? Get it out of here! It's tiny! It's 'orrible! It's revolting! Take your tiny thumb, and get out of here and never darken my door again," she'd say. I had to leave the family unit, in search of a miracle. I wandered the streets, looking for the answer. And people told me of a magic shaman, part man part hornet. So I went looking for 'im. I went everywhere! I combed the universe, in search of the stripey insect shaman. Turns out he was in a local primary school, in the bin, reeling about with the apple cores, like they do. And I stood there, with my thumb out, and he stung it! And he stung it! And he grabbed onto it! It was like he was making love to it with his sting."

Howard Moon, still driving his zookeeper van during this increasingly agitated monologue shows more and more signs of discomfort. Meanwhile, the Hitcher, in full swing of recounting his 'coming of age' story, doesn't seem to notice, keeping his stern gaze on the road ahead of them:

> "In and out! In and out! More and more! Ohhh the pus! The pain! The black voodoo! The wet jigsaw puzzle! I didn't know what was happening! Ohhh for days I was in a trance! But when I came to, there it was! Like a fleshy maraca! A THUMB, of gigantic proportion. "A miracle!" I said, "A miracle! You're a true wizard! How can I ever repay ya?" and he said to me "Five hundred euros". "FIVE HUNDRED EUROS? You won't see penny one from me you slag!" And as I raised my thumb up, to smash his tiny skull in, I could see in his little insect face, I could see him thinking "OHHH, I created that monster! I created that thumb, and now it's killing me! My own beast and creation! Killing me dead! The sweet irony." I think he was saying that, although it was a long time ago, and in hindsight, he could've just been shitting himself."

At the end of the rant Howard Moon asks in a disturbed manner 'anywhere here?'. This is followed by the climax scene, whereby the Cockney Hitcher grabs Howard's face and tells him to stop the car. In complying, Moon begs for his life to be spared, but the request is simply for a toilet break. As the Hitcher pisses near a tree by the roadside, the terrified zookeeper drives off. The Hitcher, left behind in the forest is eventually joined by his otherworldly accomplices the Piper Twins and the trio break into a rap song.

Surveillance/Sousveillance/Solidarity

Panopticon, a term for an all-seeing structure, was designed by the political philosopher Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century as a twenty-four-hour surveillance edifice. Its architecture ensured that those in residence could never see the inspector who occupied the privileged central location within the radial configuration. Those observed could not know when they were being seen. In and of itself this mental uncertainty is the crucial instrument for the way that this physical design became a conceptual construction which intended to instil a self-imposed means of regulating one's own behaviour—an internalised form of self-discipline.

Such a metaphor of panopticism has given rise to many variations in our own time. Surveillance is reduced to an idealised and ideological form. The idea was famously problematised by Foucault (1975). For Foucault, panopticism is a disciplinary mechanism that improves the exercise of power by making it lighter, faster and more effective. It is a design of subtle internalised coercion for a future society. It de-individualises power and surveillance so that it becomes difficult to determine who exercises them.

It is relevant here to expand on its counter formulation, one that possess some of the intimate and emancipatory characteristics of what some scholars have called the synoptical, which stands in opposition to the panoptical. Or what theorists such as Steve Mann et al. (2003) call *sousveillance* versus *sur*veillance—a type of countersurveillance from below—or back towards the powers that be or the state. In other words, monitoring technologies that demonstrate a significant potential for vernacular, grassroots empowerment. And this enabling potential would then have to outstrip the more sinister controlling and liberty removing effects frequently entailed by many institutionally conceived forms of the gaze. These all amount to edifying the issues of social paranoia that litters the academic literature surrounding hitchhiking's demise (Wald 2006; Morton 2016). Inspired by such findings Julian Portis points out that the rise of faster highways, such as freeways, motorways and expressways, has made hitchhiking more difficult. He adds:

> The real danger of hitchhiking has most likely remained relatively constant, but the general perception of this danger has increased. … [O]ur national tolerance for danger has gone down: things that we previously saw as reasonably safe suddenly appeared imminently threatening. This trend is not just isolated to the world of hitchhiking; it has become a pernicious artifact throughout the American cultural conscience. (Portis 2015: 46)

Social activist Wolfgang Zuckermann (1991: 54) remarks: 'Every concession a city makes to the automobile encourages movement at the expense of access and contact, and roads at the expense of residences and amenities'. Consequently, 'roadscapes' and their associated paraphernalia are good cultural indicators. They can show us many things: histories of travel and mobility as well as contemporary interpretations of them; what the local people consider important, what they put on display or what they try to conceal. So the architectural layout and arrangement of the town has certain sociological implications.

The anthropologist Daniel Miller (2001) and gender scholar Ulf Mellström (2004) describe the car phenomena in different cultures. Starting from Africa and ending with Japan, Miller's ideas concerning the car's humanity and agency resonate with the attitudes towards motorised vehicles in Kallaste for instance (Laviolette and Sirotina 2015). As Miller (2001) argues, cars become ever more personalised and ascribed with human characteristics. In his words: 'The meaning we attach to the car make the car's environment our environment […] there are the highly personal and intimate relationships which individuals have found through their possession and use of cars' (Miller 2001: 2). Indeed, different cultures treat the car in different ways. For example, usage of cars in Africa has different meanings to the United States or Japan, because people and circumstances are different. Cars can become a form of resistance to social alienation. Diana Young equally provides a fascinating case study regarding the death of cars which aboriginal Australians treat as pseudo-living beings. They are abandoned by owners in Australia when the car is no longer usable. She describes several cases which she identifies as 'social death', pointing to an anthropomorphic humanism (2001: 35).

Hitchhiking's decline in the West can be most easily explained by the overall stance that places it in opposition to the values and tenets of neoliberalism. Its somewhat anarchic features are at odds with any system that searches for maximising the efficiency of economic commodification in the exchange or gifting of companionship as it relates to travel time/distance (Purkis 2012). In terms of considering leisure and the biographical dimensions of risk, sociologist Jens Zinn has argued that biographical experiences of risk demonstrate a general need to transform uncertainty and contingency into 'patterns of expectations which reduce complexity into something more manageable' (2010: 3).

This is something I tried to develop in terms of the embodied imagination (Laviolette 2011, 2016). In such a context, hitchhiking would

obtain its framework at the interplay of adventure, risk and expectation. This space occurs within a shared micro-landscape, in (bodily) interaction with the surroundings of a driver (possible co-passengers), a vehicle and a roadscape network. Risk and anxiety as well as reward and experience allow for both an embodied and cognitive process of mobility that are somewhat spontaneous, yet far from haphazardous. Regulated by certain social norms of behaviour for interactions between strangers, hitchhiking's distinction rests in the anonymity and fleetingness of the encounter as well as the thrill and inherent danger associated with combustion engine travel. Anthropologist Kathleen Stewart, herself playing with the ideas of the road as a register for the social values of a faster-paced interconnected world, evokes these ideas in a Kerouac-styled stream of consciousness way:

> "It became nostalgias and futurisms, hitchhiking. The road had become a mode of common sense, a material semiosis of choices, styles and risks. It registered violence, potentialities, and difference itself through the accrued poetics of state power, the complexities of inclusion and exclusion, the uses of road photography and the singularities of the motorcycle as a machine, a figure, and a stage." (2014: 554)

Stewart is correct to stress the importance of such street philosophy in shaping the social imagination of subsequent generations (Joll 2012). Especially important is an article that autobiographically reflects on her continental scaled East–West experiences. For some people, such an account will evoke other literary figures too—Hunter S. Thomson (1971) for instance—whose alter ego Raoul Duke could stand as a spokesperson for the rapidly shifting post-Beat generation attitudes. In the 'road as register' trip of the novel *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, connections to hitchhiking are not an appendage to nostalgia and the future, through an existential search for the freedom of expansive movement. Instead, a freeloading teenage bohemian sets the scene but is almost immediately outcasted from encountering Thompson's two main protagonists.[13] The hitcher becomes a symptom of social paranoia. He's a parasitical pariah, a puritan by comparison to Duke and his lawyer chauffeur Dr. Gonzo. The hippie in this case soon fears and himself becomes the character of loathsome suspicion in an absurd journey that mixes decadence, self-destruction and humour. Hitchhiking is not so much portrayed as a rite

[13] In the 1998 film, the hitcher is portrayed by actor Tobey Maguire. In the book, he is drawn by the illustrator Ralph Steadman (Thompson 1971: 15).

of passage, as it is the culminating ritual for a society that mostly seeks instant self-gratification.

Is the hitching-highway hybrid therefore not a suitable material archetype for the uncanny, for a species that increasingly searches for options to colonise the planets of our own outer hemisphere. Road networks and the vehicles flowing through them, as forming a global Gaia experiment, are also a possible health indicator—a means for determining the well-being of the earth. The roadside gestures connected to the act of loitering for a lift thus allow hitchers to experience first-hand, sometimes even quite angrily, an existential immersion into fragmented loneliness. Hence, such tricksters, such subversive figures, who perhaps are so by default of their character, push for an extreme form of potential isolation and an intense dependency. In this way they require being 'rescued' via the goodwill expressed by only a limited number of other people who have had similar deviant or marginal experiences. Those prepared to take the risk for randomness and the unpredictable, themselves being willing to stand out, to share in sore-thumb solidarity (Figs. 5.1 and 5.2).

Fig. 5.1 Hey Psycho!, Venice Biennale, Katja Seidel, November 2019

Fig. 5.2 Reproduction of Noel Fielding's the Hitcher (Autoboosh artwork) by Kerstin Kary

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CHAPTER 6

Thumbbuddies on the Auto Ban

The Eurovision Song Contest of 1980 was held in the Netherlands. The entry from Greece that year was an upbeat tune called Autostop sung by Anna Vissi & The Epikouri, who performed third out of the nineteen entries on the night. The event took place during the evening of 19 April in the city of The Hague. The word *auto-stop* is itself repeated 37 times in the lyrics, which generally praise this practice as one of the best ways of seeing the world, even claiming that one can go as far as China. Out of 19 entries that year, Greece finished in 13th place. During the live performance we can see the way that Anna and her band joyfully enact dance motions which mimic the activity of hitching a ride. This is reminiscent of the 1962 American Bandstand recording of Marvin Gaye's rendition of HitchHike.

The song Autostop was re-performed 34 years later by Anna Vissi & The Epikouri in anticipation of Greece's entry for the 2014 Eurovision Song Contest in Denmark. During a live television recording held in Athens, an animated backdrop of a red mini-cooper spins through the countryside whilst dancers on stage huddle over to form a small car with makeshift spinning body limbs acting as the wheels. At this point in her career, Anna Vissi is a major celebrity of the Greek pop-music scene. She nevertheless demonstrates as much enthusiasm in belting out the repetitive refrain as she did in a time before the Berlin wall would fall and well before austerity would become a household phrase in the EU.

P. Laviolette, *Hitchhiking*,
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Now I wasn't in Copenhagen in 2014 for this event. Yet I did hitchhike there in 2002 for my first EASA conference. The EASA conference in Paris in 2012, when the Tallinn Anthropology Department won the bid to host the 13th biennial conference, had been ten years since my experience of going to Copenhagen for the first time. This was to be my first fully fledged anthropology conference. As a Ph.D. student with limited funds in the final phases of writing-up, I decided to hitch there from a music festival I was already going to be attending in Hildesheim. Unfortunately, however, the journey took me much longer than I anticipated it would. Moreover, I had not written down correctly the day of a presentation which I had agreed to do on behalf of a colleague who had announced, at the last moment, that he could no longer attend. So instead of taking the train or a coach to guarantee arriving on time for the evening of the first day, I turned up via a three day trek only to be greeted by my friend (JS Marcoux) who laughed at my story and then informed me of missing the first afternoon of panels.

[…] Autostop, me autostop,
pantou tha pame
Geia chara, me autostop,
autostop Autostop,
autostop. 'Autostop'
'AutoStop'[1]

This is obviously not great start to a journey. Yet for a number of personal reasons not worth getting into here, I have come to see this mishap as part of my initiation into anthropology; a rapid-fire, self-imposed *'rite de passage*' gone slightly wrong. It was quite literally a wayward journey into the discipline. I've since been told stories from some of our students and colleagues about how they hitched from Tallinn to Ljubljana for EASA in 2008. In one case a driver made an elaborate detour via Warsaw, adding a day to the journey. When in Stockholm in 2013, presenting a seminar paper on this topic, I was asked in a wise and inquisitively suspect manner 'would you encourage students to hitch to Tallinn next year for EASA?' What else could be said, 'no way, obviously!' But secretly I held a different opinion (Fig. 6.1).

[1] Anna Vissi & The Epikouri (1980). Composed by Jick Nacassian, with lyrics written by Rony Sofu.

Fig. 6.1 Copenhagen, EASA conference 2002 (with Jean-Sébastien Marcoux)

Car Re-Boot Sail

Many versions of Marx and Engel's *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) share the same burgundy red colour as my claret Toyota Previa MPV. I say 'my' but this is a slight misnomer since it is co-owned. I share that privilege with the Berlin-based artist Kerstin Kary. This eight-seater multi-purpose van, made in 1997, was bought on e-Bay in 2010 from a private seller based near Düsseldorf. It was taken from Rostock to Tallinn via a ferry trip passing through the Baltic sea to Helsinki. It then sat in a car park overlooking Tallinn's inner-city harbour for its first three days in Estonia, with German plates making it a 'dangerous vehicle',[2] until it was rapidly burgled for a cheap radio and suitcase full of CDs. An unassembled racing bike worth over 350 euro was left behind, however. Initially meant as a passenger vehicle for several people, its middle section has had

[2] The term used by the police officer to which the crime was reported.

its central three-seat bench removed in order to make enough space for relocating possessions. This has also meant that it is spacious enough for a camping mattress—a purpose for which it has been used several times during summer music festivals in the countryside.

Now in 2017, I chose to name this van Alfred (after Hitchcock, Frederick Engels and Alfie Gell) since he'd remained agency-less for the previous seven year. The idea was that this Alpha transporter could feature as part of a dialogic art/ethnography project that would help tie a red thread through the tapestry of hitching, roads, risk, fear and alternative forms of working through mobility problems communally—with a sporting sense of fair play. Tran-s-port here should be seen with several possible connections and connotations to travelling without a motor vehicle, which hitchhiking also evokes, especially by considering its connection with ports, sailing and travelling across water.

In short, this project explores auto-stop/hitchhiking as a creative type of risk-sport. That is, as an adventurous and humorous journeying practice, a form of camaraderie that resists normative culture of fear constructions whilst also being connected to playful, dangerous and macabre types of representations in literature and the arts.

For the first five years of his life in the Baltics, Alfred was driven around Estonia and Northern Latvia. He's even been to Kuressaare, the city on the biggest island of Saaremaa. He has been loaned to friends to attend outdoor raves, borrowed for moving purposes and taken for on the road ethnographic field trips to Narva amongst other places. He's occasionally been fixed up to compensate for the use and abuse he thanklessly received. Indeed, soon after arriving in Tallinn there were some serious engine problems which cost a third of his purchase price to sort out. Eventually, his rear axle started to jam. And so this van, now no longer drivable, has sat off-road 'in retirement' for nearly two years—having been enquired about for purchase three or four times and 'test-driven' twice, with offers ranging from 600 to 300 euro.

This project would require for Alfred to be re-booted, either as a self-propelled travelling exhibition, or one that itself needs to hitch a lift. I'd also like it to include some element of being a car boot sale, but perhaps by spelling the last word 'sail', not 'sale'. This reference is meant to insinuate possible imagery for it sailing away somewhere—it arrived in Estonia by crossing the Baltic Sea by boat, so it could travel/leave or even transform itself into a ship—at least figuratively by hoisting a massive sail

through the front sunroof and the middle section moon-roof. As an exhibition, this van could also feature photographs connected to the transport and hitchhiking research that I've conducted. The idea of it being turned into a white-cube van has also been tabled. The opportunities for Alfred's new life at the moment seem almost endless, evoking both possibility and the absurd. George Cockcroft, writing under the alias Luke Rhinehart, depicts this odd tension well in his novel from the 1970s *The Dice Man*:

> To experience something for the first time: a first balloon, a visit to a foreign land. […] the exciting isolation of leaning against the wind on the highway hitchhiking, waiting for someone to stop and offer me a lift, perhaps to a town three miles down the road, perhaps to new friendship, perhaps to death. The rich glow I felt when I knew I'd finally written a good paper, made a brilliant analysis or hit a good backhand lob. The excitement of a new philosophy of life. Or a new home. […] These are what we want from life. (Rhinehart 1998 [1971]: 33)

May Day Roads

Now some might find it odd to make a connection between art and the practice of hitchhiking, except to say the fairly banal statement about it being an artistic (or at least a creative) form of mobility. We generally accept that auto-stop is connected to both film and literature, but leave it at that. Yet despite, or maybe because of this gap, the year 2017 might go down as an historical anomaly when it comes to the world of hitchhiking. Indeed, during the month of May of that year the French sent a message against rising right-wing populism in their presidential election. It was also a time when the world was witnessing an interest in the circular economy for single-use plastics.

In terms of humbler global news, the month of flowers 2017 also saw two European group exhibitions of artists and designers curated around the theme of thumbing lifts. I participated in both: the first, a week-long event in Warsaw, the other a day show in Berlin a week after. Each brought together 15 artists plus a few peripheral contributors such as a speaker addressing long-distance hitching for instance. In total, some 40–50 people had been directly involved, not counting the hundreds of people that attended some part of these events, or even the hundreds more whose awareness was reached indirectly through social media (Fig. 6.2).

Fig. 6.2 Antonin Borgnon, as part of 'The Art of Hitchhiking' Warsaw, 2017

The Art of Hitchhiking: A Collection of Works Inspired by the Roads took place in Warsaw's Warszawski Creative Community Centre from 17 to 21 May.[3] It was curated by the young French photographer Antonin Borgnon who had never undertaken to organise such an event before. After hitchhiking himself in 2016, he took a series of black and white photographs of the makeshift signs that hitchers used on their journeys. He then decided to hold an open call on the internet for other such related works. He told me that he received over 35 submissions and chose the best 15. The event, with a budget of 3000 euro, was financed by a crowdfunding campaign. There were other photographic works; two audio-visual pieces; a commissioned set of painted posters advertising hitch-gatherings made by the Turkish based freelance illustrator Amylin Loglisci; a drawing by the graphic designer Sabrina Schwabe, the print of which was turned into a t-shirt called Drivers' Pantomime, which Antonin wore proudly. It illustrates the hand gestures that drivers make to the

[3] Curated by Antonin Borgnon at the Warszawski Centre Warsaw: www.artofhitchhiking.eu.

potential passengers they don't collect such as: 'I'm turning off soon'; 'are you nuts'; 'not you mate'; and so on). What's interesting here is that these non-verbal and non-written signals of communication are part of a largely 'universal' semiotic sphere that are pretty much the same everywhere.

There's little point in describing here every single contribution to this exhibition. Those who are curious can find more detailed accounts on the exhibition website. I offer a selective summary of those that caught my eye. One of the more intricate in terms of marketability is certainly a prototype designed to be a hitcher's travel kit, made by Agnieszka Szreder, who at that point in her life had only ever done two hitchhiking trips. It includes many water-resistant materials in order to keep the traveller's possessions safe and dry, as well as a canister of peeper-stray to help protect the passenger from any unwanted advances. This piece, revealing that one doesn't need to be a seasoned practitioner to arrive at innovative solutions to real-world problems, is cleaver for another main feature: a rollable canvas that is meant to be used to inscribe with chalk one's intended destination. This is quick to modify as the journey progresses, saving valuable time, which can be priceless when weather conditions are challenging. It is also reusable and therefore not going to be left behind by the side of the road as a polluting eyesore.

Of the two more anthropological works, one was simply entitled 'Drivers' by Łukasz Siwiec. It depicts photo portraits of some 200 people or so who offered him lifts in the 50 countries through which he's travelled. This covered a distance of some 800,000 or so kilometres. The other, a work of magnolia linen clothing by Wiebke Jahns was titled 'Are you Comfortable with Nudity'. Within the inside of each of these garments, a short narrative was inscribed to reveal a set of exceptionally intimate stories that the artist/traveller had been told by her lift-giving benefactors. Since her own practice often touches on notions of personal freedom and being prepared to leave one's comfort zone, she shows through these plain yet textualised frocks how hitch journeys can be cathartic. Through the anonymous, cocooned and confessional dimensions of motor vehicle travel, fleeting escape spaces from reality can form a type of therapeutic bond—not of momentary friendship, but instead of some short-term co-dependency that can help people transition through the randomness of chance encounter.

Clemens Schmid also offered a set of photos as his contribution to the exhibition. In his case these are DIY pinhole images that he calls

'Memories in a Matchbox'. They are produced through a simple home-made kit that give imprecise exposures to the film, thus giving the photos the result of an old-school patina, meaning that they look like they were taken decades ago. He calls this effect a 'nostalgia for the present'. A similar archaeology of the moment occurs in a collection of found objects retrieved from the roadside by Pieter Malfliet. He called this piece 'Souvenirs from Ex-Yugoslavia' and they are *objets trouvé* that he found in the Balkans during the summer of 2016 when hitching. By classifying the lost and thrown out items that he gleaned by the roadside into a collection of similar objects—animal skulls, cigarette lighters, condom packets, feathers, jewellery, maps and so on—he provides a visual order to a set of journeys that would otherwise be completely disjointed from such debris. As a curation of road junk, this art piece reminds us of the non-place elements of motorway infrastructures. It shows what can be found and how people often treat navigational spaces as waste dumps or death fields for road kill. Those liminal zones between the cement and pavement of street surfaces and the view of the landscape beyond are indeed archetypes of in-between 'gutter' spaces. Separated themselves from any real contact with our senses, they are lost or forgotten, until someone has the audacity to show us what and how our society treats this part of the environment (Figs. 6.3 and 6.4).

* * *

A second exhibition in 2017, simply called *Autostop*,[4] was curated by the art historian Dr Lýdia Pribišová and supported by the Art Council of Slovakia. It was held on May 26th at the Centre for Art and Urbanistics (ZK/U) complex in a former railway depot near the Westhafen industrial area of Moabit, in the Northeast of Berlin. With the aim of drawing more attention to and reviving some of the spirit accorded in the disappearing phenomenon of hitchhiking, Pribišová's art event *Autostop* was her residency project and was another large collaborative event, the public exhibition of which lasted only one day. She teamed up with many people across Europe and managed to include a documentary about hitchBOT

[4] Pribišová's residency exhibition 'Autostop' was part of a series called Pilot Projects at ZK/U (Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik). See: https://www.zku-berlin.org/fellows/331/.

Fig. 6.3 Clemens Schmid, 'Memories in a Matchbox, The Art of Hitchhiking', 2017

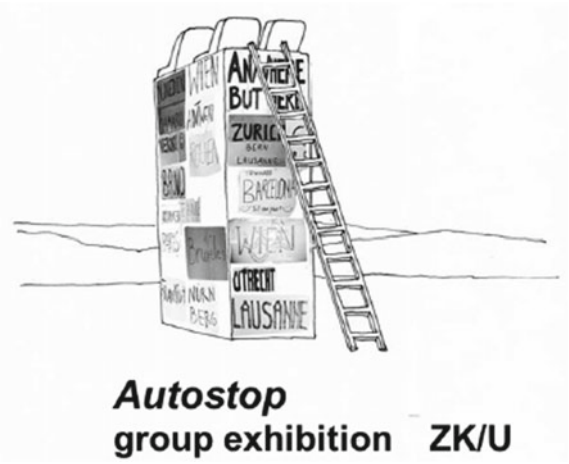

Fig. 6.4 ZK/U Berlin Lýdia Pribišová curator, Memorial of the Unknown Driver, Oto Hudec

created in 2015 by Drs. Frauke Zeller and David Harris Smith, who are based at Ryerson and McMaster Universities in Ontario, Canada.

hitchBOT came into being as a complex social experiment in 2013. Its objectives have been to learn about how humans perceive a future that promises greater interaction with robotic devices and artificial intelligence (AI). In being an applied project that required non-laboratory conditions, it also piqued the public imagination since it became a newsworthy and social media target. The intentions behind this automaton-thumb traveller, who pretty much resembles a cylindrical hoover with yellow wellies and matching rubber kitchen gloves, are many. They range from programming interactive speech algorithms so that the traveller could verbally interact with humans, through to working out many logistical problems so that a 'child-like' character with limited self-sufficiency can venture into the world unassisted and return mature, with knowledge that will be both useful for its own growth, as well as the betterment of society.

Described by its originators as crossing Germany, the Netherlands and Canada successfully, *hitchBOT* has depended:

> […] solely on the help of strangers. The robot could not move by itself, so people who picked up hitchBOT had to carry it to the car, lift it inside, put the safety belt on, and plug its power cord into the cigarette lighter. This design reversed the notion of robots as constructed to help us, and instead created a robot that would address people's curiosity and willingness to engage with technology.
>
> The robot's communication features were entertaining, albeit rudimentary, mimicking a fun companion for a car drive. (Zeller and Smith 2014: n.p.)

Now part of a permanent collection of the Canadian Science and Technology Museum[5] hitchBOT's life course has altered following an attack that put an end to an attempt to cross the United States. There have been numerous journalistic and scholarly responses on social media on what the hitchBOT phenomenon means in this day and age.[6]

[5] http://www.hitchbot.me/.

[6] One of the more spiky ones, which picks up on ideas dealing with 'game theory' and the 'tragedy of the commons' reads: "In the wake of Hitchbot's *[sic]* unfortunate demise (or disappearance, more on this later), Kickstarter campaigns have emerged to rebuild the backpacking bot to the derision of those who cast the pummeling as a sort of acceptable form of blowing off steam – 'Better a robot than a real person.' But imagine

Another striking work included a drawing and collage prototype by Oto Hudec of a 'Monument to the Driver Who Stopped'.[7] This piece is reminiscent of the high-profile memorial style sculptures found around the world, usually in significant cities or major sites used for the celebration of nation-building through mourning. They are dedicated to those 'unknown' soldiers who went missing in action or were killed and whose bodies it was never possible to retrieve. Examples of such public acknowledgements of gratitude can be found in many settings such as the National Cemetery in Arlington Virginia, or on the steps leading to the former New Zealand Dominion Museum in Wellington, were 'The Tomb of the Unknown Warrior' designed by artist Kingsley Baird is located.

Along with a performance artist physically enacting the slowness of hitching by crawling along the floor in a translucent plastic suit (as if he were a monstrous postmodern glow-worm), there was also a fully functional car which was covered in green artificial turf. Various technological gizmos were affixed to it including an LED screen with moving letters that advertised to passing pedestrians how this vehicle was itself hitching for a driver to take it somewhere. In an era when ride-share systems are ripe and there is much discussion over 'driverless' vehicles, the juxtaposition of such visually noisy yet 'pacefully' tranquil pastiche artworks surely makes a strong social statement about the future of transport and the state of our urban environments (Cohen and Hopkins 2019).

The *Autostop* Exhibition had many interesting works which are perhaps best described elsewhere by art historians and/or event curators. There are, however, two final ones that are worth mentioning since they are still publicly available. The first is a short 16 minute documentary film *Tramprennen* (2016) by Jascha Fibich about a hitchhiking 'race event' from Germany to Bulgaria. Jascha is part of the fluid group 'The Club of Roam

for a second it's all one cloth: that all violence, all desecration against the commons begins with a perception of weakness in the other. In this case the robot and his keepers were other; Hitchbot was a symbolic representation of trustful collaboration – the bedrock of the open commons. He represented a mute blinking critique of the violent, narcissistic, hedonistic, and consumerist culture that leads to this kind of event (the same 'Culture of waste, consumption and consumerism' Pope Francis derides) and how this connects to the 'Problem of the Commons' in urban America)" (Ignaffo and Dougherty 2015: n.p.).

[7] Courtesy Oto Hudec and the Gandy Gallery.

Fig. 6.5 ZK/U Berlin Lýdia Pribišová curator/Oto Hudec (Photo K. Kary) 2017

- Autostop!'[8] The other was the public screening of the fictional travelogue film *Avé* (2011), directed by Konstantin Bojanov, who introduced the work in relations to his other films.

Being based in Berlin during her residency at ZK/U, Lýdia Pribišová drew on an MA diploma thesis written in Hamburg by Maike Mewes (2016) to recreate the ways in which *trampen* acts as an incubator for testing impromptu social relations, compressing interpersonal and political dynamics to higher levels of intensity. By highlighting many of the implications behind trust, uncertainty and security, as well as the social conceptions of charity and perceptions of exchange/reciprocity, not to mention good and bad fortune, both exhibition and thesis act as catalysts for changing negative views towards twenty-first-century hitchhiking. Indeed, Mewes' largely textual project was embodied in a curatorial art space that was highly scholarly and textualised. They thus mirrored each other as being internationally German/European collaborations. Both equally showcase hitchhiking's more global ethical concerns over trust, altruism and empathy (Fig. 6.5).

[8] See (tramprennen.org). The film ends with a cover of the Pixies song from their 1988 album Surfer Rosa 'Where is My Mind', with the lyrics replaced to "where is my ride".

Slo-Research, Miran in Piran

Even though it does not necessarily feature as explicitly part of the slow movement as such, hitchhiking is indeed an erratic and fragmented form of displacement. Elsewhere I have specifically addressed these stochastic dimensions of the activity, which stresses how such a means of travel is by its very definition a broken up means of travel (see Laviolette 2016). What I wish to do here, however, is explore both the slow and exhibitory aspects of hitchhiking in terms of their research facets. Because much of the time is spent waiting on one's own, unless you're travelling with a friend or at a hitchgathering, the practice of *auto-stop* does not offer the prospect of collecting valuable experiential material quickly—unless one hitches in binges.

What follows below is a set of short ethnographic vignettes concerning a variation on such a type of gathering. Not a large-scale event organised to get hundreds of hitchhikers together. Rather, it forms a description of a museum space that is meant to attract a few travellers, but which is mainly intended to disseminate some ideas of hitchhiking travel to a wider public. It is also a way of generating a bit of money for the instigator who has become one of my key research participants since he has been one of Europe's most prolific hitchhikers in many respects. For a start, he has travelled more kilometres with the use of his thumb than it would take to visit the moon and return. Additionally, he has established more records for this practice than many of us put together. Finally, he has self-published two books from his adventures (the first being been translated into at least six languages (Ipavec 2013, 2020).

9 July 2017. 11:00 a.m. start. I've decided to hitch from Neumarkt in der Steiermark in Southern Austria, just West of Graz, to Piran on the Southwest coast of Slovenia. The reason is to see the first of two installations of Miran Ipavec's Hitchhikers' Museum to take place this summer. The distance is 285 kilometres. I seem to have found a good enough spot, with a stretch of gravel lining the lay-by for about 60 yards. There is plenty of space for a car to stop. The only reservation I have is that this part of the road is on a bend, meaning that drivers do not have that much visibility until they're quite close. Also, it seems to have rained overnight so that the ground near me is muddy and there are a few big puddles. My reasoning tells me this is not enough reason to dissuade a kind soul from pulling over. The more paranoid side of my brain, however, worries that somehow this isn't the ideal place. In the

first 22 minutes of waiting, roughly 182 cars pass by with little indication that anyone is interested. By 11:40, its 307 cars. I'm nearly ready to give up this spot and so walk farther South for a few minutes. I take a photo of the location and as I'm walking towards my bag, a black Skoda rover-type vehicles beeps and flashes his lights from the exit of the petrol station across the road. Running to my bag and then across to the waiting vehicle, a grey-haired man with small spectacles gets out and opens the boot at the back. '*Ich gehe nach Süden*' I mention quickly. He nods, offering a lift to Klagenfurt, some 55 km away.

He introduces himself immediately in German as 'Klaus'. He's roughly 65 years old. We exchange a few words but since he's noticed my Trieste sign and perhaps my accent too, he asks if I speak Italian. I say no and explain that English would be better, but that I'm happy to practice my German. He seems mildly disappointed adding that he's learning Italian. The first thing I notice from the inside of his car is a large Christian coin glued to the middle of the vehicle's dashboard. It's no surprise then when, within the first few minutes of conversation, he mentions having done a pilgrimage that took seven days from Murau in Austria to Lake Bled in Northern Slovenia.[9] He says that he does this drive every week because his girlfriend lives in Klagenfurt. He then adds subtly, as if to clarify the odd choice of terminology for an older gentleman to use the word 'girlfriend', that his wife died 14 years ago. I'm immediately reminded of the artwork 'Are you Comfortable with Nudity' by Wiebke Jahns in Antonin Borgnon's (2017) *Art of Hitchhiking* exhibition in Warsaw a few months before, in which she directly addressed the personal intimacy of stories told to her by strangers who had collected her. In this case, Jahns collected several highly detailed 'confessions' and tales of illness that in some circumstances might be seen as a breach of etiquette in terms of their familiarity. She shows in her work one of the ways in which it is a feature of auto-stopping to have allowed for such a level of personal exchange to occur. Perhaps, however, she's more likely to be confided in than I am since Klaus provided no further information after I offered my sympathies.

Before the end of our little trip together, he mentioned that his uncle and aunt used to have a house on the outskirts of Trieste and so the family would often spend long parts of the summer holidays there. He

[9] Depending on the route, this is pretty much a journey straight South of approximately 140 km going through the Alpine range that divides the two countries.

then says that as a boy, he used to take the pocket money given to him and hitch into town, sometimes getting lifts on Vespa mopeds. This, he expresses proudly, is why he's never afraid to collect hitchers. As we reach the outskirts of the city he asks if I'd prefer to go into the centre for some food, or the edge of town where it will be easier to get a lift South. I respond that I've had a late breakfast, but would be happy to take a *Kaffee pause* so he drops me off at the main Alter Platz at 12:25.

After a short break, I walk to the South of town and start hitching again at 13:15. It's a busy intersection so after 30 minutes, 205 cars have passed. I get a few waves from passengers and drivers but there are not many Slo registration plates on the passing vehicles. Over three hundred cars have gone by when the clock strikes 14:00. I decide to wait until 350 cars before giving up. 10 minutes later I find myself walking South along a main road. Seems to have been a good decision because the road breaks off on several occasions. After a trek of 20 minutes, I start again in what looks like a much better spot since the oncoming cars have a longer line of sight to notice me. Also, I'm right next to a petrol station. Less than 40 cars pass when a black Renault Rover with 'Slo' number plates stops completely as it prepares to re-enter the street from the petrol station's exit. The typical eagerness of anticipation rises in my body as I notice that the driver is clearing the front passenger seat. Indeed, he pulls up and says in English that he's going to Tržič.

Wearing slightly rugged worker's clothes, this driver is in his mid-40s with dark hair. He says that he does this journey every day because he works in Klagenfurt but lives across the border. He apologises for smoking and sparks up a spliff. Seeing a car pulled over with a mother holding a crying child, he talks about how kids get sick on this border crossing journey because of the bendy roads in the hills where the elevation reaches 1500 m. There are two kid seats in the back so it's clear he is speaking from experience. He points out lots of attractions on the way, as did my previous driver. In response to my prompting, he says he used to hitch when younger and asks if Austrians are generous. I suggest it's easier in other places like Slovenia and Germany but better than Spain or France. As we cross the border he says that the guards only check identity cards and passports when you enter Austria, not when you leave. He explains that the French made this road and then adds that he knows every hole and bend. We reach the services on the edge of Tržič at 3:15. Just before I exit he explains that it's better to list Koper and not Trieste on my sign because that's in Slovenia.

I stop for lunch in the Old English House… just like home, cheese on toast being the only option. Start up again at 16:30. After half an hour 55 cars have passed. At this point I switch to my '*Süd*' sign. By 17:15 another 30 vehicles. And at 17:25 I've counted another 20. Switching indiscriminately back and forth between the sides of my sign (which read *Süd* and Trieste) doesn't help either because another 50 more cars have driven past by 17:50.

I give up at 18:30ish and return to the pub. The waitress checks online for how to get to Ljubljana. There are no more buses tonight. She says a taxi is about 40 euro because it's 50 km. So at 19:15 I start again with slightly ominous clouds looming above. I guess I'll give it 2 hours with my new LJ sign for Ljubljana. There are not many cars at this time of the evening, even though the pub is full for dinner. After five minutes or so, however, a white VW estate with a 'Wien' registration pulls up. They're going to the outskirts of the capital, which is only 35 km distance given the road sign outside the services, not 50. They drop me off at a bus stop five kilometers from the city centre at ten to eight. They were a mid-forties family with a six or seven- year-old son. I take the city bus into town and stay the night in a hostel.

9/10 July 2017. Via a few text messages, Miran has given me direction on how to hitch out of Ljubljana to Piran. I reach the city limits bus depot called '*Dolgi Most*' at 11:00. After counting 30 cars or so, a man in shorts and flip-flops with a four day beard and scruffy black hair, carrying a rucksack of camping gear passes by and sits under the lay-by sign indicating Ljubljana's city limits. I talk with him briefly and find out he's waiting for a lift. It's from a service called Prevoz, a Slovenian ride-share which he adds is 'equivalent to Blabla cars for local and some international transport'. He then says that his lift only costs five euro and that I can book it online. After a couple minutes more of hitching, I approach him again to check if it's ok for him to ask the driver to take me as well. 'Sure, when he gets here we'll see if he has any space' is the reply. I try my luck at a free lift for the remaining few minutes. Nothing. But fortunately, when a black Ford pulls up, I notice that the rear seats are vacant. By 11:15 we're off. They're going to Izola, a small coastal town between Koper and Piran. This lift is with what seems to be a couple at the front. The other passenger has some good hitching stories such as picking up a managing director of Citroën who hitches in his spare time, including a once a year trip to India. He had said as an explanation

that it wasn't about money, but about lifestyle—about meeting interesting people, having experiences, collecting stories.

He makes a joke about road works every summer when no one does anything. The driver and the woman at the front are laughing to confirm. All the workers are indeed sat eating, although it is roughly lunch time. At 12:20 we're in Koper and the driver drops off the woman in the front without any noticeable affectionate gestures so I figure she must be a Prevoz passenger as well. A few minutes later we're in Izola. They tell me it's over six kilometres to walk, which I'd normally consider acceptable. The temperature today, however, is over 30 degrees Celsius and I do have a large enough bag. Fortunately, there's a bus to Piran in 10 minutes so I catch that. Halfway there, at the first stop, I spot a long-haired hitcher trying to go in the opposite direction. I manage a quick photo and later ask Miran if he recognises him from the museum—unfortunately the answer is no.

For the past week, Miran has had guest visitors from Argentina, Eric Lancon and Ayu Santana. They met him from an online social media group and have a little display from South America as well as India/Pakistan in his Hitchhikers' Museum. They've been travelling around the world for three years and want to write a book, in Spanish, about their hitching experiences in South East Asia. They intend to go back to Buenos Aires in the Autumn to 'do a few things'. I spend the day with them at the museum handing out flyers, taking photos and interacting with guests. I accompany Miran at 14:45 as he orders a takeaway grill from a local burger place. He mentions that unlike in Bled, where the museum was the previous year, it's problematic to sleep in the museum because they've forbidden this in the contract he has with the city council. For August and September he will take the museum to Koper. The idea then is that he would like to take it outside Slovenia, to Italy, maybe to Trieste for October and November, or for next summer.

As we wait for our order, he tells me that he was once part of a hitch-gathering online group, but left because he felt they weren't democratic. He bases this on the grounds that they had initially wanted to do one such gathering in connection with the museum being in Bled. This was cancelled at the last minute because one of the organisers involved didn't like the idea of the gathering occurring in a tourist town, even if it wasn't going to be in a touristy part of Bled. Before re-joining the others with lunch, he says his next idea, his 'legacy' so to say, will be to influence road design policy for the future of Slovenia so that hitchhiking can be

facilitated, as it has been done in the Netherlands with the establishment of *Liftplaats*.[10]

During the day I speak with Marco, a local shopkeeper and amateur photographer who visited the exhibition for an hour. Two American women (mother and daughter) from California are also keen on the games and displays. At 19:00 a group of 30 school kids arrive with an interpretation signer. About half the group are deaf or hard of hearing. Most of them seem really enthusiastic about the knowledge testing games on display and the tour that Miran gives for the exhibition. They stay for over an hour, asking all sorts of questions about his travels. What Miran is most 'humbled' by is that this group has collectively given just over 30 euro. Indeed, he has commented several times during the day about how much guest leave for tips since admittance cannot officially be charged. He's often quite cynical in observing that one can tell that certain visitors have money, but are too stingy to pay two euro for an educational experience. Earlier in the day, a woman with three children walked into the gallery briefly, but then turned 180 degrees on their heels when they heard of the cost. Sarcastically Miran reprimanded the mother by saying that she should go and get ice-cream instead since that would be much more useful for them.

We get a few other late comers, including a couple who he entices in by saying that he wrote in his book that Polish people are the best for lifts. After they start the tour with Ayu, I explain the reason for Poland's historic support of hitchhiking which he isn't aware of.[11] Until the early 1990s, auto-stoppers could get tokens from petrol stations which they could give to their benefactors in exchange for lifts. Such tokens then acted as lottery tickets for prize draws so that hitchhiking friendly motorists could sometimes get rewarded by the state for their comradeship. This was part of a state-wide sanctioned *Autostop* programme. Historian Mark Keck-Szajbel has explored in considerable detail this usual resistance to the full-on Communist Regime. As he writes:

> *Autostop* was an intrinsically fascinating form of socialist travel to which Poles have devoted only limited (and often nostalgic) attention, and which Western researchers have ignored altogether. (2013: 168)

[10] https://hitchwiki.org/en/Liftershalte.

[11] Another reason, which I didn't mention at the time, is the existence of a Polish online publication called *HitchHiker Magazine* (http://hitchhiker.pl/).

In talking about these books of tokens, Miran suggests that we should try to locate one for the museum. At 10:45 the Polish couple were still having a blast with him through the games. He gets so enthusiastic it's infectious. Ayu begins to take down their two display cabinets. Eric is changing over some brochures. Miran was facetiously chastising me for giving away too many brochures. It's now 11:30 p.m. and the Romanian couple that came in at the last minute is also having a great time. There must be some kind of night museums market to cater for middle-aged tourists in beach resort towns with little else to do after 10 p.m. We close at 00:10. The next day the museum is closed and Miran's guests Ayu and Eric will be leaving to resume their hitching adventures so he will drive us to his home in Kanal for a rest.

We leave Piran at 9:45, 15 minutes after we planned, which makes Miran a bit jumpy. He drives a dark blue Renault Laguna estate. Since we're behind schedule and because he doesn't have the sticker for Slovenian motorways, he decides to show us the location for the museum's relocation to Koper. We take the escalator and he indicates the harbour where he organised one of the diving competitions. We then walk through town and take some photos outside the spot for the museum's installation. In Kanal we have lunch with his mum. A swim with Bonny his dog and coffee at the bridge.

Artists as Ethnographers—*Mund-Stück*

A comprehensive contemporary example of hitchhiking's durability in the art word is the collaborative performance of *Mouth Piece / Mund-Stück* by artists Ant Hampton and Rita Pauls. The main co-producer is *Schauspiel Leipzig* and the piece has been presented several times in Germany. I was able to attend it on Wednesday 22 May at the *Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain* in Paris when it has featured as part of the Chantiers d'Europe 2019, a theatre programme by Théâtre de la Ville, Paris. I was also able to meet Hampton and Pauls as well as some of their friends at Le Lithographe Bistro afterwards.

Both artists share a connection to Germany. Hampton has recently moved to Germany with his partner and wishes to obtain citizenship in order to maintain his European right to 'free movement', post-Brexit; Pauls, in her mid-20s, is a German national through being the descendant of great-grandparents who fled the National Socialism of the 1930s.

Together, Hampton and Pauls set out to discover this country and its people by 'dropping' a pin in the middle of a map and then meandering around randomly for a week. The adventure starts at the centre of the country and is an attempt to get at the heart of language and identity. Their *modus operandi* for the journey—hitchhiking. They recorded their encounters with their phone's sound recorder. At the time, neither spoke much German so the project became one of intense immersive learning. They constantly asked the same question to all the people they encountered: 'What, in your opinion, should be said?' Trying to make sense of the convictions and opinions that drive German-speakers from all walks of life, Hampton and Pauls created an experimental artwork that relayed the emotions, commentary and experiences they gleaned on their mission to embody another language and culture.

In the introduction to the work, Hampton and Pauls provide one of the principles behind their piece by mentioning their shared interest in 'what you can do in spaces of trust'. Later, Pauls describes her experience of not understanding what was being said: 'once in a car, you are immersed into a chaos of sound you don't understand. So it becomes emotional quickly. And you start focusing on every other detail'. They continue by adding that on such a journey, one starts behaving in new ways. Speaking the words back to the originators seemed like an obvious objective for the project, if not for the actual audience of the collaborative performance. Some of those words are about the political: Merkel, Trump. This might not be that surprising given their question regarding what should be said. Religion doesn't feature significantly, except one brief mention. Other discussions mention the development of electric cars. And benzine petrol. About putting the wall back. About employment/unemployment. About what they think of Germans. Provocatively, they are told by one driver: 'I wouldn't hitch… well with two I guess it's ok'.

There are thoughts about the lack of infrastructures in many parts of peripheral, rural Germany. After their joint 15 minutes introductory spiel to this experimental theatre piece, they sit with notes and use music, as well as voice recordings, to show how they rehearsed repeating statements from their recordings in order to learn the language by heart. Other themes from the performance: Brexit, Europe, migration '*Flüchtlinge*' (refugees). They are told, from someone living in the middle of Germany, 'many people don't know foreigners here'. Or from someone else that: '*Demokratie in Deutschland gibt es nicht*'. We then move into

some ambiguous terrain about integration. 'There's no refugee problem here', a statement repeated so often it becomes almost easy to believe or accept, despite the sarcastic tone. Then we hear about climate change, about 'blood oil', about war. And the lack of any German will to get involved in global conflict. Yet also, about political contradiction. There's a moment in the performance when Pauls urinates by the side of the road, at the back of the stage.

The spoken lines are mostly delivered in a synchronised harmony by both performers simultaneously. They even merge to become one person with their gestures towards the end—something one of the friends in the bar mentions really liking. It is here that they tell their entourage of about 10 people how they had established two rules prior to starting the trip. To stop each evening after 7 p.m., wherever they were; and not to go back to the same place twice. Other than that, they would take pretty much any lift, recording the trajectories of their journey. They didn't camp because of their equipment, but got B&Bs or pensions instead. One time they got an invitation to stay the night.

There's a fair bit of post-socialist nostalgia in their interview material, from discussions of cheap rent to guaranteed jobs. Later, in a group discussion at the bistro, the son of one of their friends surmises that they seemed to spend more time in Eastern Germany, hence the retrospectives on the ethos of equality in former DDR times. His uncle and mum talk over drinks about former hitching tales in their youth. They must be approaching 60. They've travelled in from Normandy specially to attend the evening.

Both Hampton and Pauls speak fluent French—Hampton studied theatre in Paris, and Pauls did her *lycée* in Bueno Aires. They know each other because Hampton presented work in Argentina, where he met and later worked with Pauls' mother when she was 12. Over time they became friends and more recently started discussing this artistic collaboration. They both find ironically funny the invitation to present in Paris as 'young European artists' given their respective ages/nationalities. It was the first time Pauls had ever hitchhiked and it perhaps goes without saying that *Mouth Piece/Mund-Stück* is not a piece about hitchhiking as such. And yet this mode of travel was integral to their project, its performance and its promotion.

2nd *Mundstück* performance. Frankfurt am Main, 7 September 2019

After an early flight from Stansted to Frankfurt, I arrive at the Mousonturm Centre for midday. The cafe is closed because of a workshop, but one of the staff suggests a nice place along Kantstrasse. Walking there I spot a tiny fridge on the street. What a perfect omen for the *Mundstück* performance here tonight. I take a snap on my mobile and send it to Miran Ipavec, along with an online video link to their performance.[12] His reply is amusing: 'Do you want to HH with a fridge?' We'd joked a couple of months previously about Tony Hawks (1998) hitchhiking around Ireland with a fridge as punishment for a drunken bet when Miran had to go collect 96 beer cans from a sponsor in Ljubljana for his Tolmin display of the Hitchhikers' Museum from mid-July to August. So I wrote back saying: 'I found this little white cube 100 meters from the Theatre where *Mundstück* is being performed tonight in Frankfurt. It's a performance in which the two actors learn German by hitchhiking for a week and recording their conversations with strangers'. 'This way I learned all of my languages (without the recordings)'. This I knew. It was something he'd mentioned many times, the road as a teacher of many things.

After breakfast I bump into Rita at the Kant Cafe. We don't recognise each other at first. She tells me they are going to Berlin tomorrow by train. I take many notes during the performance with the idea of someday writing them up more comprehensively. We meet for some food in the evening and agree to meet in a few days in Berlin. The notes will hopefully also be useful in knowing what to ask them at said meeting.

12 September 2019. Tempelhof, Berlin (*Gemeinschaftsgarten Allmende-Kontor Garten*).

Rita Pauls, Ant Hampton and I met in the Community Garden. I asked about the inspiration of language learning as a performative practice for *Mouth-Piece*. Paraphrasing their mutual answer, they expressed the idea that it's nice to have language as a limit. In the case of the outcome, the 'future' was brought in when it wouldn't have been expected, in a situation grounded in the present.

Concerning rituals, a question they seemed to like, they mention the idea of 'oracles' minimally mentioned at the beginning of their performance of *Mouth-Piece*. Beckett's *Mercier et Camier* (1970) book gave them clues of possible future and past aspects of their trip… they would read together during the moments of waiting, avoiding rain or heat. They

[12] *Mundstück* / Mouth Piece (Hampton/Pauls). 2 minute 'promotion clip': https://vimeo.com/312789352.

then spoke of the division of tasks and taking turns with 'front seat duty'. They added that not knowing where to stay at night was liberating. They even stayed with one couple once for two days and took a day off from travelling.

This couple were alternative, freegans, not the more stereotypical 'types' that most of other lift givers were. They shared a sense of complicity of hitching as a past event, reconnecting with counter-culture. This generated an instant trust between them. This sense of complicity with Pauls & Hampton created a sort of joyful pact to see that this activity was still around. Moreover, their respondents would get passionate with the answers… 'we were becoming their mouthpiece in a way'. Pauls and Hampton added that, except for near Leipzig, they never went on the autobahn during their *trampen* adventure. The longest lift was a retired couple for over an hour. Also, they never waited more than 30 minutes, except a couple times. A few 2-minute journeys were still important in terms of their intensity. The first person to answer their 'question' was depressing because he wasn't educated or cared about anything, but they were so happy to get a recording. This is why they've put his answer after the 'Nazi guy'. They were also quite surprised that quite a few women stopped. These seemed to be during those 'moments' when their morale needed it most. This is when they felt such lifts would appear, perhaps indicating that this is when they looked/seemed most desperate (i.e., most in need).

I asked about the possibility of using some of their photos for this book. They showed me a few from a mobile. There's a funny one with Rita in combat fatigues holding an *Irgenwo hin* sign. I quite liked this reference to 'somewhere' or 'someplace', but they suggested that for them it somehow doesn't work visually. This is perhaps because of the associations that some people might make of the staunch pose with military attire and a certain sentiment of OTT nationalism, particularly given some of the conversations that Mouthpiece ended up vocalising. This however, is only speculation since I didn't ask any further and we agreed that they would send me an email of some promotions photographs that they took which I could use (see Fig. 2.1 from Chapter 2).

6 November 2019. Today I'll be presenting some ideas about hitchhiking in an *Atelier Antropologie* workshop at the Univ. of Bucharest. Rather than give a lecture, I've asked Miran Ipavec to join from via a social media link so that the students can hear about his exploits and Hitchhikers' Museum. As it happens, he's hosting the famous Russian

world traveller Anton Krotov and his friend Alexei Vorov. I've heard lots about Anton, through Miran. On repeated occasions he's pointed to copies of books by some Russian ancestors in long journeys of this type in the display cabinets of his museum.[13] This is the first time that I get the chance to speak and learn more about one of Miran's own 'idols'. It's an exciting chance to do 'online' fieldwork with both students and professional social scientists.

Just instants before I'm meant to present, artist Ant Hampton sends me a link to an article in *The Guardian* published online today. I'm nervous about whether all the technological issues will work out as well as how to record some notes for myself without losing track that this is a group exercise. To calm myself down, I skim through the text and images as we finish our pre-seminar coffee. I see it as an opportunity to link the two recent field experiences together. Hampton's selected the following quote from the piece by the Berlin-based correspondent journalist Philip Oltermann,[14] adding that this was news indeed.

> From a post-wall perspective, the reasons why East German citizens could be subjected to Zersetzung can sound absurd. In the case of Annegret Gollin, from Neubrandenburg, it was enough for her teenage self to wear sandals and flared jeans, and enjoy hitchhiking – a largely symbolic act of rebellion in a small state where public transport was cheap and motorways far and few between. Hitchhikers were one of a number of "negative decadent" youth movements – including punks, rockers, goths and New Romantics – the Stasi believed to be part of a concerted western effort to undermine East German morale.

I agree with him that this is newsworthy, replying with a leading question of whether he'd been to either Berlin's Stasi Museum in Lichtenberg, or the Everyday Life Exhibition in the GDR permanent collection of the Museum of the Kulturbrauerei in Prenzlauer Berg. These both display

[13] [автостоп] *avtostop* in Russian, almost identical to the Slovenian, French, Greek…

[14] Philip Oltermann is the Berlin bureau chief for *The Guardian* 2019. Hampton, a rather recent resident of Berlin, found the article hours within it being posted online and forwarded it to me. Had the story not been so sinister, I would have tried to squeeze it into the workshop since I already had power point slides to talk of state surveillance and the paranoia that sometimes accompanies hitchhiking, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/nov/06/ive-been-shafted-twice-stasi-victims-and-their-quest-for-compensation?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other.

different kinds of archive material kept by the state on 'deviant' travellers, or on the views and design plans that their citizens had for the future of socialism.

Amongst many notable artefacts are: a photo of a hippie travelling to Bulgaria; a pair of worn but lovingly preserved 'shoes'; a log book of a young man's travel adventures around Eastern Europe; two different variations on the 'Swords into Ploughshares' *trampen* jacket.

The Other in the Self

At the end of the day, the practice of hitchhiking can be seen as a reaffirmation of our humanity. It incorporates our most distinct physiological features into its execution. To start off, the thumb, an opposable digit isolated from the rest of the body and gestured in a positive upward fashion. Once the hitcher has been successful, another of our most humanly defining attributes, the tongue, comes into play through the need for the passenger to at least attempt some minimum level of spoken communication. At its most basic level to identify if there is a shared language with the driver. This need not be the case of course since the practice can occasionally exist purely in the realm of non-verbal interaction. But usually, hitchers are a form of entertainment for drivers[15] so frequent verbal communication is the norm.[16]

Perhaps there's a parallel in ignoring hitchhiking as a serious topic for anthropology and the towering figure of Bruno Latour, who is not everyone's cup of tea. As Berliner et al. have stated fairly recently:

> In our attempt to assess the possible contribution of Bruno Latour to anthropology, we found ourselves wavering between two possible portrayals. Our hesitations concern the unique thinker, who sternly wakes over his creation. At the same time, we admire the trickster that he is, the irreverent, creative figure […]. (Berliner et al. 2013)

I have no doubt that this trickster-ish side can be seen as excessive, perhaps even immoral at times. Yet Latour's versatility is such that he

[15] This has even given the originators of Bla bla cars its name. When one registers as a driver or passenger, a question with three options for describing how talkative one is follows this format (bla; bla bla; or bla bla bla).

[16] Except, of course, when there are Harry Potter audio books available.

does address very topical, perhaps even critical issues, as the planet faces the potential for ecological collapse. Some might not like his hair die, hipster specs, or his abhorrence to music over serious conversation that never ceases… or whatever it is that could be identified as the dangers in his thinking which could shatter the layperson's illusions in how science and technology work. Nevertheless, the Anthropocene, the environment, the state of social justice, the desire to change the world for the better, these are topics that much of his recent work deals with; surely that's commendable? Besides, anyone who has taught in a mining college and is part of the editorial board for *Cosmopolitiques*[17] cannot be all that bad? So I would concur, hesitantly as well, that the humanist trickster in Bruno Latour is indeed something to admire.

As a mode of getting to the Other, even within the context of 'at home' ethnography, hitchhiking allows for the expression of the other within the self. That is, hitching introduces strangeness into the familiar, by the act itself as well as the characters involved. In so doing, however, it does not marginalise or completely isolate the eccentric. Rather, it acts as a 'pocket of resistance' (Berger 2001), which demonstrates that strangeness can co-exist with 'everyday' social norms. It allows for types of behaviour and forms of expression to be more different than they are regularly—yet doing so alongside the conventional, at both the level of the individual and the social.

So, not that it is a wordplay that requires a definition, but this would probably be how to best describe the idea of thumbbuddies: a type of co-opportunistic community (Laviolette 2008) inspired by the French expression for *donner un coup de pouce* (meaning to give a little thumb push/stroke, i.e. to give a helping hand). In this imaginary, such communities can do their bit collectively to help make sure there is enough social space for Berger's pockets of resistance to remain secure in a world of leaky logic. Such communities sound utopic. Yet the idea is for them to be organic enough to exist in those spaces in-between the grandiose imagined nowheres and the real someplaces—settings where it is both the pockets and our human 'hands' that hold collective dreams. We would thus not be far from Fritz Schumacher's visions in *Small is Beautiful* (1973). These ideas of 'scaling down' also feature in Alberto Corsín

[17] Established in 2002 in Paris, *Cosmopolitiques* is a French journal with the remit of being a laboratory for the practice of political ecology. See: https://www.boullier.bzh/cosmopolitiques-archives/.

Jiménez's (2013) more recent anthropological research, to which we now turn in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER 7

The 'Carthulucene' at the End of the Road: Lost in the Ruptures Not Taken

'Are you sitting comfortably? Good, then we'll begin'. This was a famous opening to 'Listen with Mother', a BBC radio programme for children that ran for 32 years, from 16 January 1950 until 10 September 1982. Given the audience, it was a gentle, soothing introduction to a broadcast that introduced young toddlers to songs, nursery rhymes, as well as other forms of fairytales and stories for kids. This child mantra has been remixed recently by some electronic music DJs to give it a rather sinister 'Doctor Who' effect.

Eschatology is a word that refers to the world's completion, the end of time. Associated with the apocalypse, or even a type of Armageddon, it has become topical because of growing concerns for the global ecological crisis, as well as due to the increasing importance in the digital humanities for studies dealing with virtual gaming, which sometimes transports its players into the fantasy worlds of medieval conquest, car chases, or the invasion of distant galaxies (Latham 2003). In a simple binary way, one could classify much of the growing body of literature on eschatology as either quite pessimistic, or pointing towards hope for the future. This hope generally resides in a belief for the hybridization of humans with technological forms which would allow us to achieve some immortal 'transience'. Now as someone committed to dialectical thinking and who admires Edmund Leach's Reith Lectures '*A Runaway World*' (1968), I would also argue for a critical middle ground. Any naive optimism should be balanced against exasperating pessimism. After all the planet is

P. Laviolette, *Hitchhiking*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-48248-0_7

finite. Yet as Roger Caillois indicates below, humans are gifted with the faculty of imagination that hitches together abilities to improve and improvise. Art, literature and the sciences, as destinations for improv, need to somehow make way for more re-imagined futures. In one of their 'synthsonic' tracks produced at the turn of the new millennium, Goldfrapp even asks of our human hubris: "who do we think we are?"

Armoured cars sail the sky
They're pink at dawn […]
We're pilots watching stars
The world pre-occupied
'Pilots' (On a Star)[1]

Virtues, Vertigo and Adolescent Car Art

If we artificially juxtapose Caillois' emancipatory approach of a 'play instinct' with Michel Foucault's writings on the constraining mechanisms that originate through Western modernity, some interesting tensions emerge: 'But the latter [Man], more disgraced, also possesses an imagination that knows how to levitate the objects of vertigo where reality offers nothing that must confuse him' (Caillois 1964: 47 [PL translation]). Picking up from Chapter 3 and the Foucauldian idea of *parrhesia*, we move on here to ask where the limitations in an archaeology of knowledge that focuses mostly on the era of modern genealogies of thought could be located. In other words, can anyone ever really go beyond Foucault's ideas of digging into systems for how we know things if they wish to retain the 'values' associated with the realm of modernity? From my reading, this is one of the main questions posed by Linda Tuhiwai Smith in her now classic text *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999).

> Foucault's writings, of course, are concerned almost exclusively with eras and locations which he explicitly regarded as part of the genealogy of the modern Western subject, even if latterly, in his studies of the Hellenistic period (1987; 2005), this included roads not taken and possibilities that have disappeared from view in the course of that history. (Cook et al. 2009: 49) [PL's emphasis]

[1] Off *Felt Mountain*, Goldfrapp (2000), Alison E. Goldfrapp/William O. Gregory, Warner Chappell Music.

Such an obscure statement, admittedly taken out of context, is nonetheless a point to ponder. Yet when do we have time to revisit the roads not taken? Who has such luxuries? When does the modern era even allow people time to themselves? How is it we remember certain things so vividly, whilst forgetting others so easily? Where do we think, reflect have epiphanies—those eureka moments—feelings of liminal enlightenment? Enter the scene, obviously modelled after Auguste Rodin, is Miguel Calderón's '*Le Penseur/The Thinker*' (1971). It's a satirical take on the heavy iconography of the original by mimicking the bodily shape of the famous bronze sculpture through the medium of unopened toilet paper rolls.

Now I recall one such revelatory moment of a lightbulb switching on when being driven by some close friends to the Eden Project (a large botanic biodome in a former China Clay mining landscape of mid-Cornwall). We were off to see Alison Goldfrapp. It was the summer of 2006 and sadly we arrived too late to see the Liverpudlian band called Ladytron. As I sat in the car, with some music we all liked playing in the background, the sub-title to a book it would take nearly five more full years to complete jumped into my head—'*Not a Hap-hazardous Sport*'. It's far from original, a nod in the direction of the anthropologist Nigel Barley. Yet once this wordplay phrase set itself into my mind, a sense of complete calm, maybe even bliss or ecstasy overtook me completely. I felt I was truly on to something and it wasn't an idea that magically appeared in the loo. Not that this is unrelated, well, let's see.

* * *

One evening after midnight, when we were about 14 or 15 years old, my two best mates and I ventured over to the house of one of our teachers. He was one we actually liked, responsible for teaching moral education instead of religion per se. We toilet papered his car. That is, we wrapped it up completely in kitchen and bog roll. It was a pretty good effort too, we even got the exhaust pipe, windscreen wipers and the aerial for the radio. Unfortunately, we never took any photos. Yet he had, which he proudly showed us a few days later, once he'd figured out who the culprits were. Some 15 years later, this innocent bit of fun would come back to haunt me.

I was having dinner with a group of anthropologists from UCL (London that is).[2] They had been involved with a five-year British Academy funded landscape archaeology project on Bodmin Moor in Cornwall. They had devised ways for making certain features in this often grey and gloomy prehistoric landscape stand out, for better recognition and interpretation. They were equally interested in fitting their scientific techniques into a discourse about environmental or land art *à la* Andy Goldsworthy; Richard Long; Christo and Jeanne-Claude.

Two of these people were socio-cultural theorists who would become my PhD supervisors, Barbara Bender & Chris Tilley. Over a curry and some wine, they described a process of wrapping large menhirs and standing stones in cling film, painting them in bright colours, taking photographs and then removing the plastic shell, leaving the stones unscathed. They then asked if I could think of any other ways of highlighting the stones, or making temporary art out of them. 'Well, you could always mummify them in loo roll', I mumbled or snickered, with what must have seemed like an increasingly stupid grin, realising that everyone had suddenly gone silent at the non-deliberate insinuation that such environmental art was a load of crap. Of course I must have intuitively known that what I was about to say would most likely come across as childish or insulting. Yet somehow I couldn't resist. It was an 'instinctive', or better still, a reflex reaction from the memory of a juvenile prank more than a decade before.

I cannot remember much else worth noting from the rest of that evening. It's still a mystery to me, however, why I was asked to participate in the Leskernick Landscape Project in Bodmin. Perhaps they appreciated the irreverence. In terms of the potential for being some sort of 'unofficial' appendage to their particular public archaeology research, and the many publications that have resulted from it, this chapter hijacks some of the conceptual ideas, strategies and methodologies that were involved since it explores the significance of a series of vernacular as well as environmental and installation art practices. My own approach to a 'Hermeneutics of Hitchhiking', tries to explore how immediacy or urgent fieldwork, combined with *longue-durée* socio-historical and phenomenological techniques, can provide a conceptual framework where art and landscape archaeology of the contemporary past can co-exist (Lucas and

[2] There's a need to be specific because this might become confusing later in this chapter.

Buchli 2001; Holtorf 2008). Or what we could perhaps label as a type of 'anthropology of environmental art'. At least that's how I currently make sense of what the 'fluid team' of the project led by Bender, Hamilton & Tilley were doing in the Duchy of Cornwall over 20 years ago.

Participating in this project on Bodmin Moor helped me to think through and better understand art historians such as Hal Foster (1996) and Miwon Kwon (2012), in addition to the work of Michel Foucault and Michael Burawoy, who I'd been reading at the time. The former in his now classical book *The Archaeology of Knowledge* wrote:

> From the political mobility at the surface down to the slow movements of 'material civilisation', ever more levels of analysis have been established: each has its own peculiar discontinuities and patterns; and as one descends to the deepest levels, the rhythms become broader. (Foucault 1972: 3)

Two decades later, the latter claimed:

> Even in this post-modern age of academic reflexivity, which has spawned so much methodological navel-gazing, few social scientists have undertaken empirical research on research itself. (Burawoy 1991: 223)

So how do you do an archaeology of knowledge on a topic that has few concrete epistemological layers? That is one of the conundrums to materialise recently from my hitchhiking project. One option is to begin with objects, things, art-e-fractions since whatever texts exist are tangents. And just as with 'the past' or 'knowledge', one can never get a complete picture, so sections are drawn, frames taken, oblique angles considered. These are methods for reflecting both backwards and forwards, without forgetting the truly real need to pay attention to the present. It's not just a neoliberal doctrine to emphasise that scholarship needs to be relevant to society and current socio-ecological problems, especially when some of those concerns are to do with the future of humanity. In other words, we need to philosophise with intent. This could still take the form of the Marxian view of wishing to change the world for the better. Or at least to make it more beautiful and funnier if it is headed towards some fatalistic calamity—as some doomsday prophets have been predicting over the centuries. Every day the media reveals to us that newer versions of pessimism have been manifesting themselves globally, in these opening months to this new century's next decade. Donna Haraway (2016) for

instance, claims that there is scope for some optimism, without being especially interested in a 'politics of hope' (Verdery 1995; Bubandt et al. 2016).

So how do we apply this to hitchhiking? Why might better understanding this practice be important beyond its singularities, or its ethnographic particularities if you will? In other words, how can we turn hitchhiking's conceptual eccentricities around in order to make it more than a nice quirky topic with little relevance? Some of the objects that I've initially attempted to describe in this book so as to better help us answer these tricky questions are such hybrid things as: cars and road vehicles, infrastructural networks, human motilities and—excuse the tired pun—autobiographical encounters.

Thumb Piece—Augustin *l'Auto-Stoppeur*

Here's one such example of applying an anthropology of environmental art approach to my hitchhiking fieldwork. I start by introducing you to one of the key informants in my ethnographic research. He's nearly 20 years of age and stands at two metres tall. He's not, however, an Auguste Rodin spin-off. Rather, Augustin is a bronze sculpture of a very different disposition—a protagonist to a different set of reflections for the age in which we now live. Unlike Rodin's creation, he's not naked, sitting on his laurels with his fist clenched to his forehead, lost in some deep existential search, or in some hernia straining pensive act. On the contrary, he's a young man very much on the move.

But for all that, don't think just because he's not feigning the cliché pose for activating those little grey cells, that he's an anti-intellectual. Quite the opposite, he's got his book satchel with him and, thumb stretched out whilst sporting a sensible pair of shoes, he's ready to hunt down whomever stole his reading spectacles (Fig. 7.1).

Augustin Philippe Simon was born at the turn of the millennium, on Christmas day 1999, as his Belgian Identity Card reveals. He is the son, as his surname indicates, of Paul Simon who died some years ago now in the noughties. Mr. Simon was an engineer who later became a businessman and opened the Chez Augustin Brasserie/Restaurant. He was one of the first residents of Louvain-la-Neuve, a planned city in the French/Wallon-Brabant part of Belgium. It is now known as the municipality of Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve. This post-war development was

Fig. 7.1 Chez Augustin, *l'auto-stoppeur*. Belgian ID card and portrait of Paul Simon (2015 PL)

built in the 1960s to rehouse a new section of KUL (*Katholische Universität Leuven*, the oldest 'Belgian' university being a Dutch one dating back to the fifteenth century (1425).[3] This post-medieval institution owns the entire section of land on which Louvain-la-Neuve is built, since the deeds of ownership predate the formation of the modern Nation-State. This is particularly relevant in the case of a country that was formed quite recently. As with several others, this is a place with many complex ethno-linguistic divisions and tensions, as well as various means for regulating disputes and engendering tolerance strategies for peace (Fig. 7.2).

Indeed, certain historical precedents are unique to this small crossroads in Western Europe. So New-Leuven/Louvain was a project in twentieth-century urban re-development—utopian, ambitious, modernist. As a post-global conflict laboratory, or experiment for embracing both unity

[3] KUL (A/B) [1834–1968], thereafter KUL/UCL.

Fig. 7.2 '*Coup de Pouce*' (2019 photo by PL)

and diversity in terms of this region's complex socio-religious and politico-linguistic divides, some researchers have seen it as ideal for studying infrastructures of power and identity formation (e.g. Goddard et al. 1996; McDonald 2005). In other words, as the anthropologist Marc Blainey has more recently claimed, a type of microcosm for understanding at least two things: the European project and anthropology's relation to that project, in light of its own colonial associations, affiliations and guilty secrets (2016).[4]

[4] Blainey describes the situation as such: 'The fragmentation process lends credibility to the idea that Belgium is in the process of breaking up into two separate countries. Over the past half-century, Belgium has experienced numerous internal standoffs, tied to its

From this context, as a student travelling in-between a 'segregated' university campus, Paul Simon dreamt up the idea of returning something to this new place, his adopted home town as it were. With Michel Woitrin, he went about the ordeal of finding an artist to put a shape to this idea. Mr Woitrin is crucial to the history of this narrative, so let's open a short parenthesis about him. He was initially a lecturer at UCLouvain who then became an economic adviser for the Ministry of Economic Affairs (1947–1948), an administrator at the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation in Paris (1948–1949) and Deputy Head of Cabinet to the Minister of Economic Affairs (1949–1950).[5]

As did most students in this new town, Mr Simon used to hitchhike between the two Leuvens, to get books and attend different lectures. Once he became a businessman with his own French-style café/bistro, he wanted to give something back to the local community. So through his friend Michel Woitrin, one of UCL's and the city's most influential administrators (who was the neighbour of an artist with several public artworks in the town), Paul Simon commissions the work from Gigi

inbuilt ethnic-linguistic hostilities, what Belgians allude to as the "Linguistic Problem". Influenced by demonstrations of civil unrest that occurred across Europe in 1968-1969, student and faculty protests resulted in the official breakup of two of Belgium's most prestigious universities (Fox 1995: 14-15; see also Jobs 2009). The Catholic University of Louvain[12] became two universities (the Katholieche Universiteit Leuven on the original campus in Flemish Brabant and the Université Catholique de Louvain, established in a newly planned city in Walloon Brabant). The Free University of Brussels also split along linguistic lines […]' (Blainey 2016: 488).

[5] Dr Woitrin [5 May 1919–27 October 2008] was born 101 years after Karl Marx, to the day. He obtained a teaching post at the university in 1950 and was appointed 'ordinary' professor in 1954. His courses related to macroeconomic analysis, international trade theory, contemporary economic issues, as well as economic and social demography. In 1955, he founded and directed the: 'Centre for Perfecting Enterprise Leadership'; in 1958 he was in charge of the Common Market research group; he led the Demography Department in 1963 and that same year became Secretary General and General Administrator of UCL/KUL, holding this position until retiring as emeritus in 1984. He died 24 years later at 89. Maybe even more than as a teacher, it was as the person in charge and the driving force behind the developments of the city of Louvain-la-Neuve that his name survives for posterity. He led the monumental task of building a new twentieth-century city, leading a team of architects and urban planners to do so. Paul Simon was amongst them. And it is thanks to them and the green party mayor at the time that Augustin was commissioned from G. Warny (who has many other public sculptures in the city). Louvain-la-Neuve also has science parks, the Hergé Museum (in honour of Tintin's creator); a championship level golf course. All these have materialised into a new version of an old seat of learning (a 'Foucauldian' pendulum to paraphrase Umberto Eco 1989).

Warny in 1998/1999. She cast him in Bronze in Italy where she does all her heavy works. On the phone she told me that Louvain-la-Neuve is a bit like a 'little Vatican', given its complex history with the church and the legal systems in Belgium concerning land ownership. Mr Simon used the designs for the piece that she created as the 'house-theme' for his establishment, mirroring the sculpture into a blue-logo and affixing a branded concept, whereby travelling bohemian student-types would feel welcome alongside other punters drawn in from the busy Grande-Place onto which the mid-size brasserie leads.

He then gave Augustin, the actual artwork, to UCL. Warny, however, still owns the creative licence, or copyright (whatever the legal term might be) for being accredited as his creator. Augustin came into this world on Christmas day, the dawn of a new millennium, at arguably a turning point for auto-stopping.[6] The university kept him in a 'sarcophagus' in the basement of one of its art storehouses for around two years, before eventually finding a spot near a parking lot to display him. Shortly after, his reading glasses were nicked. The bistro insignia has him wearing sunglasses, large aviator shades—his 'incognito and adventuresome side, whilst on the road', according to Gigi.[7]

To replace his lost property, as a pre-pubescent scholar, he was baptised with a ceremony for the media. Shortly after that, he was vandalised, or accidentally knocked over by some heavy vehicle, such as a lorry (at least according to an interpretation by his 'mother', who literally modelled the two-metre high young man on her fourth child). The reasoning behind suggesting it was an accident is that his arm, after being broken off, was placed by his feet rather than nicked as a souvenir. During our short 45-minute phone conversation, I found fascinating, captivating, even mesmerising, her abilities to demonstrate so many different possibilities for seeing the world in ways that are unconventional. For instance, she commented that she still hitchhikes and finds Apps or similar methods unreliable because of their technological dependence. This goes against the conceived opinion that such techniques allow for more safety nets.

[6] A day when, in world news, an Indian passenger plane was hijacked by armed terrorists and taken to Afghanistan. A day also when Russia launched a ground attack on Grozny, the capital of the Chechnyan Federal Republic. This required the infantry to take the city 'street by street' (BBC News, 26 March 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tk1WgEOZ8to).

[7] Gigi Warny, personal communication (15 October 2019).

I desperately wanted to ask how she felt about her children 'hitching', but held back. It seemed inappropriate. Besides, it became clear when we ended our call that she had a more alternative existence than I had anticipated. After browsing her website I had made certain assumptions. Some of these slowly dissipated as we spoke, so by the time she explained living a lifestyle in a domestic setting without electricity, I wasn't completely shocked. But it was a farther cry from the norm than I had expected—a reminder of why it is often fun and sometimes pleasantly destabilising, or distorting, to try to understand art ethnographically.

Shady Characters, Standing Up for HH (Mid-October 2019)

What's perhaps interesting about Augustin's 'baptism' in 2002 and the argument of Belgium being at the heart of the EU, global migration and so on, is the way that Augustin stands out as an Other. His 'outsiderness' isn't so much to do with being an inanimate object. Rather, it's by being an alloy composite of copper, tin and zin, etc. And the patina that forms when bronze oxidises means he looks, well, black.[8] Certainly not copper. Even his hair is tight and curly, modelled on Warny's son, who might be of mixed descent. This is just one of those questions I need to follow up with her. Without the empirical evidence, to what extent is this an un(sub)conscious reading on my part. Or is it a collective consciousness reflection of a situation and set of tensions that have been part of Belgium's history since its Imperial role in the colonisation of certain parts of Africa. Regardless of this ethnic angle, he still stands out as different, possibly uncanny. This is part of an implicit Othering often projected onto hitchhikers/loners/drifters throughout the history of the practice since after the war.[9]

[8] See Bonazzi (1997) regarding Mirrors, images and the ideas of Othering/blackness; also Khaira and Carlin (2003). The previous chapter addresses vanishing hitchhiker lore which might bring to mind a connection to Heonik Kwon's (2008) interpretation of mass psychic sightings in his book *Ghosts of War in Vietnam*. This point is ever more pertinent subsequent to the attention that public sculptures have received since the May/June 2020 protests surrounding the killing of George Floyd and the global Black Lives Matter movement.

[9] For various case studies of 'vanishing' hitchhikers in urban myth see: Jones (1944) for New York and Voichici (2012) for Romania. Brunvand (1981) gives a classic overview of phantom, ghosts and vanishing roadside travellers. Galuska and Johnson (2007) provide an exhaustive bibliographic reference list to works on this theme. And the next chapter briefly explores the three hitching ghosts at Disney World's Haunted Mansions.

After the baptism, some might say by fire, since he literally had some recasting work done to mend his broken arm, with his feet also being welded to a deeper, more sturdy base, he was then moved near the exit of a shopping complex by the city's central bus stands. This location has him shielded from the rain and sun by some trees in-between a park for cars and a set of access roads. Iconographers reading this could push further the Catholic/Judeo-Christian symbolism of what's happening to this 'martyred', saint-like hitchhiker. To enumerate some possible speculations: he survives being crucified by a vandal/vehicle, he's anchored by his feet to stay vertical, he's healed from his blindness or had his second sight perforated. In having sustained injuries, having his thumb pierced, so to say, he becomes a type of post-modern 'canonised relic'—a future for *Aurelius Augustinus*—brought back to the earth's surface to prophesise a new branch of mobile philosophy to those in awe or agony over any Chthulu infested future (Lovecraft 1928).

Indeed, the Medieval period's Catholic Church foundations are built on an eschatological system inspired by Augustinian 'amillennialism'. I would therefore argue that there is an active 'Carthulucenic' symbolism at work in the narrative surrounding Augustin. The seculars amongst you would be correct to ask: how else could this religious symbolism be understood? The anthropologist of art (or is that agency) Alfred Gell (1992) might say that Augustin is a technology of enchantment—not only to this ethnographer, but for the world of new media. I would hazard a further guess that he's a mnemonic technology, a *memento mori*, as well as many other things to many other interpreters. Some might even say that he's an encapsulation, or better still—an in*car*ceration—of our very humanity, as it were, as it was, as it could be remembered.

Augustin is dressed up in a scarf on 24 September 2019 because it was quite cold in the afternoon when I went to pay him my second visit (Fig. 7.3).[10] Soon after taking some snaps from my phone camera, whilst

[10] The first was after the Lokeren Festival in 2015, when I camped overnight. The next days I travelled first thing in the morning to Louvain-La-Neuve to find the Chez Augustin café. Arriving before the opening at 11 a.m., I walked around town to find the Augustin sculpture. After taking some photos, I returned to speak with the owner. Asking about the story behind the commissioning of this 'public' artwork, he simply pointed to some frames above the bar near the cash till. The first image depicts Augustin's national ID card, with the birth date of 1999. He adds that the statue was commissioned by the co-owner, now deceased (Mr. P. Simon), who used to hitch in the 1960s and 1970s. His portrait is next to the one with Augustin's ID. Paul Simon thought the sculpture would

Fig. 7.3 Augustin. Permission by G. Warny

make a good mascot for the café and a sketch of the artwork features on the windows, doors, menus and business cards. There are other old photos of hitchhikers in the café, downstairs in a corridor by the toilets.

After lunch I tried hitching to Germany. Giving up after a three hour wait, I took the train to Liege. I then got a lift with a Wallon artist who was moving into his parental home after his mother had recently moved into sheltered accommodation. He was sitting in the café talking with someone when I arrived in the West part of Liege to check my emails and take a break from travelling. When I got to the curb side and dropped down my bag, his car pulled up right beside me as I was about to wave my sign in the air. He'd seen me in the café and said to himself, 'he's a real traveller'. In collecting me quite late in the afternoon he offered to join him with some friends at a little gathering that he was meant to be attending. He then suggested that I could stay in the place he was in the process of moving out of before putting it on the market.

playing around with methodological ideas of fieldwork immediacy (given new digital ICT possibilities), as well as older psychologically inspired techniques (involving our first, minimally filtered impressions of things), I shared the image with some friends on social media. One response from a 30-something-year old, who normally travels on long-distance coaches, was: 'He turned to stone already while waiting, give that poor fucker a flixbus voucher on this thumb :)'. One could fairly safely suggest then, that Augustin is more than a banal public sculpture. He's equally a memorial reflecting a practice that many argue is dying because of ride-share apps and cheap travel offered by budget coaches or airline companies.[11]

When looking closely enough at this statue's thumb, it is obvious that it has been rubbed for luck, as is the case with many Bronze art installations around the world. It could also be that some people are testing the limb's strength, to see if they can nick a piece of public art as a keepsake.[12] We notice that in 2019 he'd been tagged with purple spray paint—a royal traveller in the context of a constitutional monarchy.[13]

Augustin does have a full name, but he goes by the simple pseudonym *l'auto-stoppeur*, which appropriately enough is the 'non-name' that Silvain Prudhomme gives to one of the main protagonists of *Sur les routes* (2019). This French novel is set in the Southeast of France, where Kerouac (1960) himself situates many of the more adventurous moments of his European *grande tournée*. Again, it's easy enough to interpret

He collected me at lunch the next day. We went for a walk in some former mining landscapes. Then he dropped me some 10 miles from Aachen, near the Belgian/German border. An Asian man stopped after only 5 minutes. But he wasn't going the right way. Less than five minutes later, I got a short lift to the boarder with a woman in a hatchback. Two Polish chaps retuning from Paris were hitching so I rested for 45 minutes until they got a lift. Less than 40 minutes later I too was off—in a fast-moving BMW with a Dutch guy working South of Charleroi as a Human Resources staff trainer. After sussing out that I wasn't going to insist on speaking French with him (he was being forced to learn it at work so was tired of his week of lessons) he told me I was a 'lucky bastard' because he was going straight to Berlin to see his girlfriend. He'd been doing this every couple of weeks for a few months now and wasn't sure if this might be the last time (Laviolette 2020 gives a more complete description).

[11] Such a loaded response suggests that it would also be worthwhile to study workers of such service provider industries.

[12] As it also happened with Miran Ipavec's life-size laser cut out of himself (Ipavec 2013; see Chapter 2).

[13] See M. Blainey (2016).

this text with considerable Judeo-Christian overtones. The three principal characters are the narrator Sasha; a literary translator called Marie; and her partner referred to as *l'auto-stoppeur*. Prudhomme admits in a French interview that the book is partly autobiographical, with the intention of trying to capture the feeling and the strength of being there, in the moment; '*sentir la force d'être la*'.[14] He sets the scene in the same area where he grew up with characters to be of his own age range. He talks of the narrator as a writer who, after a long absence, encounters a long-lost friend, the 'hitcher'. They were great friends in their youth but needed to separate since they were seeking polar opposite things out of life.

The reunited friendship brings them closer, but then there's a rupturing role reversal. Sasha falls in love with his fiend's wife during a period when his friend lapses into returning to his road travelling ways, leaving his child and partner 'available'. The reunion has reanimated *l'auto-stoppeur's* free spirit after his domestic captivity. Sasha, the diligent and responsible writer, gradually moves in with Marie, also becoming a surrogate father of sorts. As a counterpart persona who has never really settled down himself, he is now equally challenged with a life change. In the middle we have Marie who is attracted to both men; we are left to imagine a *ménage à trois* scenario. Metaphors of betrayal and sin, as well as liberal/libertine values for free love are all present. Is this a nostalgic yearning for the values of the 1970s, of which Prudhomme is only just at the tail end of having experienced first-hand?[15]

Leaky Logic and Melting *Trompe Pas*

If you think this is all a bit weird, idiosyncratic or just plain zany, just try going online and doing a search for 'Hitching Snowmen'. It's a huge genre, an internet meme—mostly of hitchers with a short shelf-life going to warmer climatic zones, or towards spring and summer. A few go to the North Pole, however. Shouldn't they all be waiting to go someplace where they'd get better accident indemnity or fuller medical coverage? In

[14] Interview: http://www.gallimard.fr/Catalogue/GALLIMARD/L-arbalete-Gallimard/Par-les-routes.

[15] This novel also has elements similar to Andrei Tarkovski's *Stalker*, where each character is part of split personality (poet, philosopher, scientist), but with a female protagonist thrown in by Prudhomme.

other words, to a destination that assures them some form of life support? Or is this a Marxist joke that I haven't understood yet… an army of ice blocks seeking its own self-destruction so that it can melt itself into more air-time?

Rather, it could be some indication of our very serious collective denial towards the destructive character of anthropocentric behaviour? What Freud called the Thanatos 'instinct'. That is, an obsession with self-annihilation so that, particularly in this case, through denying the impact that the motor vehicle and petrol chemical industries are having on climate change, we are begging for the Extinction Rebellion to be taken seriously? Indeed, one might even be tempted to make an outlandish analogy that we are in the midst of another Cold War—a global fight to keep the world cold enough so as to avoid the repercussions of what Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2016) has called the problem of our planetary 'overheating'. At the very least, it is clear from ongoing peaceful protests and global manifestations that it is time for certain international leaders and governments to stop fooling the public when it comes to the invisible ghost of Adam Smiths' guiding hand. The neoliberal economic policies that have been more recently interpreted from such enlightenment thinking really do seem to be acting autonomously, so that a haze of smog has descended upon all our eyes. It keeps us in the dark about how to behave, when to respond and what to do in order to curb our enthusiasm for incessant growth.

Moralising pit-stop aside, a different set of references are worth exploring through the enigma of a character simply known as the Hitchhiker.[16] He is a bronze *trompe l'oeil* traveller, hitching his way to Boston. He was made by J. Seward Johnson, who has produced over 450 sculptures worldwide in such places as Hong Kong's Pacific Place, Les Halles in Paris, Times Square and the Rockefeller Centre in NYC, and the Via Condotti in Rome—all roads lead there indeed.[17] A direct conceptual

[16] The online catalogue for the owner of this work, the Hofstra Museum of Art, also calls him the 'Witchiker'.

[17] The Via dei Condotti is a popular, fashionable street in the heart of Rome, straight West of the Vatican. In Roman times it allowed people who crossed the Tiber to reach Pincio hill because it was one of the arteries that cut through the ancient Via Flaminia. It begins at the foot of the Spanish steps and is named after channel conduits that carried water to the Baths of Agrippa.

This reminds me of a joke Miran Ipavec told me in Tolmin at his Hitchhikers' Museum in August 2019: 'where is a hitcher going if he stands on one side of the road, gets a

parallel to the book *An Anthropological Trompe l'Oeil for a Common World* by Alberto Corsín Jiménez (2013) would prove valuable. Now nearly 90, American artist John Seward Johnson II was born into the Johnson & Johnson cosmetic family. During the 1960s, he started out as a painter. By 1968, he made the decision to switch to 'sculpting', but initially his silent participants in everyday life were indeed realistic statues because they were 'human veneers'.[18] Literally meaning eye deceivers (or visual distortions meant to trick, fool and challenge its audience's perception of reality), Seward Johnson's *trompe l'oeils* were in this case 'actors' painted and disguised as bronzes and then left in public spaces as a form of social experiment. Since 1968, he's created over 300 permanent pieces that are scattered throughout the world in private collections. 'Hitchhiker' was donated to Hofstra University in 1983. Johnson's work was made especially popular in 1985 when that University's Museum and Gallery held an exhibition of his real inanimate bronze sculptures. Hofstra was founded in 1935 as an extension of New York University under the name Nassau College. It is the largest private university campus on Long Island.

Because so many of Seward Johnson's original human painted bronzes have moved from their site-specific locations, if you chase up this Boston hitcher online, chances are you'll end up a bit like Don Quixote, flapping at windmills. Incidentally, this reminds me of an in-flight magazine I found completely by chance, or serendipitously perhaps. In March 2018, I was flying from Madrid to Tallinn, via Charles de Gaulle airport. It was an exhausting and exhilarating journey of three weeks, travelling the length and width of most of Spain in a zigzag of flights, car hires and coaches from Madrid to Bilbao, Santander to Vitoria, via many pit stops in such places as Guernica and San Sebastien. In the South we took in Seville, Ronda, Málaga, Granada and many other surreal places like that Smurf village Júzcar in Andalucía.[19] Sitting fatigued but comfortable in

lift, gets out and then stands on the other side?' PL: in circles? MI: 'Hhmm, kind of… to Ro[…]'. PL: 'ome, ahh yes, I see what you did… because all roads lead there'.

[18] John Seward Johnson II (aka J. Seward Johnson Jr) became famous for helping to establish a whole movement of bronze painted *trompe l'oeil* 'statues' which has become a motif for street performers and panhandling.

[19] 'Whose car' indeed. I'm cherry picking names here of course. It is a real 'fictional' place though, which the year before *Lonely Planet* said was 'closing down' because the Smurfs were being turfed out. The little village of fewer than 300 people certainly felt

my window seat, after a stopover in Paris during which I had to change flights, I reached into the seat pocket in front of me to grab the *Air France Magazine*. Gloomy and rainy outside, the plane zipped down the slippery runway and I gleaned the 'retired' Concord approaching fast to our right. Fortunately, I had my camera to hand so I took a couple of snaps, followed by some nervous flipping through of the glossy pages, in anticipation of hopefully drifting off to sleep against the window. Landing on a random page, there was this glacial black and white photo of an ice-cold figure staring right back—Terry Gilliam—I hadn't escaped La Mancha, either.

In the interview this iconoclastic film director talks of finally finishing his up-until-then, 'doomed life work', now being called '*The Man Who Killed Don Quixote*'. The article is both in French and English. As a fan of Monty Python and many of his absurdist, situationalist and other genres of truly bizarre realisations, I was hooked. And then I nearly dropped my phone between the seats when I got to the last lines. They read[20]:

> **Your house is filled with objects […] above all, books. What kind of reader are you?**
> I'm always reading two books at the same time […]
> **And comic books?**
> I don't read them anymore. Even though I made some. I was hitching around Europe when I was young and ended up in Paris. I didn't have any money to get back to America.
> I got in touch with the editor of Pilote magazine, René Goscinny. He gave me two pages to do, something about snowmen […].
>
> (In Aucouturier et al. 2018: 62)

These *trompe l'oeil* bronzes seem to capture our imaginations for many reasons: they immortalise our actions; artists themselves often get

like a ghost town when visiting. Yet there were still a few Smurfs and Gargamel's lurking around the corner. There were reports that some disputes took place with the heirs of the Smurf creator (the 'graphic artist' Pierre Culliford from Belgium). Yet that seemed to be resolved when villagers settled on some royalty payment on all Smurf-related income. Perhaps the closure is related to how such income could actually be determined? Or with concerns for over-tourism since this is a region close to protected areas of outstanding natural and cultural heritage value (see Smith 2017).

[20] There are some interesting translation terms between the English interview and the French translation, which does not mention hitchhiking or *auto-stop* but simply 'j'ai fait un long tour d'Europe'.

shrouded in mystery and enigma. Take Banksy for instance. His artist residency in New York during 2013 '*Better out than in*' was a media sensation. As with the incognito enigma himself, his work offers social challenges, mirroring presence by absence—being conspicuous by inconspicuousness, conspiratorial by taking risks. Of playing with vertigo and the fear induced by state mechanisms. For others, *trompe l'oeils* will be reminiscent of the 'disappeared'; for others still, they could evoke stories, myths and legends of the vanishing hitchhiker, as well as similar macabre stories dealing with uncanny ghost apparitions (Brunvand 1981; Johnson 1992; Kwon 2008; Lyngdoh 2012; Ferrell 2018).

Anyhow, in the case of Hofstra University's ownership of this artwork by Seward Johnson, there are certain uncanny parallels with Augustin. Both are owned by Institutions of Higher Education. And similar to UCLouvain, Hofstra equally has links to Dutch origins. Both would seem to be students, although this is more ambiguous regarding the Boston Hitcher. He certainly seems older and on top of his large rucksack does have a mid-size suitcase by his side. His repeated presence nearby many East coast university campuses, before settling in Long Island, could even suggest some itinerant status. It could indicate a mature student or a staff/faculty member who's fallen on hard times. His life history, however, offers another interpretation. Given that, unlike Augustin, he has no real biographical narrative constructed for him, we are left to speculate.[21] Is he simply a runaway? Or we can assume something more sinister, that he's some type of abandoned abomination. A kind of Kasper Hauser, who cannot speak for himself and who has been too Other in his stillness for his mobile human kin to bear (Fig. 7.4). They've left him in this alien world to the mercy of the elements, with nothing but a sign around his neck and enough provisions for him to make his own way in the world. Alternatively again, he's more literally meant to be a time travelling ghost. He only blinks when you move away. Or again he's the haunting apparition of a lost age. If a hitcher falls in a forest, can anybody steer?

[21] A blog posting from around 2009 stated that Boston was a 'random destination' for such a traveller. Yet other online references create a narrative identity for him as being a student commuting through the East-coast highway belt of Ivy League seats of learning.

Fig. 7.4 Kasper Hauser, Ansbach Germany (2006 Michael Zaschka) (Public domain wikimediacommons)

Truck Stop—What's in a Frame?

As anthropologist Tim Ingold (2011) reminds us in his reaction to Bruno Latour, names and the naming of things do matter.[22] So when you hear Gould, who do you think of? Here we shall consider, not Stephen Jay, the American palaeontologist, who equally had a short life, but Glen, the 'North American' composer. Have I lost you yet, because this type of stochastic, stop and start, go forward, backward, as long as you keep moving type of journey can be exhausting and confusing?

[22] They might sometimes even influence our choice of research topic (see Drifter 2014).

Isn't that what research, scholarship is meant to be… if it's easy it cannot be good—to paraphrase Pierre Bourdieu, or maybe even Albert Einstein. Yet paradoxically, narrative telling has to be comprehensive to people beyond the intelligentsia. This is part of an ongoing philosophical debate about how political could/should research be. I digress though, so let's take a diversion instead to a different *trompe l'oeil* by turning to *Thirty Two Short Films About Glen Gould* (Girard 1993). This is a bio-anthology, or semi-fictionalised, pseudo-documentary about this musical composer's various forms of creativity and eccentricities. 32 was the age at which Gould stopped performing live. It is also the year of his early to mid-twentieth-century birth.[23]

Now the film was released in 1993 at the Venice film festival. It's 98 minutes long, directed by Francois Girard and written by Don McKellar and Girard. It features actor Colm Feore as Gould.[24] One of the shorts is called *Truck Stop*.[25] This is a story that directly and indirectly tackles the pros-and-cons of hitchhiking. One question when watching it is: which narrative do you follow? The Anglophone truck drivers? Or the bilingual couple at the service counter? The Québécois driver here has had his route changed after three years. He's made 156 journeys to this Truck Stop (near a summer home location Gould used to visit) to see the waitress… she then says to him in English before resuming her work, 'it's over'. The conditions of his employment have changed, the relationship is

[23] Glen Gould [25 September 1932–4 October 1982] was a Canadian composer and virtuoso pianist who admired Bach. His premature death at the age of 50, of unusual circumstances, can possibly be compared with some of the problems and ailments faced by the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski).

[24] (Producers Allder, Finchman, Sweete, Weinstein). Distributed by Rhombus Media/Samuel Goldman Co. Toronto Canada. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5Y4wVWz-AQ.

[25] This was kindly passed on to me by Dr Aleh Ivanou. On 23 October 2019, Aleh wrote to me: 'Dear Patrick, may I contribute to your research with another relevant story – most heart-rending story about hitch-hiking that I know – how a cat was hitch-hiking in minus 40C on Kolyma. Please, see at 45:55.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oo1WouI38rQ

This YouTube-based documentary by Yuri Dudj is one of the most viewed in Russia this year (2019). Yuri is a young journalist, film-maker, producer. He is considered as one of main challenges to Putin's regime regarding Russian civil society. He filmed this documentary last year. The title is *Kolyma - Birthplace of Our Fear*. Kolyma is a household name (scary/horror term) in the former USSR (especially so to Soviet people). It is both a road and a huge area in Russia North-East […].'

done. Grudgingly he accepts it. Meanwhile in the background, there are two men betting on a pool table. The main storyline is told by a trucker who collected a 'hippie hippie' type when stopping for some company on the road during a long-haul drive. His initial impression is that the long-hair in scruffy flairs by the roadside was a man, only to be surprised when a young woman hops into the cabin of his lorry. She's told him her whole life story within an hour of meeting.

As the short film unfolds quickly, we gravitate around the main protagonist, who is of course a type of non-character. This central presence is a shy and shielded figure, a character with a hat, gloves and sunglasses. The short film starts as he pulls up to a roadside diner in a big stretch car driving South out of the city of Toronto (a sign indicates he's approximately 20 miles away). Some books rest on the dashboard. He seems content with himself once finding a song on the radio. The irony of the lyrics in the snippet we hear talk about going 'downtown' to alleviate loneliness.[26] And yet this singular man, in leaving such a destination, seems to be on a journey to escape his urban solitude. The music follows him into the dinner, insinuating that they are tuned into the same radio station. He then sits, assuming a fairly central position. He is clearly a regular client, receiving instant attention from the staff. It is then that he (a man meant to be Gould) tunes himself into the conversations around him, taking them all in one after another. He's both observer and orchestrator of the scene simultaneously. Acting as some semi-visible, clandestine figure in the shadows, he's both incognito and all hearing. He could even be taking notes for a memoir, or to gather material for writing a new composition.

One radio documentary that Gould was involved with, in order to virtualise his life presence and live performances, was *The Idea of the North*.[27] This addresses his sympathy for the plight of Native Americans and his concerns over the environment. It also seems to be about maintaining humour despite a fear of people. This type of 'smokescreen' he developed into a persona—the 'auto-crat' in an interview of himself as portrayed in the 32 short films. We thus see how he began to prefer

[26] Music: the song 'Downtown', performed by Petula Clark was written and produced by Anthony Hatch (not hitch), in November 1964 (Pye, Marble Arch/Warner Bros. 3.05 mins).

[27] There are many references to the notion of the North as an imaginary. One that directly addresses *l'auto-stop*, however, is by the graphic novelist Michel Rabagliati (2015).

pseudo-fictional and surreal encounters—creating a prosthesis of his music and visions for a better world through the growing new media technology available at the time. This is of course all symptomatic of the social theories being developed by one of his 'countrymen' Marshall McLuhan (1964), who most people will know for such famous phrases as 'the global village', or the 'medium as message'.

One can find parallels some decades later with the work of Michael Burawoy (1979) or Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988) who push such ideas into the more political realm with *Manufacturing Consent*. Such sources might spring to mind, as the docu-drama stories of Gould's life also become ethically and morally loaded with public awareness messages for charity, acceptance and tolerance in everyday life, as we see in *Truck-Stop*. As a tangent, what's missing in that short film (but present in the rest of the feature movie) is the indigenous peoples' dimension, suggesting that hitching is a 'white-man' thing. This is demonstrated even more so by the film with the plot twist of the trucker whose monologue is the most audible and understandable (at least for many English speakers). He starts talking about what seems to be a rather 'tough-guy' story, one that sounds like it might finish with some unpleasant ending, or have some misogynistic spin. Instead, the trucker stops his monologue with the idea of abiding by a strict moral code in everything he does. His narrative ends by returning the troubled young girl to her parents' home, despite her almost 'begging' to be abused by him, in the disturbed state of mind he recognized her to be in.

Gould, as a clandestine fly on the wall, is eavesdropping in an omnipresent way on everything that is going on. The character himself in this account of his life is being fetishized as a quintessential or archetypical stranger. Known to everyone, yet invisible, a troubled genius that everyone identifies with and perhaps too often wants a piece of—begging for 'his' recognition, accolade, tutorship or whatever. Does this not remind the anthropologist in us all of Clifford Geertz's (1973) deep-description of feeling like a ghost when starting fieldwork in Bali and not understanding the local cultural codes?

We are therefore in the presence of an anti-social or over-social Other—a kind of 'stalker' or wanderer, restless and somewhat nomadic that many people fear, keep away from or want to share too much concern for. At

least until some ritual or rite of passage is accomplished successfully to set them free.[28]

Roads Not Shaken

A valid critique of the material presented above is that it is rather Eurocentric (Tuhiwai Smith 1999). Yet after all this is a project mainly dealing with European hitchhiking. But to leave it at that is a lazy answer, since even within Europe we must recognise disharmony and difference (Brubaker 2002). A guiding premise throughout this book is that hitchhiking is an activity of the embodied imagination. Nevertheless, the conundrum of sorts that I've raised by talking about how it is also a writerly past-time, entangles us in some reflections on the ties between language and the structuring of thoughts/politics. People such as Umberto Eco, for example, have suggested that Hegel or Heidegger would have had different hermeneutics of phenomenological theories, had they grown up elsewhere, or spoken a different language. This seems fairly obvious. Yet there is a danger that some people might come up with quite deterministic conclusions when allowed to take such arguments out of context. Or in reverting the logic. Richard Rorty (1989) for examples has noted something to the effect that philosophical problems are akin to problems of language. Paraphrasing Orwell (1950), an English equivalent might suggest to stop hiding things behind a language.

Hitchhiking is a practical problem though, right? It's largely about being pragmatic and having contingency plans. So, we can theorise experience, or apply cross-cultural examples, but this is difficult for those activities that exist beyond the spoken or written word. This certainly hasn't been done so much for hitchhiking, perhaps because it is a taken for granted rite of passage for a disappearing age. I'm not so sure though. As a rite of passage for the educated, free, adventure seekers, there are nonetheless many examples proving the contrary, at least cross-culturally. For instance, we could ask if hitchhiking has been difficult to study because it is coded in secrecy, ambiguity, as well as art or media sensationalism. This is perhaps closer to the mark, especially in a shrinking world with many standardising processes for uniformity and health 'n'

[28] Again, see Franz Nicolay's descriptions of the estrangement that touring lifestyles can have on self-esteem: '[…] trying to patch the holes we've torn in our own lives by our leaving with rags from those of the people we pass' (2016: 3).

safety concerns. Why has it not been discussed much academically? Maybe because it is too counter-cultural, dangerous to think with. Seeking such answers is like doing a U-turn on a round-about. Could be fun, but doesn't get us very far.

Indeed, some might argue that hitchhiking is not a philosophical problem at all. Yet if Rorty is right, equating both language and philosophy, then hitchhiking is a language problem, insofar as communication and facility with languages does make it easier.[29] Besides, maybe the issue exists in the 'beyond language mechanism' of our human-hybridity as entwined with motor vehicles, what some call techno-scientific eschatologies: 'Under labels as varied as man-machine hybridization, androids, posthumans or transhumans, a new eschatological path has emerged' (Liogier and Servais 2016: 292).

One way to get around the critique of Eurocentricism, would be to draw on parallel cross-cultural case studies within the anthropological literature. For instance, Anne-Marie Vuillemenot (2011: 130) talks about how her nomadic male informants in Kazakhstan could no longer carry out their livelihood of being shepherds. The repercussions of the Soviet regimes, recent war on terror and so on—this onslaught of the effects of an unstable modernity has changed their lifeworld landscapes beyond recognition. As a result, they have had to seek alternative employment, as ambulance or taxi drivers mostly. The upshot is that they no longer travel on horseback from village to city centre, but in cars.[30]

This is a clear example of what I mean by 'Carthulucene'. By contrast, the current volume (in terms of field material) is certainly a study that can be classed as comfortable. Yet this isn't always the case. I've tried to show, at least through secondary sources, that there is a darker side to

[29] The word 'Auto-stop' has many derivatives. And in some languages there's more than one way to call the practice (for instance, in Romanian there's both *autostopul* and *ia-mă nene*). The documentary by DeVilder and Dumortier *Hitchanbul* (2012) provides a pan-European account of trying to get from Belgium to Istanbul in a week.

[30] Vuillemenot relies on such thinkers as Agier, Appadurai, Bauman and Marcus to make her argument. I'm drawn especially to how she uses Alexei Yurchak (2005) *Everything Was Forever* and Michel Agier (1997) *Anthropologues en dangers*. Because of her sympathy/empathy with the plight of her informants, she ends up creating a sense of loss, exile and emotional trauma that relates to her own identity and personhood. As a privileged European anthropologist who has access to a world that is rapidly disappearing because of policies of global international relations, which are indeed beyond the reach of most ethnographic research tools to truly grasp, her auto-ethnographic account about disciplinary exile is disturbingly thought-provoking.

hitchhiking rhetoric. By playing around with familiar terms and concepts, I've attempted to help reconcile the tensions between other types of real-world problems and the abstractions of an upwardly mobile practice as it is often performed by educated and usually fairly privileged participants. Besides, there is 'Carporeality' to focus on; the body languages that are shared more easily across language borders. And then there are the philosophical/moral problems of sharing vs begging; sociality/solidarity vs individualism; socialism/communism vs capitalism. Or even, as a reaction against the human arrogance of thinking in terms of the Anthropocene. Hence, we now have the Chthulucene—as Donna Haraway is fond of calling it these days (Bubandt et al. 2016)… the 'Ca®thulucene' in my own current world view.

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CHAPTER 8

Fine: Waiting for Volvo

So, this is an interesting place. I guess it's as good as any other for waiting. It certainly seems to be a place where time has stood still for a while. So here I am, feeling time. If time feels like this then I must be trapped in waiting, playing a waiting game. When I was a student, going to music concerts and festivals was one of my biggest passions. It was a way to escape, to find out more about the artists whose work I was so drawn to from the sonic environment around me. I discovered this cool waiting game whereby one stood by the road and tried to capture a lift—to somewhere in particular, or to anywhere but here, as the cliché goes. Yet at this moment in my life, I'm tormented by Samuel Beckett's existentialist idea of waiting for the sake of waiting. Waiting for some mythical character that never arrives. Waiting, as it were, in vain—for something or someone who won't turn up and who probably doesn't exist anyway. Instead, as a hitchhiker, you'll understand that I'm not waiting for Godot. Rather, I'm waiting for Volvo. In other words, I'm waiting for a lift in a nice, safe, comfortable car of ultra-modern Swedish design. Or a bicycle, or whatever.

Maybe these are archetypical moments of being placeless. When one is ignored, when people drive past and 'refuse' to acknowledge our presence in the world; denying the essence of humanity. It is during moments such as these, I guess, that one is truly without place. Marc Augé in the mid-1990s wrote a book about non-places—like motorways for instance. Indeed, as passengers dependent on others we often have to wait in odd

P. Laviolette, *Hitchhiking*,
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places—places for example where we hear the incessant mechanical hum of engines as well as that wall of sound caused by hundreds of tyres rolling past on tarmac. Those of us who play this game expose ourselves to hours and hours of this sort of repetitive and monotonous white-noise. The background vroom, vroom of incessant traffic.

> And you know it's time to go. Through the sleet and driving snow. Across the fields of mourning. Light in the distance. And you hunger for the time. Time to heal, desire, time. And your earth moves beneath, your own dream landscape. ('A Sort of Homecoming', U2, 1984)[1]

Tragi-Comedy, Systemic Slip Roads

And such noise as well as the waiting that accompanies it can drive us a bit crazy too. So, we play makeshift waiting games to pass the time. How many cars an hour? Where do I reckon those registration plates come from? How many people is each vehicle carrying? I'm sure you have your own, like kicking stones across the road to hit a signpost. Who hasn't played that one, especially in those dull moments of frustration? Or the singing of songs and recalling our favourites stories of absurdity:

> ESTRAGON – 'Nothing happens.
> Nobody comes, nobody goes. It's awful'.
>
> (Samuel Beckett 1956: 31)
> (Act 1: A Country Road. A Tree. Evening).

I wonder though, maybe these drivers that pass by, the ones who refuse to offer a lift, they must know to some extent that they are leaving us in limbo. So my question is, is there any reflection beyond that on their part? Doesn't the anomalous figure of the stranger by the roadside occupy any more of their mental space? What I'm asking is, are they really ignoring us so completely? Or does our presence by the lay-by stalk them to a certain extent? That is, does it eat away at their conscience, or at least annoyingly bother them just a wee bit.

[1] U2 (A. Clayton, D. Evans, P. Hewson, L. Mullen) 1984. A sort of homecoming. From *The Unforgettable Fire* (producers Brian Eno and Daniel Lanois). London: Island Records Ltd.

'Honey, I'm home. You'll never bloody guess what? I spotted a hitch-hiker today. Lunatic. Ya, kinda weird. A bit old for that sort of thing and all dressed in black with these sketchy shades holding up his floppy hair. I thought to myself, no way I'm giving a lift in my new shiny beemer to that scruffy type of David Bowie wannabe anarchist-punk'.

Such a scenario reflects a great error in the system. Loads of people going places, but increasingly intimidated because society seems to be telling them that they should to be afraid of others. Or that their personal space and property are so valuable that they shouldn't be prepared to share with an unknown person who is either needier, or with a greater sense of adventure. It seems, at least at this moment when people speak of hitchhiking as purely a historical phenomenon that doesn't happen so much these days, that socially we are indeed going nowhere, or even backwards.

What's worse then, being ignored or being despised? I'd say the former. I'd rather be noticed and counted, even if unfavourably, than overlooked. Seen through as if I were a ghost. So if we're present and disliked for being auto-stoppers, then good. Then at least we're acting as a prickly pear in the social consciousness—a colourful fibre in a washed-out moral fabric of modernity. Because my position is that, well maybe not in the Yukon or Alaska, but generally there are too many cars in the world. And I think it's completely incorrect to see so many single-occupancy vehicles—except those new mini electric Teslas of course.

Another fun thing to do whilst waiting is to refine one's singing in the shower voice. […] 'lalalala, we're on the road to nowhere' […]. Well, maybe not the most encouraging song when hoping to actually move on from the roadside. Still, the founding member and lead singer/songwriter of the band Talking Heads, David Byrne, penned the lyrics to 'Road to Nowhere' in 1984, just five years before the death of Samuel Beckett. The song resonates with one of the playwright's more famous theatre works. In joyful, almost frivolous ways, both speak to the dystopian ideas of doom, absurdity and waiting for nothing. Byrne is an avid bicycle activist. Beckett, like Duchamp and a different D. Byrne, were chess enthusiasts. All, I think, would have looked approvingly on hitchhiking.

'La la la, we're on the road to no[…] hmm, shouldn't that be bla bla blab these days?' Y'know, you might have heard of all these new ride-share systems. There's all the rage, especially in this second decade of the twenty-first century. A bit like Airbnb for getting lifts between various cities. Loads of people are now telling me, 'hey mate, you should really

be doing a study of that'. And so I have, a little bit. I've taken a few lifts in the past years. Let me assure you, it's not the same. There's money involved and all these measures for rating performance and registering. There's no spontaneity in that. The randomness and the possibility of error; most of this is removed. When speaking with Miran Ipavec a couple of times about car-share systems, he repeated twice the same story, as if to emphasise the point. He compares them to a fisherman who gets fish from the sea vs the fisherman who goes to the supermarket. 'In the end both have fish, but one got it with skill'.[2]

Don't get me wrong, that's not completely a bad thing. But there are some facets which strike me as highly neoliberal and overtly capitalistic. I mean, I have no problems offering to buy someone a coffee and a sandwich for a 45-minute lift in the direction where the driver was actually going anyway. But when someone starts charging 25 euro per seat for a four-hour drive to a place where they're going because of their work—a journey for which they'll probably claim back petrol money and perhaps even file their receipts for tax reimbursements… well, c'mon, that's just profiteering. It's equivalent to usury (i.e. excessive interest on a loan). One might as well walk around with an unmissable high-vis vest on.

Now another fairly big difference that I experienced once with a ride-share car was that the driver and his girlfriend had no interest in talking with me after an initial introductory conversation of about 15 minutes. When hitching, except when there's a language barrier, there is sort of an understanding that once in a car, the passenger should follow the driver's rules. Maybe becoming a sounding board for some ideas, or even an entertainer, if that's what the situation requires. And it often is: 'Talk to me, keep me awake. C'mon, tell me a funny story will ya'.

-*Knock-knock!!*
who's there?
-*Hitch.*
hitch who?
-*Nono, Hitch-hike you muppets, no wonder yer not getting anywhere. You won't get a lift if ya don't even know the proper terminology. Hitch-who?*

[2] The analogy to his hobby being like hunting and fishing is something Miran Ipavec spoke of in a 2014 interview for *Around the World in 800 Days* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtzxOHfGZCQ).

That doesn't even sound right… I mean if I'd have said Doctor, then you'd be alright.
Ah ya, that reminds me, what do you call a time travelling ghost? Dr Boo.

Wait, how about this one… why did the Dalek cross the road? To exterminate humanity.

Hmm, maybe any comprehensive *Carthulucene* movement would take some inspiration from the Extinction Rebellion? Indeed, there are many roads out there now that even a Dalek couldn't cross easily.

As a narrative genre, time travelling is not so far-fetched in connection to hitchhiking. I mean for a start, just look at the semiotics of the gesture. The hitcher is quite literally standing with their 'backs to the future'. So even if this has been contested quite recently, language experts such as philologists and etymologists have made an interesting suggestion that the Ancient Greek conception of time was such that it was not in front of them. That is, not as if they were surveying a vista, as we generally conceive of it today. Instead, through a rather spatial argument, it's been argued that since the future is unknown in advance, it couldn't be conceived as existing on the horizon. Rather, their conception of the future situated it so that it existed behind them, in the realm of the non-visible.

Besides, hitchhikers often speak with their feet. They are used to waiting and waiting, often in silence. With the thrill of getting a lift shaking them out of their little world. This usually involves a little run to get their bags, in an effort to depart as quickly as possible. This is both a demonstration of respect towards the driver's time and the result of a physical release—a little symbolic dance of joy, after moments—sometimes many hours—of idleness.

Fieldnotes, Brussels, Tuesday 22 March 2016. So anyway, there's this one time recently when I would have gladly taken a ride-share out of Antwerp, but it wasn't possible.

Yep, slightly hung-over from last night's little party at *l'Ancienne Belgique*, a famous music venue in the heart of the European capital. Four of us are staying at an Airbnb flat just opposite Place de la Bourse, when suddenly, almost as a wakeup call, our respective mobile phones start sounding off with the chimes of incoming text messages. "Are you ok? Have you seen the news? What's going on in Brussels this morning?"

Before getting ready to check-out, we flip the TV on to hear the broadcasts of the morning's events. We then walk to Brux-nord station. The exits have all been blocked off. It's a warm day so we have coffee outdoors on the square. Suddenly a few police motorcycles and two squad vans arrive and park strategically around the station square. Armed officers in full riot gear emerge and begin escorting everyone to the areas indoors.

We take our drinks inside and remain for over 90 mins. The flat screen above the bar is showing a non-stop news reportage of the attacks. We eventually leave and join a few other friends at another pub near Place de la Bourse. From there people arrange various extensions to stay in their hotels, or to consider alternative travel routes.

Much of the rest of the day is spent in that pub trying to rearrange travel plans and reassure friends via social media that everyone is fine. I manage to get a lift to Antwerp and stay there for the night, but due to the havoc of such improvised arrangements I forgot my phone in Brussels. Travelling the next day thus proves tricky. There's the option of a car share but one needs a mobile for the Bla-bla car system to work. "I know" I say out loud to a mate at breakfast "I'll hitch to Germany and then arrange to book a cheap flight from Köln to Berlin". And so after lunch I make my way to Deurne's Southeastern city limits and stick my thumb out at a lay-by of a junction heading towards Eindhoven. It feels like it's been a while since I've done this, but actually only last summer did I hitch from Liege to Berlin. Anyhow, within 45 minutes, three cars have stopped, offering local lifts of some 10 to 15 kilometres. They're Flemish and for some reason have ignored my 'Köln Deutschland' sign. I give myself another 20 minutes to get a proper lift out of there, otherwise I'll head back to the train station. After a few more minutes a white van pulls over. I'm in luck, it's got GB plates.

After speaking with the driver for a second, I cross over to a sliding door. As I'm hopping in, he warns me "but at your own risk mate, ya… you should know this heap of junk breaks down a lot, including yesterday in Brugge". "I'll take my chances" I reply. Turns out I wasn't the best omen. There are no seats in the back of this vehicle. The three chaps at the back, two of which are half asleep under a large duvet on a makeshift banquette, make way for me upon entering. The floor is cluttered with stuff: coins, bags, shoes, maps and a large amplifier with a half-eaten chocolate cake resting upon it. The lads, all from London, are in their mid-twenties. Last night they were out celebrating one of their birthdays (another has his tomorrow). They're travelling to Berlin to watch the England-German pre-Euro friendly (which England miraculously won in the 91st minute after coming back from being 2-nil down).

> That's the plan anyway, but after roughly 25 minutes, before we're even near the Belgian–Dutch border, the driver has to pull the steering wheel sharply as the van unexpectedly surges into the left-hand lane. We spend the next half hour driving on the hard shoulder with the hazard lights on. That is, until we enter a massive queue over five miles long which is effectively a temporary restricted one-lane access route across the border into Holland. Seems the police are surveying all the cars that leave Belgium after the terrorist attacks. As we enter into the industrial estate area of Eindhoven, the navigator notices a garage which we pull into. It's nearly 5pm and the lads obviously want to sort out the steering problems before continuing on.
>
> We're directed to another nearby garage. After over 90 mins wait and a three-mile trek to Macky D's (MacDonalds), we're told that the van might be ready late tomorrow afternoon. The mechanic then wobbles the front left tyre, saying "you're lucky the wheel didn't come straight off. The garagist who looked at your van yesterday is a complete idiot". We're about 10km from the city centre so we walk for over 30mins to find a bus shelter with a schedule. They finally reach a cab company which sends two cars. One of the lads finds a hostel online and I choose to go to the train station to carry on towards Köln that night.

Hitchhiking in this case allowed me to escape the conditions of a post-terrorist attack. Yet it also trapped me into an unusual adventure of collectively sharing the grief of mechanical car troubles.

The body can indeed be both liberated and confined when travelling in this way. The angle I wish to explore, however, is not so much the trapped body. Rather, it is the body as a trap—as a trapping mechanism of time, experience and the attention of others. We could play word games with the idea of a Mauss-Trap here since Marcel Mauss discussed eloquently how body techniques such as how to learn to swim is very difficult to unlearn (as seen in Chapter 3). His own personal descriptions are fascinating. Providing generational and cross-cultural comparisons allows him to make the point that our bodies learn to perform some tasks differently given the differences of our circumstances. In focussing on pedestrian strolls, eating and several other mundane chores of everyday life the reader can actually relate to what might normally seem to be regionally specific material or convoluted theory. Belonging to a certain intellectual 'pedigree' means that 'class' and hierarchy are also things he is sensitive to, as well as risk aversion.

Indeed, when it comes to auto-stop, there are poses, body techniques in relation to location and prosthetic devices such as a bag, signs and maps which allow the hitcher to convince drivers of certain things such as safety and their legitimacy as genuine travellers. And for those who remember the golden years of hitching, such as Fred Keogh (2011), the process is sometimes even 'karmic', or connected to some Zen experiences that became increasingly difficult to recreate with excessive mechanisation. This is where ideas dealing with the uncanny and serendipity can be useful. In his words:

> the word 'cocoon' for the vehicle itself, something I used in *Dream Weaver* more than once, because that is what it seemed like – a temporary repose that would plop one down in some other local(e) with a new set of possibilities – a kind of metamorphosis where time rather than actions led to something new – much like hitching itself. (pers. comm 2016)

Now contrast this to Robert Pirsig (1974) when he wrote in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*:

> We hitchhiked back to our own city and rented a trailer and put it on our car and came up and got the cycle, and hauled it back to our own city and then started out all over again by car. But it wasn't the same. And we didn't really enjoy ourselves much. (1974: 9)

If you are reminded of some of the features in Tim Ingold's (1980) hunter–hunted relationship in this case, then the analogy has worked. Although Pirsig and Keogh, as authors of a more popular genre, do not explicitly cite such a source, there are some similarities. Indeed, interpretations of time, waiting and the means by which our thoughts are seen to enter the world in search of something beyond what our bodies can immediately attain—these vary cross-culturally. And technologies, be they bows or bikes, lassos or Ladas are often the prosthetic extensions of our desires. Pessimistically, they fill us with surplus and slip roads. More optimistically, they help us survive, reach an adventure or attain new heights.

Stop and Start, Serendipitous Notes

'Lament' based on a fake German expressionistic poem *Einstürzende Neubauten*/Blixa Bargeld

1 June 2018. On this date in 1935, England introduces the Compulsory Driving Test for everyone who started driving on, or after, April 1st of the previous year. A voluntary test was introduced by the Road Traffic Act in 1934 and the first person in Britain to take and pass his driving test was Mr R. BEERE.

29 May 2018. Berlin. CARMAH (Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage), part of the Humboldt University's Institute for European Ethnology, hosted Marilyn Strathern in their seminar series. Under the title Transformational Relations, she asked in her presentation: What kind of future is there for a discipline that now describes itself in the plural? Strathern started with reference to how people generally tend to see their own individual future(s). Dichotomising, she said: 'many see it as a road ahead of them… stretching out into the distance with some predictability […] then there are those who see it as something hiding, lurking, ready to jump out and surprise'. She's been of the latter persuasion in anticipating the trajectories of her own life, she adds. Despite being exhausted, from this moment on her rhetorical device hooked me into paying close attention. Such a setting provided a nice analogy for the driver/hitchhiker relationship, as well as the way the latter's unpredictability has increasingly been frowned upon—perhaps even squeezed out—by what could be termed the thumb of the guiding neoliberal hand.

28 May 2018. I started to prepare my part of a joint paper with Judith Okely from my fieldnotes that month. In our title to a paper we were presenting at the fourth RAI conference, we referred to 'Whereupon', which incorporated the idea of 'we are upon', as in we're embarking on a journey of collaborative cooperation. In using Samuel Butler's Erewhon we wanted to evoke the notions of utopia–dystopia, placelessness, as well, of course, as the considerations of *Own or Other Culture* (Okely 1996). We were hoping to convey how roads act as conducive metaphors.

DISNEY-lude(d) Towards the end of the Haunted Mansion attraction at three of the Disney Parks, visitors encounter a spectral trio of hitchhiking ghosts. The first, in California's Disneyland, opened in 1969. The second found in Florida's Magic Kingdom (Disney World) was launched in 1971. Finally, in 1983 the Fantasyland version in Tokyo went live,

so to speak. These optical mirror projections, which now feature CGI technology, allow the hitchers to appear in the 'doom-buggy' cab of the ride goers, hence following them home. Through Disney's vast industries, there have been other pop-culture appearances. Their semi-official names are Phineas (Traveller), Ezra (Skeleton) and Gus (Prisoner).

These three ghosts were initially designed by Marc Davis. In 2012, at the Tejon Ranch near Lebec, California, three American actors got together with the world-famous photographer Annie Leibovitz to recreate a set of scenes with this legendary trio. The work featured as part of her 'Disney Dream' portraits series (available for purchase of course). This is the same series that sees Roger Federer as King Arthur, Taylor Swift as Rapunzel and Russell Brand as Captain Hook. Jack Black, Will Ferrell and Jason Segel have mentioned having their own personal reasons for joining this project since each are allegedly nostalgic about the first time they experienced the Haunted Mansion and how it remains one of their favourite Disney Parks attractions. One of them has admitted to having a poster of the attraction on one of his walls at home. The attraction is apparently a self-conscious parody of the disappearing ghost legend in America's hitchhiking history (see Brunvand 1981). Speaking of which, let's journey into how such episodes have found their place in a more academic setting.

Hands in Gravel. Smithsonian Institution Museum.

The People's Highway, Route 66. America on the Move Exhibition.

Route 66 was commissioned in 1926 and fully paved by the late 30s. It ran from Chicago to Los Angeles, creating connections between hundreds of small towns and providing a trucking route through the Southwest. While not the first long-distance highway, or the most travelled, Route 66 gained fame beyond almost any other road. Dubbed the 'Mother Road' by John Steinbeck in *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), Route 66 carried hundreds of thousands of Depression-era migrants from the Midwest who went to California hoping for jobs and a better life.

A civil engineering student at Antioch College in Ohio, Pete Koltnow spent several weeks hitchhiking and riding buses on Route 66 for pleasure in the summer of 1948. 'The main hazards of hitchhiking in those days', he remembered later, 'were sleeplessness and sunburn. Hitching was an acceptable activity, an effective way for someone without money to get around the country'. Two years later he repeated the trip before starting

a summer job in Arizona. During the second trip, he wrote postcards to Dot Witter, his classmate and future wife.[3]

27 May 2018. Talking at an art exhibit in Berlin about what I'm up to these days, I mention my key informant Miran Ipavec's having a Hitchhikers' Museum that itself travelled every summer in a hired van. He should be setting it up in Trieste this or next month I added. Describing the autobiographical format of the objects in this collection, my interlocutor makes the comparison to the Victorian aristocratic collections of curios. Miran is thus displaying a type of 'contemporary cabinets of curiosity' we conclude. A bit later in the evening, talking with a friend about the frustration of trying to write a book whilst being nomadic, yet still having several fixed responsibilities, I mention that we are all actors in a world of movement. Her response is 'the streets are the performance stage of the world'.

25 May 2018, International Towel Day.[4]

9 May 2018. Raphael Nonsensio in Thomas More is a similar narrator to Biggs in Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872). As well, of course, as the guest narrator in William Morris' *News from Nowhere* (1890). In Chapter 23, 'The Book of the Machines', Butler seems to 'prophetically' anticipate Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's ideas of the 'noosphere' when talking about human extinction and consciousness evolution. If this seems too far-fetched, one can surely appreciate the stylistic and reactionary similarities with the second chapter in the tome *Lift-Luck* (1910) by theologian and apiculturist Tickner Edwardes.

[3] Quotations taken from the exhibition site: https://americanhistory.si.edu/america-on-the-move/route-66.

[4] This last Friday of May 2018 was International Towel Day, a reference to Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1986), first broadcast in 1978. In January 2012, *The Huffington Post* listed Towel Day as one of ten cult literary traditions. The city of Innsbruck is where Douglas Adams said he had the inspiration to write HHG2tG. Towel Day 2020 is thus the 42nd anniversary since this epic was released into the world. See http://www.towelday.org/, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Towel_Day.

17–19 May 2018. I start to re-read Judith Okely's (2001) visuality and landscape article. Most strikingly for me in this case is how she writes about serendipitous methods. From here I start thinking more about how 'hitching' relates to cars as well as vans. Word associations begin to gel such as 'CarAVans'. I send a copy of Hege Høyer Leivestad (2018) book to Judith with a postcard because on pages 6–9, Leivestad sets out the main stigmas against caravans, as representing 'unsettledness', homelessness, etc.

5 May 2018, Alfred, my RT van (named after Engels, Gell, Hitchcock)

Alfie's a mini-Erewhon. He's utopic—in going nowhere. At times his life has been like trying to chase up all the works about hitchhiking published over the years (Cravens 1972; Mukerji 1978; Brilliant 1989; Carpenter 1992). He's gradually being freed from use, snug, shielded. Protected by some, coveted or desired even, there is a sense of him being deserted by others. He's becoming a mobileless street van, waiting for human use, whilst equally perfect as target practice for Tallinn Harbour's birdlife.

Let's park up this section with Arnold **van** Gennep (1924). Writing about initiation rituals at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there's an undercurrent of his ideas that run throughout this volume. I should perhaps use Victor W. Turner, who has actually been more influential in charting the trajectories to my thinking. There's no time for VW-Turns here, however, since we're interested in 'vans' for the moment. After Marilyn Strathern's lecture in Berlin as well as discovering recently Philippe Rochat's *Others in Mind* (2009) and Jeff Ferrell's *Drift* (2018), I started pondering again on the anthropology of hitchhiking as a means of getting to the Other. Don't the types of approaches that embrace or welcome uncertainty (rather than fear it) allow us to rethink what is 'of the body', what is corporeal? In such light, hitchhiking enters a placeless zone for ritual—it shows us our 'carporeality' (Chapter 3). Hitching lets us glimpse at nowheres that do not exist in any particular time, but which endure through communities that conduct real and ritualistic care for each other; for the sake of it, as if they had a hitch to scratch.

Hence politically, isn't it interesting to push the wordplay further. To 'transplant' some of van Gennep's ideas on rites of passage to The Rights to gain passage—especially when considering people who are seen as transient in neoliberal economies that do not seem to value 'free gifts' all that much (Laidlaw 2000). Or to a place built on the worth of surprise and serendipity—the journeys and futures that lurk around the corner and jump out unexpectedly, like 'ghosts in the machine'.

Hitchhiking (5 Investigative Questions)

Of course, an interesting dimension to this project is to ask why academics and especially anthropologists have largely ignored hitchhiking until more recently. This would be a valid research question if I was doing a study

of anthropology from the get-go. But that's only an aside, an added bonus, something which hopefully gives an already fascinating topic of enquiry even more flair. At the end of the day, it is worth reflecting upon, but first we need to address the many meanings, perceptions, associations which auto-stop travel evokes. Another important aspect is on it being laborious. Hitching can indeed be fast, comfortable and a great way to meet interesting people. Often like-minded but occasionally so completely different from oneself that their encounter becomes an utter challenge to one's beliefs or values. Yet travelling by auto-stop can equally be slow and painful. One can get easily bored. Or worse, hungry, cold, tired and generally frustrated with humanity. Impatience is a significant hurdle to successfully voyaging in this manner. And don't assume that hitchhiking is always cheap. Well, the ride part of the journey will most likely be economical. If, however, a person gets stuck in unpredictable circumstances, they can end up spending loads of time, money and energy getting out of difficult predicaments. As one avid participant in his early thirties said to me at a hitching event in the summer of 2017:

> the worse thing is being dropped off in a bad spot. It's often better to get off early or not to take a lift at all if the driver doesn't really have an idea of where they might leave you to suitably get the next lift… if they've hitched before they'll know to ask you a few questions about your destination and whether you already know of any good waiting places.

Sorting out these kinds of pragmatic problems involves a lot of nattering chit-chat, small talk. As a method, this isn't always the forte of social researchers, who in the quest to dig deeper, often don't see such a field site as serious or political enough. The actual process of travelling with strangers (who often feel like they have rapidly become new-found friends) beckons that we consider the five main questions of enquiry.

Why? This is a thorny question… why would anyone? It's also a knotty question because, quite frankly, it's kind of a nutty practice, right? So the justifications and answers that people put forward can get quite tangled. Effectively, the answer given by one of the first people to attempt to climb Everest single-handedly, George Mallory, should apply too: …'because it's there'.

Where? But then the obvious question becomes, well, where's that? After all, in relation to a non-site specific activity, where becomes meaningless

(*Überall, Partout*). Is it culturally specific? Well yes and no. Yet these are the ethno-historical specificities that we learn more about from different disciplines within the social sciences and humanities.

When? When was it that people started? Again, not straightforward but easier. The birth of the automobile is one giveaway answer, with possible exceptions.

Who? This is perhaps the most interesting sociological question because then it's about self-identification, biography and so on. Indeed anthropologically, we can then analyse such a practice through kinship terms, Gift/Lift-Giving, reciprocity, gender and reproduction, migrations patterns, transgression, taboos, so on and so forth. Who shadows who? (i.e. learns from, acts as the understudy, etc.)

What? Just like anthropology, archaeology, sociology (whatever) have occasionally been defined rather flippantly as 'what these scholars do', then so to can hitching be defined as what hitchers do. But that's not quite good enough as a definition, otherwise we're in the terrain of 'monkey see monkey do', and humans aren't that basic, or are we? Anyhow, definitions of hitchhiking are quite straightforward, at least in English, and it's only when we venture into the cultural relativist terrain and the thing about micro cultural or linguistic differences that this question either gets complexified or requires context.

or **How,** hmm well, I started this volume by saying this wasn't going to be a 'how to' book, so it's best to skip this…[5] (Fig. 8.1).

[5] There are loads of guidebooks, websites, videos (see LaBeouf et al. 2016, etc.). It's only fair, in the vein of auto-ethnography, to give a bit more detail on how I chose this topic however. Illusively I'd answer: 'perhaps this field/topic chose me'. For instance, regarding Cornwall, before ever going there, and despite having best mates from near Padstow/stein (as it's sometimes referred to with some derision), I'd say the seed was planted by one Beemer driver. He was a bearded man, perhaps in his late forties or early fifties, who asked *en-route,* after picking me up hitching from near Heathrow to Bristol, something to the effect of 'know much about Cornwall? Been there before, you should go one day?' I knew some people who grew up there, two quite well actually. They left as soon as they could. But Cornwall did indeed become my ethnographic home. And hitchhiking, a method I used for fieldwork as well as a topic I would never be able to let go of.

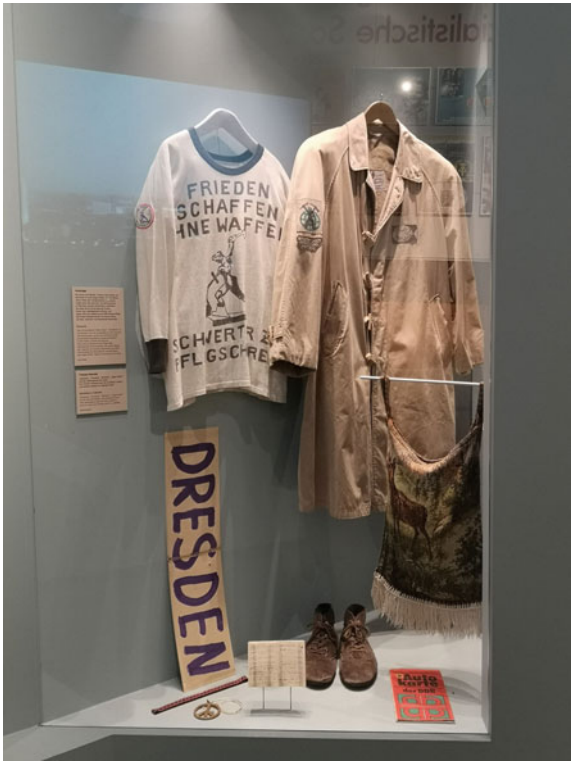

Fig. 8.1 *Exhibition of everyday life*. GDR Museum, Berlin (Photo by K. Kary)

The Fame of Chthulucene Cars

I don't always like the label anthropologist, or even social anthropologist… there are times when I much prefer to say: 'I'm a pre or post-anthropologist'. Yes, of course I'm interested in humans, but isn't it even more fascinating to be intrigued by what came before, or what might come next? Let's face it, a discipline that exclusively studies *homo-sapien sapiens* has a shorter shelf-life than many other fields. Anthropology will go extinct. Well, the version of it that we currently know anyway, more or less. Imagine, indeed, that it will be difficult with our limited human brain to understand through participant observation those human-like creatures that may succeed us.

And so a question arises, why be interested in deviant or marginal behaviour? One reason is because these have the potential to be extremely significant in the future, for whatever might follow our genus. So when the Anthropocene is over, we must surely assume that this particular incarnation of our species has come to an end. So if there are any, what shall we call these post-humans? *Homo-sapiens, version 3.0*?

More seriously, however, yet not wanting to venture too far in the direction of thinking along the lines of Donna Haraway's earlier work on cyborgs, such theories regarding more-than-human or post-human subjects are relevant here. Yet whether you're a fan of the Anthropocene as a concept or not, it must be taken seriously for what it implies overall. Or, as she has been debunking, to go beyond such language; to imaginatively explore the real troubles of the twenty-first century. For Haraway (2016) then, the 'Chthulucene' is a spider web configuration that stands for the flattening of any hierarchies between people and sentient beings. She borrows the term from a species of arachnida (*Pimoa cthulhu*) found the redwood forests of California. It is nevertheless also a mythical sci-fi creature created by Howard P. Lovecraft in the 1930s—a fictional being which nonetheless has a 'literary' agency of its own. This is at least the case in the social imaginary for how many people still perceive human/non-human relationships. Her challenges to capitalism, colonialism and humanism are both inspiring and mind-boggling. How, one wonders perhaps, does that help us get out of the trouble?

I'm not quite sure either, but let's start with the simple premise that roads are total social facts at a global scale. They and the vehicles upon them are thus principal artefacts in shaping this epoch that many are increasingly referring to as the Anthropocene. They are local and transnational devices. More than material or infrastructural technologies, they are hybrid entities that are both liberating and oppressive. Hence, we would then need to ask are there any alternatives, or subversive uses of road networks and motorised vehicles that are viable? For over a century now, these technological objects (or infrastructures if you don't like the word object for a road), these things have existed at the heart of the globalisation of human cultures and civilisations.

When we include their reliance on rock aggregate mining as well as steel and petrol chemical industries, then the impact of car cultures is truly one of the main features of the Anthropocene (Lutz and Fernandez 2010). Amongst other things, roads serve as navigation routes for transport, people and goods. They are also national markers, allowing for

civic surveillance and military defence. Whereas cars are containers of convenience, status, wealth and identities. Both are obviously more than material or infrastructural artefacts. They are, indeed, socio-cultural phenomena—conducive spaces and environments for expressive social events and actions, as well as for diverse forms of physical movement along or within them. People and governments thus endow roads, cars, motorcycles and trucks with broad meanings and purposes.

With this background in mind, it is important to address the paths less travelled. I've thus been keen to examine an alternative use of roads and ground vehicles; what is effectively a hybrid type of displacement which shares certain properties with racing, car sharing, trailblazing and begging to name a few (Tesar 2015; Cass and Mandersheid 2018). The sub-themes of auto-stop/hitchhiking revolve around such research aspects as: adventure, gender, trust, risk and fear. Here roads and cars function as a social stage and serve as 'soft' cultural infrastructure. These themes can be extended to exploring how roadscapes and the mechanised vehicles that travel along them are employed for trade, crime, self-expression, art or political protest. They are equally appropriate as commemorative and remembrance spaces. Similarly, an insight into their temporal dimension, nocturnal or diurnal patterns and consequent industrial transformations also highlights further understanding on the social constructions of the Anthropocene.

Why does the study of hitchhiking still have currency in the twenty-first century? Well one answer is that because, even though many of my key informants are not in it for the money, they seek recognition. There's a competition element in/to this non-competitive activity. A gentle type of one 'up-manship'. A sense of who's got the better story, the longest or more torturous route. Who's sold or written the most books, has the most acolytes, or followers on social media.

Miran Ipavec has asked me on a few occasions, 'do you think I'm in the top 10 most famous hitchhikers'. The first time we both looked at each other and laughed. We agreed the question should probably be phrased 'most famous amongst those hitchers still living'. Then I agreed nervously 'I'd say so. Maybe even top five'. I was uneasy because I realised he was trying to teach me that I didn't really know much about long-distance road travel.

Another time he asked, I said 'top five for sure', trying to conceal my ignorance with bravado. He walked over to the books and maps cabinet on display in his museum, something he'd done many times. 'But

you know Anton Krotov?' His silence worried me because of course I only knew the name from our past meetings. I did, however, remember reading the adventures of many a traveller in Russia crossing the vast expanse of Asia, Africa, etc.

Then there's the United States, where psycho killers (e.g. Jeffrey Dahmer) and music representations such as Riders on the Storm (by the Doors) have dampened the spirit of hitchers for generations (Strand 2012). And yet not that long ago, the famous film director John Waters (2014) thought he was James Dean for a week and took a walk on the wild side as he hitchhiked his way across from Baltimore to San Fran. Now the others are of course all dead, except John Waters. He'd surely be in the top five? So again, maybe we have to be more specific with narrowing down the question to some regional/continental delimitation (the Where Question). But also, the point is that in a similar way that anthropologists talk of prestige, honour, fame and transformation, a lot of hitchhiking, especially when it gets connected to narrative storytelling (and not just a mode of transportation to get from A to B in the quickest, cheapest way possible) is then about a certain sense of 'myth making' and/or archiving to demonstrate that the journey was real. The world was explored, something was learnt from the adventure and some are more heroic than others in the telling of such tales.[6]

This we can say is itself a form of 'Adventure Capital' to wedge a subcategory into Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) 4 main categories (e, c, s, s). So that travel events are not just a lot of energy wasted… or entropy. This seeking fame, notoriety, being remembered, is an aspect (through ritual and writing, narrating and documenting) that gives this means of travelling some anthropological credibility as a research topic, because such elements mean that in a sense, these journeys transcend time and space. They are rituals of choosing, between rupture and repair, for instance; or

[6]For example, when writing about value in Papua New Guinea, Nancy Munn talks of the *Fame of Gawa* (1986). For his part, but via a different ethnographic case study in PNG, Maurice Godelier (1986) considers ideas of status and greatness. Playing with these ideas, Chris Tilley (2002) writes about canoes in Vanuatu as devices that can trap time and spatial arrangements through their transformation. Drawing on such material we learn how the power of objects and gender dynamics, for instance, stand as metaphors for narrating contradictory claims. And it is in the skills of navigating through the paradoxes of storytelling that allow some ephemeral journeys to be recorded, whereas others are lost.

between leaving, returning and/or remaining *en route*—on the road… always hopping from one place to the next. Hitch-hop(p)ing, so to say.

* * *

The Hitchhikers' Guide to Infamy. ***So Long, Thanks for All the Lifts.***

Here we go again, by the side of the motorway with a rucksack and cardboard sign. Thumbing it can take time. A bit of bravery, with a dose of stamina, won't go amiss. Some preparation and local knowledge also help. The sense for adventure is perhaps most crucial of all, however. Well that, as well as the willingness to engage in idle chit-chat. With these skills, most journeys will be successful—unless of course one is simply unlucky. Accidents do happen. Besides, not everyone out there has your best interests at heart. Yet most seasoned hitcher's like to think that they can spot trouble—if not a mile away, then at least when it is staring them in the face.

Maybe all this interest in new forms of virtual hitching still brings us back to the romance of travel and the open road? Despite all the negative stereotyping of Otherness, hitchhiking has kept its mysterious allure of connecting people. It was a romantic narrative hook in *It Happened One Night* (1934). And going back to the very roots, subsequent to the 'biblical' references to charity and allegories of travel as an education, we need to remind ourselves of the ties between good fortune, machines and mammals, as Tickner Edwardes observed in *Lift-Luck* back in 1910. This is a story of travelling 200 miles through the Southern counties of the English countryside by soliciting journey time with strangers via walking and cycling as well as horse-drawn carts. Aptly enough, he did get a lift with a motor-man, who is initially fixing his primitive but comfortably seducing vehicle. Whether it's the explosive ignition of an object brought back to life through the agile repair of its owner, or the prospect of another jovial walk that he is all too familiar with (or a combination, or even a rhetorical hooking device), Edwardes chose to try something new. His prose indicates some regret. Perhaps writing about the adventure brought him one step closer to *car-t-harsis*.[7] Puns aside, what's nevertheless fascinating about his account are the elements of amateur

[7] Given that our narrator, Tickner Edwardes was a vicar, this link to emotional 'purification and purgation' might be fitting. In medical terms such origins for Catharsis are associated with Freud but not through any German etymology. In his writings on Poetics

ethnology present in describing cultural variations as an insider/outsider to the 'peasant' cultures he's discovering.

Hopefully this is a fitting way to come full-circle to my opening gambit in the introduction. That ideas over reflexivity and studies 'at home', or in familiar contexts are crucial. This brings back to the table any disregarded or neglected NIMBYisms—reminding us that there are costs to the environment; that lifts are never truly free, not really. One of the environmental paradoxes of hitchhiking is to assume the principles of a free service being provided. But in the longer term, the global 'Commons' have been discounted, if not to say sacrificed. Such a journey, however, seems to inevitably end where Douglas Adams did. With pondering over the state of the planet and its viability in the galaxy. Hitchhiking's value in such a scenario is as a shared responsibility (Fig. 8.2). It is therefore about 'space' travel and our place in the universe (Varda 1985; Ioan 2003).

So in the end, could anything else really be said other than 'Don't panic?' Well, perhaps not. Since that slogan has been used already, however, let's return to a bit of political auto-poetic satire. My own travel memories converge around two, or is that three things? Confused again, I hear a song by Johnny Cash mixing in with the closing lines to *Green Eggs and Ham* from Dr Seuss (Geisel 1960). Why's this then? Well, because Tim Ingold used the 'innocence' of this story as a concluding gambit in his Radcliffe-Brown lecture at the Royal Academy in 2007. Ingold closed off his lecture with reference to the 'childlike' stranger that stalks professional researchers with the most fundamental of questions. Such scrutiny, he reminded us, is not just useful for anthropologists, because quite frankly that would just be self-serving and narcissistic. Rather, it is necessary for scientific investigations to matter, to be defensible in the real world.

In this sense, my own narrative is that I've tried hitchhiking as a method and as a social metaphor of the embodied imagination. I've not just applied it abstractedly to do ethnography, but to do anthropology as well. In other words, it's been valuable as a method for meeting people in their cars; for meeting other hitchers during hap-hazard and semi-prearranged ride shares; for meeting anthropologists studying similar subjects. Over the years of what feels like a life project, we've hiked here and there, tramped around, stopped some autos. Some of whom

Aristotle used the metaphor of Tragedy to evoke extensive emotional changes which in turn result in renewal and restoration, i.e. 'Katharsis' (Spiegel 1965).

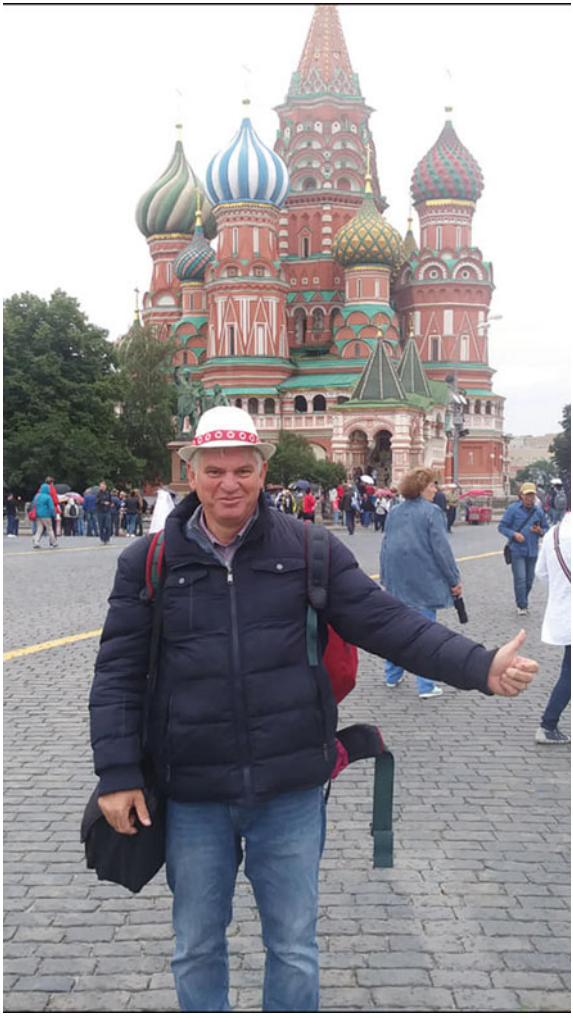

Fig. 8.2 Miran Ipavec (Red Square, Moscow December 2019)

will even find they've reached Nirvana; that truth in finding nowhere. We've hitched-up, sideways and pitched underground. For sure, we've walked, taught and hitch-spotted. Taken together, doing it with bikes and in lorries, on boats or in taxis—from John o' Groats or to Helsinki harbour—we've hitched in cars and to bars, hitching high and low. Imaginatively, we've even gone beyond everywhere you know.

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Appendices

PL's Relevant Conference and Seminar Presentations

2020 Paper: L'UE en attente et les techniques de l'autostop. *Atelier Ethnologie* (groupe SIEF) Lodz, Poland, June.

2019 Workshop (with Ipavec/Krotov): All Roads Lead to Rupture *Atelier de Antropologie SAS*, University of Bucharest, November.

2019 Seminar presentation: Thumb Piece. *IfAS, NEC, Autumn Series*, Bucharest, October.

2019 Paper: Roadside Ethnography (in Panel D01 Streetscapes), *ASA Conference*, UEA Norwich, September.

2019 Panel co-convenor (Spaces & Affect, with J. Holler & M. O'Regan), *IUAES Inter-Congress*, Poznan Poland, August.

2019 Seminar presentation: Voyaging Vagabonds, *Social Anthropology Seminar Series*, Kent University Canterbury, March.

2018 Seminar presentation: Hitchhiking's Carporeality, *Anthropology Seminar Series*, University of Aberdeen, September.

2018 Paper, Mauss Trapped: Carporeality vs Cartesian Ethnography (P B09), *ASA Conference*, Oxford, September.

2018 Paper (with J. Okely): Whereupon the Road to Erewhon, *RAI Conference*, British Museum, London, June.

P. Laviolette, *Hitchhiking*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-48248-0

2018 Seminar presentation: Rules of Thumb, *LAA Narrating the Human Series*, National Library of Latvia, Riga, February.

2017 Symposium presentation: Miracles in the mundane: hitchhiking and micro-adventures. *ESRC Festival of Social Science*: Bournemouth University, November.

2017 Seminar presentation: Dividually Driven. *Anthropology Seminar Series*, Univeristy of Belgrade, October.

2017. Paper/Panel: 'Red van manifesto'/Autofestos (with Finnegan, R. & J. Mitchell). *4th Autoethnography Conference*, University of Sussex, July.

2017. Paper: The hitchhiking diaries: Thumbbuddies, semio-shorthand. *9th Annual Lotman Conference*, Tallinn University, May.

2017. Public talk: Zeitgeist dem Daumen. *Autostop Exhibition* curated by Lýdia Pribišová *ZK/U* Berlin, May.

2017. Public talk: Waiting for Volvo. *Art of Hitchhiking Exhibition*, Warszawski Gallery Warsaw, May.

2016. Public performance: Bodytraps. *System & Error Exhibition*, Linnahall, Estonian Art Academy, Tallinn, October.

2016. Paper: A hitchhiker's guide to the uncanny. *Wild or Domesticated*, Finnish Academy, Helsinki, September.

2015. Seminar presentation: Getting to the Other. *Anthropology Seminar Series*, University of Manchester. November.

2015. Podium paper. Thumbs Up. *Anthropology of Hands Conference*, University of Kent, Canterbury. June.

2015. Panel convenor & paper. U-Turns and the mobilities roundabout, *Utopia SIEF Congress*, Zagreb, June.

2015. Public Talk: Auto-stop. *Stop and Go: Nodes of Transition and Transformation*, Kultuurikatel Tallinn, May.

2014. Keynote Lecture: Fast and the Furious. *Youth and Social Acceleration, Summer School*, Tallinn University, July.

2013. Paper and panel convenor (with K. Lund) &: Mobilities & Marginalities. *Circulation SIEF Congress*, Tartu University, July.

2013. Dept. Seminar: Hitched. *Social Anthropology Seminar Series*. Stockholm University, March.

Exhibition Links

Sign competition: http://rovingsnails.com/index.php/2014/10/17/the-art-of-thumb/.

2011 Autostop exhibition: http://www.oliviaguethling.de/index.php?/travelling/a-u-t-o-s-t-o-p/.

2017: The Art of Hitchhiking: a collections of works inspired by the roads: www.artofhitchhiking.eu.

2017 Autostop Exhibition 25–26 May 2017. ZK/U. Curated by Lýdia Pribišová: https://www.zku-berlin.org/fellows/331/.

2018/19 *Mund-Stück* / Mouthpiece: https://www.fondationcartier.com/en/live-shows/soirees-nomades/rita-pauls-et-ant-hampton.

2017/19 Chez-Augustin (Cafe-Bistro); l'auto-stoppeur Gigi Warny: www.gigiwarny.com.

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