

EMBODIMENT

Mental and Physical Geographies of the Neo-nomad

by

Yasmine Abbas

D.P.L.G., Architecture, 1997
Paris Val-de-Marne School of Architecture

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ARCHITECTURE STUDIES
AT THE
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

June 2001

©2001 Yasmine Abbas. All rights reserved

The author hereby grants to MIT permission to reproduce and to distribute publicly paper and
electronic copies of this thesis document in whole or in part.

Signature of Author:

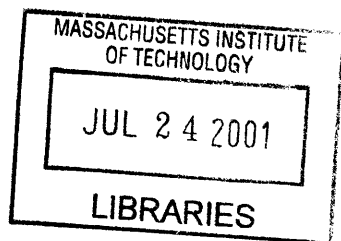
Department of Architecture
May 24, 2001

Certified by:

William L. Porter
Professor of Architecture and Planning
Design Technology

Accepted by:

Roy Strickland
Principal Research Scientist in Architecture
Chairman, Committee for Graduate Students



ROTCH

Readers

Edith Ackermann
Visiting Professor
Design Technology

Nasser Rabbat
Aga Khan Professor
History, Theory and Criticism

Julia Scher
Visiting Artist
Visual Arts

EMBODIMENT**Mental and Physical Geographies of the Neo-nomad**

by

Yasmine Abbas

Submitted to the Department of Architecture
on May 25, 2001 in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in
Architecture Studies

ABSTRACT

Globalization is today significantly debated. The ineluctable phenomenon has led to homogenization, hybridization, cultural confusion, and social disorders. The resulting chaos has been translated by a loss of landmarks, which has consequently engendered mental and physical displacements.

New species, hybrids, have emerged from these various cultural encounters. Displaced, these populations of the border, the 'third' space, have developed their adaptation skills, including choice and negotiation, in order to assert a sense of belonging. Among the plethora of today's nomads such as refugees, global workers, and immigrants for example, hybrids are species that have mutated. They have become something detached from established orders, and not attached to any specific place. Like nomads, they move and adapt. Neo-nomads, then, in their effort to adapt and build a sense of belonging not bound to place, reminds us of the traditional nomads.

By analyzing the hybrid, the ensuing spatiality, skins, and geographies of the neo nomad, this thesis offers an open-ended discussion about mobility, connectivity and space. These observations lead to the conclusion that nomads we were, nomads we are, and nomads we will be, always.

William L. Porter

Professor of Architecture and Planning

EMBODIMENT

Mental and Physical Geographies of the Neo-nomad

Readers

Abstract

Content

Acknowledgment

warning

Introduction	9
Zone 001 Neo-nomads	14
Interlude	24
Zone 002 Conversation of the lesion	29
Zone 003 Dérives	39
Zone 004 Landscapes	46
Conclusion	50
Images	54
Bibliography	57

EMBODIMENT

Mental and Physical Geographies of the Neo-nomad

À maman et papa

My deep gratitude to the Aga Khan Trust for Culture

Warning

The essay you are about to read translates me. I am probably writing the way I act, by association of ideas, and drifts... [Pause]... You are reading the writing of a hybrid or neo-nomad [NEOMAD], whose language is an amalgam and who lived more than half of her life abroad, meaning [Pause...] outside the territory where 'accidentally' she was born.

The essay traces a succession of thoughts, faux pas, sufferings, manifestations, and dialogues. It translates my shifts, and my displacements. It unveils my existence. It reveals the neo-nomad, me... And you also... You, 'NEOMAD' because of our increasingly global world ...

Then you say... My aim? My aim is to engender dreams, thoughts and hopes around mobility, an intensifying factor in our world. We were, are and will be genuine nomads, and my writing again expresses these existences...

Introduction

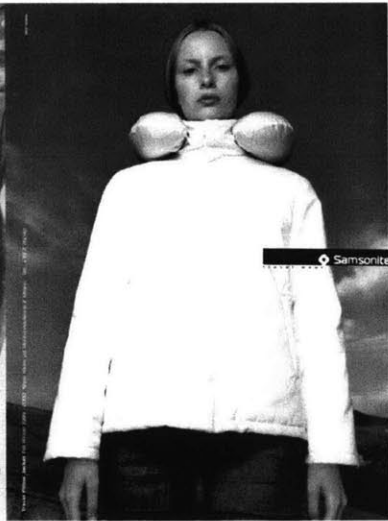


Image 1 \ Global thinking

Global thinking... Are we just so flat?

Confrontation

Wallpaper, the British magazine, is probably the first one that provocatively stands for globalization. Ode to the global... Wallpaper perceives globalization [and depicts the phenomena with humor] as a resource for creativity. Virtuosi, Wallpaper mixes patterns, colors, and flavors of various localities, but leaving the poor and the ugly aside. Wallpaper the Western sells dreams, playing with masks that veil or unveil the consumerism ideology and its left behind. However glossy, the magazine consciously [or not] witnesses the 'latest' trends that I am curious about: hybridization and nomadism.

Found in Wallpaper, the advertisements for Gucci, Evian and Samsonite that I bring to your attention is an illustration of what I am looking at, the investigation of what is the neo-nomad, the nomad of today. If all three advertisements are addressing a particular social class and obviously contribute to the spread of globalization, all aptly illustrate my topic by addressing the notions of hybridization and displacement that generate particular spaces. According to Elaine Sturtevant¹, 'globalization brings disintegration.' Our society run by the media is tending toward the denials of the self, transforming us into 'surface-objects' empty and fake. The emptiness, feared or perceived on the contrary fosters thoughts about what we are increasingly becoming: hybrids forced, or more or less free, to wander. Thus the space in which we evolve articulates interiority and exteriority, and expresses our generation, squeezed between forces and spaces, encouraging the expression of the edge. The boundary condition therefore becomes a space on its own, a mutated community of people that does not want to relate to either of the confronting spaces.

Clashes

If the advertising for Gucci obviously illustrates cross-cultural encounters and suggests exoticism, and perhaps colonialism, the one for Evian addresses our mythology and the notion of in-between-ness that we fantasize about, evoking the idea that fascination for a 'third space' has always existed. Samsonite, a company that was originally selling suitcases [travel], has an optimistic vision of the future. By mutating, Samsonite chooses to adapt to and logically answers

¹ Elaine Sturtevant, Talk at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 'Interior and Exterior Visibilities', MIT, April 24th 2001

the need of a society that promotes mobility, which is also inherent in consumerism. Objects and goods like a toothbrush or a coke [not to emphasize the imperialistic aspect of the popular drink!] can be found everywhere. In theory, we travelers don't need to transport much items. We can now find anything everywhere, a 'coke' or a special drink from Brazil. Then, what is identity about? To what do we belong? Is that as important as knowing if we do have a sense of belonging? Nomads have it. Mobility and sense of belonging can thus come together. We need comfort and feel that we belong to something that is not imposed on us. The myth of the nomad as being free then fits perfectly with the philosophy. The new transformed space of the nomad, the inflated collar of the Samsonite travel wear, for example, is also a variation of the tent as a protective membrane, or a metaphor for the skin.

Because we are thin-skinned. Vulnerable... And... The envelope of the neo-nomad contains a soul, no matter.

Globalization has caused many other disorders in terms of social and cultural encounters, increasing for example the number of homeless, also a population of wanderers. Mobility in that case can be a statement against a political chaos, also a necessity for recovering a cultural identity if not a social one. I firmly believe that cross-cultural encounters engender displacements of many sorts, mental and physical. Hence, the globalization phenomenon is reinforcing hybridization [cultural encounters] and movement [crossings, therefore expansion of geographical limits]. But are they really new phenomena considering that there is no history that is intrinsically 'pure' as ultra-nationalists think? Juan Goytisolo² rightly says that 'Toute culture est en fin de compte la somme des influences qu'elle a reçues,' meaning that all cultures is in fact the sum of received influences.

However, the nomad of today is also a constructed image, an invented species, a mutated [adapt] hybrid. The nomad is, in one sense, the sum of all gathered assumption about the mythical nomad—an abstraction of nomad—and his freedom. As Edith Ackermann says, 'The nomad from within is also more or less than a sum. Her/his identity emerges from the exhausting and non-ending attempt to transcend or reconcile the 'piecemeal' fragment of her/his life.' Today, the word Nomad is used extensively to qualify mobile technologies, as well as hybrid people, or exile. As an example, *Le Monde*, the French newspaper also available on the web

² Juan Goytisolo, *L'heritage Andalou: une perspective occidentale*, Quantara n° 37 Automne 2000

[<http://www.lemonde.fr/>], offers more than a hundred of articles related to nomad. Some involve intelligent textile³, other concern the February 2001 exhibit about nomadic civilizations ‘For long ignored’⁴. ‘Nomadology’ is applied to everything, reducing the word nomad to the notion of mobility. Various groups of the society that carry talkies are, for example, called ‘nomadic tribes.’⁵ Like traditional nomads, neo-nomads or NEOMADS carry tools, a solution to the need for reconnection or distancing [the new technologies still permit choice] that expresses a social anxiety. Have media flattened us? The confrontation with the other on the contrary brings about much resistance in that resistance asserts our identities, and our souls. Our interiority and the questioning of ourselves, as much as the freedom to roam that new technologies allow, brings new questions about our geographies. As Paul Shephard writes in ‘The Cultivated Wilderness, or What Is Landscape,’⁶ ‘Millions of individuals are arranged for matters of convenience into nations, in which language, law, and money stands as the qualities of nationhood.’ So what are we on the move for? Escape realities? Find truths? Then, what is essential to us?

My intention is to grasp as many aspects as possible of the new engendered specie, the neo nomad also a hybrid, a stranger and a mutant. The hybrid represents the social and cross-cultural encounters. The idea of the stranger thus expresses a fragile sense of belonging and dislocation. Mutation then relates to the notion of adaptation to the surrounding. My essay is organized such as to explore the interiority and exteriority of the neo-nomad [his mental and physical geographies], from introspection – I am a hybrid – to the exploration of the geographies, and the subtle relationship of the neo nomad to his social and physical environment. As Roberto Esposito the philosopher says⁷, ‘Rather than continuously encounter with what is similar to us or what belongs to us, being in common would mean to meet with whoever is different from us.’ Thus my goal leads to the understanding that being a nomad, mixing, adapting, and mutating, is about

³ Le Monde, Interactif, Schoeller, La Mutation du Textile, Edition du Mercredi 18 octobre 2000, <http://interactif.lemonde.fr/article/0,5611,2857--106409-0,FF.html>

⁴ Le Monde, Du Pacifique à la Mer Noire, l’Art Méconnu des Guerriers à Cheval, Mis à Jour le Lundi 5 février 2001

<http://sortir.lemonde.fr/article/0,4462,146673,00.html>

⁵ Le Monde, Les Tribus Urbaines adoptent le talkie, 05.04.01

http://www.lemonde.fr/rech_art/0,5987,170006,00.html

⁶ Paul Shephard, *The Cultivated Wilderness, or What Is Landscape*, MIT Press, 1997, p117

⁷ Roberto Esposito, *Communauté ne signifie pas identité, mais alterité*, Article in *Le Monde*, Mardi 19 Decembre 2000, p018

Personal translation of ‘Etre en commun devrait signifier avoir continuellement affaire non pas a celui qui nous ressemble ou nous appartient, mais a celui qui est different de nous.’

confronting the other. Being a nomad, then, appears to be human nature because originally life is about encounters... adaptation... and movement.

Nomads,

Always,

We

Are...

Zone 001

Neo-nomads

Definitions⁸

Nomad: n. **1.** a member of a people or tribe that has no permanent abode but moves about from place to place, usually seasonally and often following a traditional route or circuit according to the state of the pasturage or food supply. **2.** any wanderer; itinerant. –adj. **3.** nomadic. [1580-90; < L nomad- <Gk, s. of nomás pasturing flocks, akin to nemein to pasture, graze] –**no'mad.ism**, n.

Hybrid: n. **1.** the offspring of two animals or plants of different breeds, varieties, species, or genera, esp. as produced through human manipulation for specific genetic characteristics. **2.** a person or a group of person reflecting the interaction of two unlike cultures, traditions, etc. **3.** anything derived from heterogeneous sources, or composed of elements of different or incongruous kinds: a hybrid of the academic and business worlds. **4.** a word originally drawn from different languages, as television, whose component comes from Greek and Latin. –adj. **5.** bred from two distinct races, breeds, varieties, species, or genera. **6.** composite; formed of composed of heterogeneous elements. **7.** composed of elements originally drawn from different languages, as a word. [1595-1605; < L hybrida, hibrida a crossbred animal]

–**Syn. 5.** HYBRID, MONGREL refer to animals or plants of mixed origin. Hybrid is the scientific term: hybrid corn; a hybrid variety of sheep. Mongrel, Used originally of dogs to denote the offspring of different breeds, is now extended to other animals and to plants; it is usually deprecatory, as denoting mixed, nondescript, or degenerate breed or character: a mongrel pup.

–**Ant. 5.** purebred, thoroughbred.

Mutant: adj. **1.** undergoing or resulting from mutation. –n. **2.** a new type of organism produced as the result of mutation. [1900-05; < L mūtānt- (s. of mūtāns), prp. of mūtāre to change; see –ANT]

Stranger: n. **1.** a person with whom one has had no personal acquaintance: He is a perfect stranger to me. **2.** a newcomer in a place or locality: a stranger in town. **3.** an outsider: They want no strangers in on the club meetings. **4.** a person who is unacquainted or unaccustomed to something (usually fol. by to): He is a stranger to poverty. **5.** a person who is not a member of the family, group, community, or the like, as a visitor or guest: Our town shows hospitality to strangers. **6.** Law. One not privy or party to an act, proceeding, etc. [1325-75; ME < MF estrangier, equiv. To estrange STRANGE + -ier -IER²] –**Stran'ger.like'**, adj.

⁸ Random House Unabridged Dictionary, second edition

–**Syn. 1, 5.** STRANGER, ALLIEN, FOREIGNER all refer to someone regarded as outside of or distinct from a particular group. STRANGER may apply to one who does not belong to some group –social, professional, national, etc. or may apply to a person with whom one is not acquainted. ALIEN emphasizes a difference in political allegiance and citizenship from that of the country in which one is living. FOREIGNER emphasizes a difference in language, customs, and background. –**Ant. 1.** acquaintance.

Neo-nomad, a Possible Definition

neo-nomad: n. **1.** the nomad of our contemporary global world, whose behaviors are similar to the traditional nomad in that he has no permanent abode and moves from place to place, usually following economical reasons, or due to constraints [political, geographical dilemmas]. Global nomad, urban nomad **2.** any stranger-like wanderer, itinerant that undergoes deprecatory compartments or rejections. **3.** a person who contrary to the traditional nomad has no sense of belonging, but who is developing his adaptation skills in order to recover it; a new born nomad **4.** a hybrid who had undergone a mutation.

For further understanding of what a neo-nomad is possibly, I have looked at the differences and analogies between the traditional and the neo-nomad. Are these two species so far apart as Ashley Benigno writes?

"Old" and "new" nomads in reality share little in common, aside from intending movement as life and considering political borders as an infringement of the right to roam. For other aspects they are worlds apart. When Chatwin says that nomads are "resentful of, and resistant to change", what should we think of Luther Blisset and the rest of the techno-nomads with their advocacy of extreme change?⁹

To me, a neo-nomad is a newborn nomad. He is someone that is not a complete nomad in that he has not achieved the development of his adaptation skills, meaning, learn a path, a way to recognize the environment or to explore the field he evolves in. The neo-nomad needs to build a sense of belonging, and at the same time, to move. Talking about the traditional nomad as a

⁹ Ashley Benigno, 'Deleuze & Guattari and Techno-Nomads,' <http://www.rhizome.org/object.rhiz?1538>, 1999

person with settled habits might sound peculiar. It is however the way he constructs his ability to be comfortable everywhere. Traditional nomads build a knowledge of the field, like sailors who learn about their environment by looking at the stars, feeling the air, calculating trajectories, understanding currents. Consequently, sailors are able to direct themselves in what appears to be for others a very unfriendly [because unknown] and fascinating landscape. The knowledge of the nomad's environment is built on a history of practices. These adaptation skills when mastered favor discoveries and freedom, a status he does not want to lose. That is why he is resistant to stay in one place. Neo-nomads are even more looking for freedom. Confronting the increasingly complex geographies, limited, mental, unlimited, or mix, they need to recover some stability and a sense of belonging. The new technologies are somewhat a way to negotiate the displacements that globalization entails.

Neo-nomads, victims of cross cultural encounters, and victims of globalization are suddenly projected outside the realm of the known and the habitual. They are disconnected, uprooted. The migrants for example are constantly trying to articulate a sense of home, therefore create a new spatial condition. They are in the realm of the unknown [unfriendly] and have to learn about it, understand it and therefore map their environment, to locate, assert, direct, and recognize their path. In that sense, hybrids are like the newborn nomads described above, negotiating with the environment and establishing new rules for adaptation. As Abdelali Ziyati writes, 'To be simultaneously deterritorialized from the two cultural settings (e.g., France and Morocco) suggests that migrants have established a distinct culture of their own that is simultaneously visible and threatening to both cultures which they initially represent.'¹⁰ Like the hybrids, not from here not from there, strangers everywhere, neo-nomads are lying in this boundary condition, the ecotone, a mix of two cultures, that, when blended, become something else.

Ecotone

The ecotone, [ECO- Gr. οἶκος house, dwelling + Gr. τόνος tension, -TONE] is a transitional area between two ecological communities. There, species develop an ecology on their own. They mutate. My hybrid is a mutated species who develops the ability to adapt, [negotiate and make choices] an ability inherent to the traditional nomad. My hybrid is not a hybrid according to the rigorous scientific definition of the term because he is not truly the product of two different species, but rather two different cultures. He is not sterile but significantly creative. My Hybrid

¹⁰ Abdelali Ziyati, *The Re-birth of Nomad Cultures: The Case of Moroccan Migrants in France*, 2001, <http://www.lhup.edu/library/InternationalReview/2%20A%20Ziyati13.htm>

then, is an intellectual who roams in urban environments. He is a neo-nomad, in that he develops the same faculties of adaptation that are necessary for building a sense of belonging everywhere he goes. He has not organized yet the minimum vital abilities to have a sense of belonging. Yet the sense of belonging he acquires is linked to mobility. The hybrid is fragile because he is a newborn nomad. He is indeed thin-skinned, displaced mentally and physically because he always feels to be a stranger, from the start. He lives in inflated borders – borders that have a thickness. Expanded edges characterize him. The ecotone, or ‘third space’ is not a new idea. Indeed, as Maurin Perkins writes, ‘The ‘third space’, is a term which the cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha takes from Fredric Jameson's Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. Jameson talks of interstitial, or in-between spaces, and Bhabha expands the concept to signify expressions of hybridity. He urges the recognition of ‘in-betweenness’ as the means of avoiding ‘the politics of polarity’.¹¹ It is not necessary to choose one or the other pole, he suggests. Editors of ‘Les Mots Pluriels’ ‘have taken Bhabha's designation of hybridity and applied it to situations in which individuals are trying to mark out a new sense of racial or ethnic identity.’¹² The hybrid again is never from here nor from there, so he wanders, partly to look for his identity and affirm a sense of belonging.

Studying the hybrid as a living neo-nomad may inform us about the human nature of the nomadism. Relative to the metamorphosis of geographies, the hybrid demonstrates the importance of a discourse privileging the recovery of the senses that contributes to the understanding of the space.

I am a hybrid

Globalization has created me...

My mother is French; my father is Syrian. I have lived in Morocco, France, and the United Arab Emirates... I am here in the United States, for how long?

Always in transit...

Confrontation

Often the hybrid feels that he does not belong to any of the cultures that made him because he does not feel complete. Even more, the hybrid feels trapped between the two cultures that made

¹¹ Homi K. Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994

¹² Maurin Perkins, *Les Mots Pluriels*, no 7 [editorial] 1998
<http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP798edito.html>

him but that reject him. In Sartoris¹³, Faulkner¹⁴ writes about a hybrid that Jackson, a character of the novel, wants to create. The new specie, a mix of a hunting dog and a fox, will, as Jackson hopes, inherit of all the best capacities of each specie [scent of the dog + speed of the fox]. The result is pitiful because the parents, or other ‘true species,’ deny the so-called ‘revolutionary’ animal. The hybrid, in that case is the conscious product of an experience, also symbolizes the mulatto [Mulatto, Creole, multi-ethnic...¹⁵], caught in between, uprooted, ignored, denigrated by both sides. Furthermore, each ‘side’ sees him in a different way, but always as ‘other’. As the reading of Italo Calvino suggests, confrontation is always shaping the form and the space of the hybrid: ‘Despina can be reached in two ways: by ship or by camel. The city displays one face to the traveler arriving overland and a different one to him who arrives by sea.’ [...] ‘Each city receives its form from the desert it opposes; and so the camel driver and the sailor see Despina, a border city between two deserts.’¹⁶ The geography of the hybrid appears then to be elastic, expandable, transformable and adaptive to external oppositions.

Quest

As a result of this confrontation, the hybrid adopts a nomadic behavior. In the same way Julia Kristeva writes, ‘Not belonging to any place, any love. A lost origin, the impossibility to take root, a rummaging memory, the present is abeyance. The space of the foreigner is a moving train, a plane in flight, the very transition that preludes stopping. As to landmarks, there are none. His time? The time of a resurrection that remembers death and what happened before, but misses the glory of being beyond: merely the feeling of a reprieve, of having gotten away.’¹⁷ The hybrid roams in quest of his identity, his peace of mind, and a sense of belonging. The search for hospitable geographies seems to be of greater importance than the issues of race.

Extra sensitive I am

¹³ William Faulkner, Sartoris, IVth part, chapter IV, p298 of the French version I have [La Pleïade edition]

¹⁴ William Faulkner, the American author, wrote extensively about the South. He depicted the South, truly, and impartially [that is why perhaps he was not well received].

¹⁵ ‘Across cultures and time we might point to terms such as half-caste, half-breed, mulatto, octoroon, métis, chabine. In the last one hundred and fifty years these terms have sprung from the notion of race, a concept hardened into rigidity by colonial powers anxious to strengthen their political and economic hegemony.’ Maurin Perkins, *Les Mots Pluriels*, no 7 [editorial] 1998 <http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP798edito.html>

¹⁶ Italo Calvino, *Invisible cities*, New York and London, 1972, p017

¹⁷ Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, Columbia University Press, 1991, p007

Freedom

Yet, the hybrid who is not fully belonging to any of both culture-systems that made him, however hurt, is free to choose to where, to what and to which extend he belongs to one or another part. It is this freedom that gives the hybrid the ability to interpret, transform and invent his past. The hybrid plays with his memory. His knowledge is becoming another thing, not an amalgam, not a simple mix. Something that has weaved the bits of knowledge he learned from both sides.

The hybrid may choose to adopt one culture rather than another because of cultural and environmental contexts, or because of a need for community recognition. On the other hand, the hybrid may want to celebrate his difference, as a new species living in a 'third group' or ecotone. Being a symbol of the union of two cultures, the hybrid is thus creative, mixes genres and things, refuses conformism or rejects blending – he who is a mix. In 1981 then again, Adrian Piper, the artist-philosopher, and hybrid, draws a self-portrait accentuating her 'negritude' not as a statement of choice but more as a rebellion against racism. However plural hybridity is, 'No-one who inhabits the third space can take anything for granted, not even the language they speak, which may well be the language of those who reject them.'¹⁸ All hybrids strive to be heard. So they play...

Play

Someone asks: 'Where do you come from?' But who is he really for inquiring? I feel exhausted. Again, what kind of story am I going to tell? Each time I am asked to reveal my identity, I lie... By omission... Depending on she, depending on he. I would emphasize one part of myself, to shock, disturb, defend myself, to generate interest... My answers are, always, denials of one part of myself... I am from two cultures. Which one is the strangest to you? What tale do you want to hear? Exotic? ... I am, with my mysterious veils, my glamorous accent of the exile my rich past full of golden palaces. Intimidating? ... I am a spy, a revolutionary. Don't you see that I am dangerous? My masks are a self-protection... Because also, I don't know where I am coming from...

Language can also express the particularity of the hybrid. Language articulates at best the choice of the hybrid for one, another or both cultures. It is also a medium that is malleable. The hybrid hence invents his expressions and juggles with the worlds. The hybrid plays. When the hybrid

¹⁸ Maurin Perkins, *Les Mots Pluriels*, no 7 [editorial] 1998
<http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/MP798edito.html>

neo-nomad, thus migrant, adopts another language, it is a way to adapt and build a sense of belonging. He/she will, for example, fake or accentuate mistakes. Julia Kristeva nonetheless, talks about the ‘silence of the polyglot’, this migrant, always a stranger however excellent at speaking a new language. She writes: ‘You can become a virtuoso with this new device [language] that moreover gives you a new body, just as artificial and sublimated – some say sublime. You have a feeling that the new language is a resurrection: new skin, new sex. But the illusion bursts...’¹⁹

As to me, I play with my accent and my mistakes. This empowers me: I am not tied to any constraints, thus I feel free like the mythical nomad. I mistake more, and I generate interest. I have an accent that I modulate according to whom I speak to [outside] and to what I want [Inside]. My language like a veil masks or reveal my otherness, or my identity. Yet I can choose accordingly to adopt or to reject, as I always need to negotiate between affirming a singularity or being accepted. Like a pendulum I oscillate.

But... I have memories that I embellish

Interpretations

Memory is tightly linked to the idea of identity. Having memories signifies having existed somewhere. Good memories suggest the comfort of a past life, thus the ideal home we have reached at a certain moment. Collected memories work like the postcards of today. They map the territory of the neo-nomad. Memories, however embellished or altered, are an important part in the making of a sense of comfort, which is also inherent to the sense of home.

‘Nomads. I have always lived with them. They were in the background or on posters for promoting dream vacations. I knew the Blue men of the desert for the powerful magic they had on ignorant people’s imagination. The Blue men of the desert... I lived in Morocco for so long—14 years, and I haven’t seen any. I just dreamed of their freedom because of the blue veils [intensively and industrially produced for the tourists] that were sold in the souks of Marrakech. But you know what? It is like I have always known them. They are like a chimera, a Djinn of the one thousand and one nights that I enjoy describing or remembering. Morocco is also that. My Morocco is a lie.’

Awareness

¹⁹ Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, Columbia University Press, 1991, p015

A teller of tales, the hybrid is. Playing with masks, and veils, imaginaries and realities... Thus, none can really grasp his sincerity, not even himself. He is always a stranger, a condition that he is aware of. Like nomads do, the hybrid instinctively understands the space where he evolves. His very developed senses of perception are not only due to his extra sensitivity, but are also due to a constructed knowledge [understanding]. Each time he learns a little more about how to adapt to a situation. So he builds his geographies, always negotiating.

Honor

The hybrid does not want to be rejected [endure deprecatory comments for example]. He is therefore rebellious against unfair treatments. So is Adrian Piper. This artist-philosopher is also a hybrid. Half African American, she fights racism by, for example, distributing calling cards with this message written on it: 'Dear Friend, I am black [...] I regret any discomfort my presence is causing you, just I am sure you regret the discomfort your racism is causing me.' Adrian Piper seeks a behavioral attitude, a sense of honor:

Norms of etiquette that express acceptance of cultural and ethnic others include norms of courtesy (which exclude racist or sexist slurs), of noblesse oblige (which exclude self-serving contempt for or indifference to the less fortunate), of modesty and humility (about who is in fact less fortunate than whom, and in what respects), of tact (which presuppose sensitivity to others' feelings irrespective of cultural or ethnic affiliation), and a sense of honor (which includes extending to others the same respectful treatment one expects for oneself).²⁰

The hybrid develops this ability to perceive the other, to negotiate, and chooses to accept or not. The hybrid has a strong character built along his experiences. He is never submissive.

Anonymous?

The hybrid refuses to be anonymous. The hybrid plays, shows off, asserts his identity as a hybrid, or defends himself when he is considered a stranger. He is a thin-skinned nomad who fears to blend with the mass because he is born with the fear to be nothing, not accepted or forgotten. So

²⁰ Adrian Piper, 'Xenophobia and the Indexical Present I: Essay,' *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, Vol. 1, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press [1996], p. 246-67
<http://parallel.park.uga.edu/~lisaboyd/240G/w98/piper.html>

he roams, for exploring new territories, escaping realities or confronting them, never wanting to settle, but always leaving a trace.

A hybrid neo-nomad

Interlude

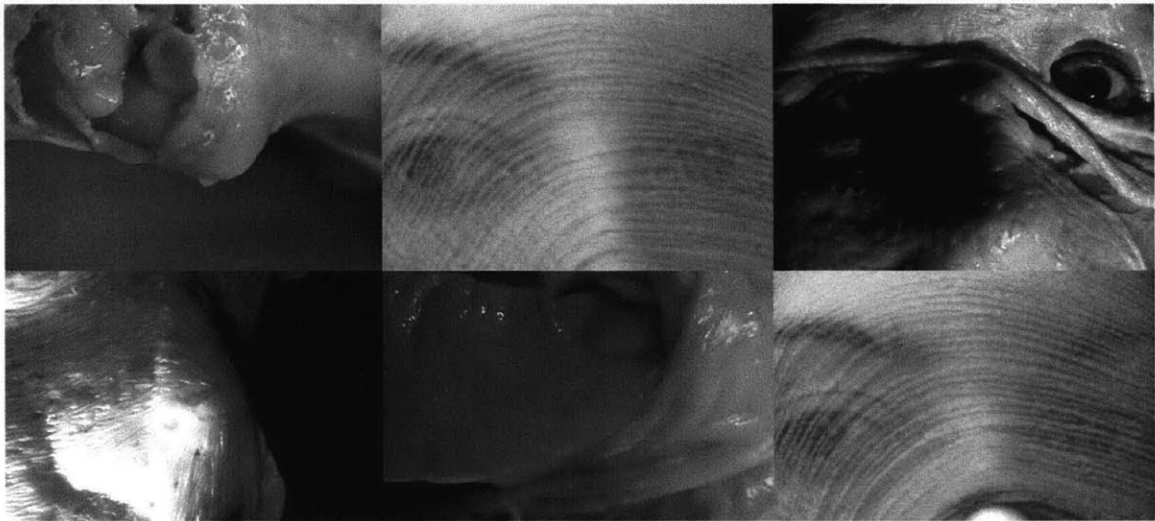


Image 3 \ Embodiment, stills

‘Place implies memory, reverie... The imaginary... Place also implies displacement, being elsewhere, being a stranger. Films are like imaginary journeys; the cinema is a magic means to distant places. Places are functions of narratives [action must take place somewhere] yet the fascination of films is often in the places themselves.’²¹

Video art allows the exploration of memory, play [masks] and identity. On one hand, video itself is an art form that struggles for identity: it is not film; it is displayed on the web, it is used in art performances. It thus expresses the hybrid, plural, and his various geographies, mental and physical. Video furthermore addresses spatiality in many different ways. Space can thus be evoked, narrated, imaginary or real. The space of the video works like the veil of the hybrid, masks or enhances realities. On the other hand, media, and video in particular helps the negotiation between the past and the present. As Abdelati Ziyati for example writes, ‘The use of the media [e.g., satellite television, VCRs] articulates migrants' existence in that they simultaneously establish and control their cultural differences in the host society and, thereby, mark continuity with an imaginary homeland.’²² Media, which has replaced the role of oral messages, is in that case a way to assert identities.

1973. In *Three Transitions*²³ Peter Campus refers to one’s search for identity, which is remarkably applicable to our contemporary culture. As described on an article,

Peter Campus uses video techniques to create illusions, wherein his image is erased and sometimes reconstructed. Campus, wearing a yellow blazer, walks up to a wall of yellow paper with his back to the viewer. An image from the other side of this "wall" is superimposed, so that a knife appears to slice through his back. As he cuts a hole in the paper wall, he disappears and reappears through the hole at the same time, then tapes it up and walks away. In the second vignette, Campus rubs his face, "erasing" the image as he goes to reveal another image of his face beneath himself. In the third transition, an outstretched

²¹ Quoting Wollen [P. Wollen, ‘Introduction, Place in the Cinema’, *Framework*, 1980, p25], Paul Rodaway, *Sensuous Geographies, Body, Sense and Place*, London 1994, p164

²² Abdelali Ziyati, *The Re-birth of Nomad Cultures: The Case of Moroccan Migrants in France*, 2001, <http://www.lhup.edu/library/InternationalReview/2%20A%20Ziyati13.htm>

²³ *The Television Workshop*, <http://main.wgbh.org/wgbh/NTW/FA/TITLES/Three334.HTML>

piece of paper bears Campus' reflection. Setting fire to this paper, he slowly obliterates his own image.

At the time of the new technologies, the global economy, the nomadic behaviors, the cross-cultural exchanges, the screens and veils of the consumerist society, we are indeed starving to define our own self. Before beginning his career as a video artist, Peter Campus studied experimental psychology. The artist is thus sensitive to human perceptions and expression of their existentiality. Hence, in his work, he raises many questions regarding the self-exploration, and the capture of reality by the camera. Is the camera, the external eye, able to capture one's identity? Who is the other?

Memory, however, plays an important part in the hybrid's making of identity. He embellishes it, invent it and disguise it. His mind is like the camera of Yoko Ono, always in Focus. The imagined images are abstract but evocative, therefore evoking the global world. The Hybrid, neo-nomad maps as such his spatiality.

Film N° 13 [Travelogue]²⁴

Travelogue from a point of view of a person who could only see things in focus and close-ups. Show things in close-ups and in focus as the usual narration goes on about the things to discover and enjoy on your travel. For example you introduce Tokyo and explain that what you see there are just knives—only because you focused in on a knife shop and that became Tokyo to you. On the screen you don't see knives except a very large view of the blade or a tip of the blade without any background. You could explain how beautiful the Geisha girls are, but only show strands of hair blowing in the wind in close-up. You talk about the mixed bath experience, and only show the steam. You talk about making love in the park and show two pieces of grass waving. You talk about the experience in a noodle shop, and show a close-up of the noodles without the background so the heap of noodles would look like an abstract expressionist painting.

²⁴ Scott MacDonald, 'Screen Writings, Scripts and Texts by Independent Filmmakers,' Berkeley, 1995, p29

This travelogue can be made without leaving your apartment.

Make a travelogue of your home country that expresses your focus.

Make travelogues of different countries that express your focus.

Inspired by these artists, I have worked on a video project evoking the world of the neo-nomad, his spaces, mental [imagined or aimed]. I intend to further explore the idea of travel, mobility as a factor of displacement, and mobility as a way to assert an identity. The neo-nomad learns to build a sense of home, by adapting, learning, analyzing, negotiating and choosing.

Script

Scene 1

A boat in paper floats on tormented waters.

Fade to black

<<When someone asks... Where do I come from? I panic>>

Scene 2

Panic. Trance. Everything turns around me... I am like a dervish... The camera focuses on parts of my body, clothing floating and inflating with the wind. And the world turns around me, quickly... the trees, and the sky... Until I fall.

Scene 3

Like in a dream... I see the sky, and people jumping, indifferently. I look again.

Transition

Black... <<Who are You?>>

Voice: 'What Am I?'

[Like a leitmotiv] Scene 2

Panic. Trance. Everything turns around me... I am like a dervish... The camera focuses on parts of my body, clothing floating and inflating with the wind. And the world turns around me, quickly... the trees, and the sky... Until I fall.

Scene 4

I look at the camera. The red veil rolls on my head. The meat is sliced, alternatively.
I am a hybrid...

Scene 5

Alternatively the veils rolls, the camera follows my moves by framing on the red veil that I carry.
Then the camera stops.

Panic. Trance. Everything turns around me... I am like a dervish... The camera focuses on parts of my body, clothing floating and inflating with the wind. And the world turns around me, quickly... the trees, and the sky... [Until I fall?]

ZONE 002

Conversation of the Lesion

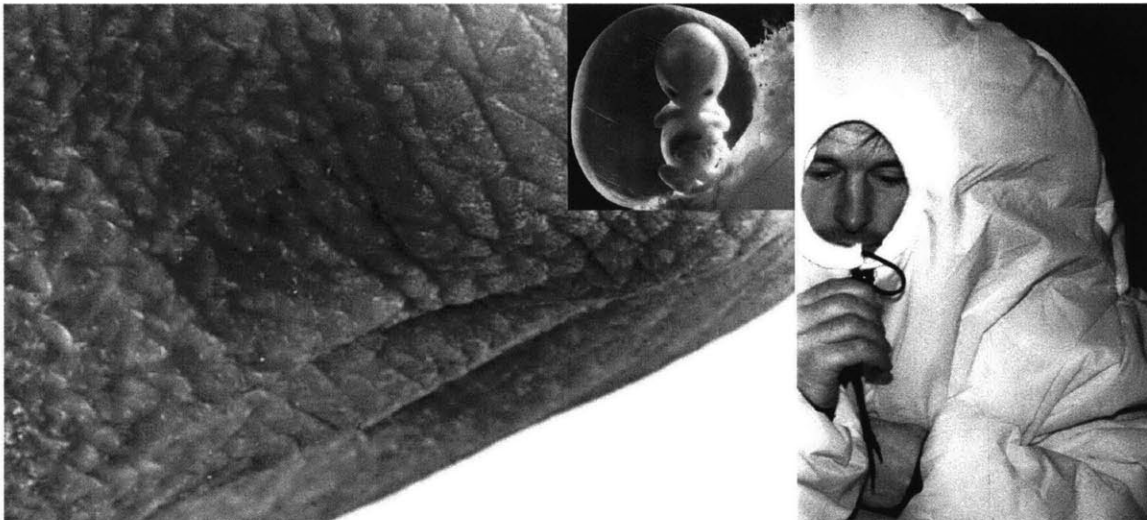


Image 2 \ Skins



Image 3 \ Memory skin

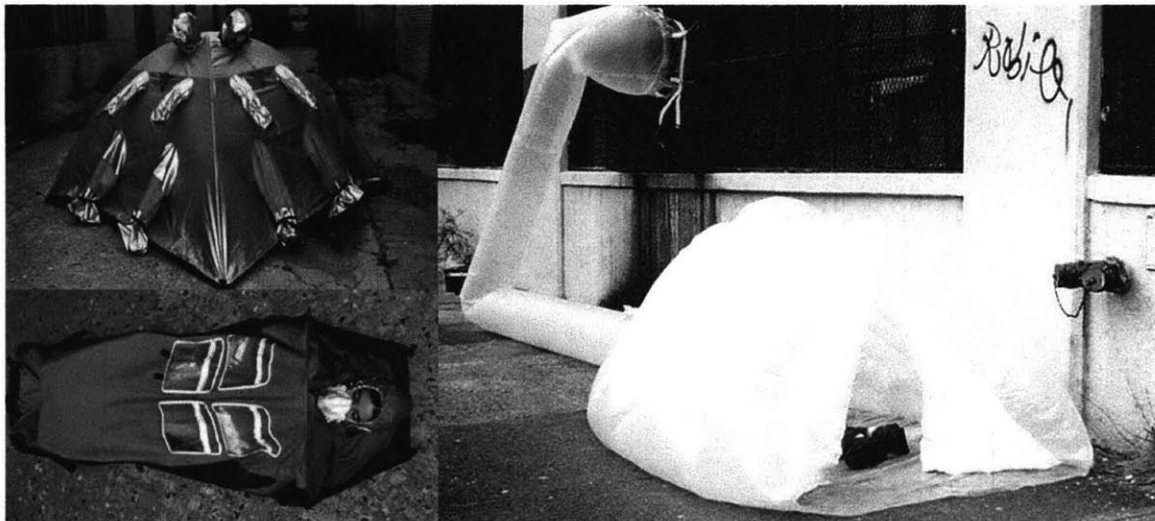


Image 4 \ Skin habitat

‘The tactile sensation is at the same time a sense of surface and form, texture and temperature, pressure and movement.’²⁵

Thin-Skinned

Hybrid... ‘Sensibilite à fleur de peau,’ he is the one that reacts to the condition of being a new kind of species, born from the mix of two. Accordingly, the hybrid can think of him/herself as not complete, never recalling really where he belongs. Always feeling homeless or, on the other hand, very much feeling stronger as new substrates products of mix metals can be.²⁶ Hence, the duality of the hybrid is expressed through every move and through the surrounding space that his presence alters.

Hybrid! You alter the geographies, mental and physical. Thin-skinned, you come. You are a stranger. Never one of us because of this otherness... But you, Hybrid, you don’t like us either! How proud you are to be you, Hybrid... Difference identifies you. Yes... Being identifiable comforts you, Hybrid! ‘Just as in its biological substrate, hybridizing always requires dealing with dominance and duality, and the danger of an integration, submersion, or simple disappearance into a ‘superior’ strain, a hegemonic whole, with no inscription of one’s own history, is always present.’²⁷ With you, sensitivity ‘à fleur de peau,’ Hybrid, and your haptic senses – among others – Hybrid you, you generate a space. A comfortable space, receptacle of your memories... Hybrid.

Memory Skin

Nomads of Niger use different decorating techniques, such as tattoos and scarification, to testify to their belonging to a community. Like them, the hybrid needs to assert his belonging to a place by emphasizing his traditions, recreating rituals, landmarks of his mental geographies... And me... I...

Memory of mine... Childhood; Morocco, a country I lived in for fourteen years. I am concentrating on the motion of the old lady. She came to our home because of our taste for exoticism, and our fascination for the local, the other; she is here also because of her drawing

²⁵ Paul Rodaway, *Sensuous Geographies, Body, Sense and place*, London 1994, p028

²⁶ Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles, Writings, Projects, Interviews*, MIT, 1999, p021

²⁷ *Ibid*, p023

skills. She knows the secrets of henna, the substance that dyes skin. Her grandmother taught her mother who taught her the tribal drawings. I am sure they have a meaning. I ask. She comes from the south. She is ancient. How old? One hundred, two hundred years... Carefully she traces lines, tales of her village, with the greenish mixture. On one palm... On the other one... That is it. I look transformed. I feel transformed. I am... Like her – ancient!

I left Morocco about ten years ago. It is not even my country of birth, nor the country of birth of my parents, global workers. However, the henna ceremony is now a part of my culture. I have appropriated the ritual, transformed it, and reinvented it, accentuating its mysteries. The ritual is now a part of my traditions. By reclaiming such traditions, me, always ready for departure, I foster a sense of belonging. I build my history according to every place I happen to dwell in long enough for me to adapt. Henna distinguishes me as much as it helps me feel a part of a culture.

Skin, because of the henna ceremony [the ceremony I have appropriated and re-interpreted] is associated with my memory and the personal space I create wherever I go. As a matter of fact, the tattoo drawn on the most private space [surface] of a human being, expresses his beliefs and identifies him. In the *Pillow Book* by Peter Greenaway, the heroine fashions a book out of the skin of her victims on which she has drawn calligraphy. According to Daniel Webster, ‘As the bodies are written upon they are also written through; their physical texts operating simultaneously to deploy a network of symbolic and cultural significance that governs levels of authority and identity.’²⁸ To me, it appears to be the supreme appropriation of human bodies. The skin, indeed, is the envelope, which contains a highly private space.

Embodiments

Diller + Scofidio already define flesh as being the ‘outermost surface of the ‘body’ bordering all relations in space.’ If flesh represents something more voluptuous, thicker and generous, skin seems to suit more the hybrid-neo-nomad. Indeed, skin suggests something extremely vulnerable, thin, and delicate. ‘The surface area of the skin has an enormous number of sensory receptors receiving stimuli of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and an infinite range of tactile sensations. It is estimated that there are 50 receptors per 100 square millimetres. Tactile points vary from 7 to

²⁸ Daniel Webster, MA Dissertation, University of Sussex, 1997 | <http://www.dcwebster.freeserve.co.uk/5frame.htm>

135 per square centimetre'.²⁹ Skin, moreover 'is also, already, right from the start [birth is the transfer from an aquatic to a dry environment for example], a highly adaptable system.'³⁰ Like Paul Rodaway develops in *Sensuous Geographies*, 'The skin mediates between the body and the surrounding environment.' Tactile sensations, 'haptic senses,' [warmth, vibration...] allow us to perceive geographies, meaning spatiality. The skin not only suggests envelopes, but porous thresholds that lead to exchange, and maybe communication. The skin is thus definitive between one and another space, and sometimes protects. It may allude for example to the metaphor of the tent, transportable everywhere, that encloses the minimum vital space required by the traditional nomad. In our highly public environment, however, the skin appears to be the last remaining private space of today's nomads. Skin, therefore, best expresses the mental and physical geographies of any NEOMAD.

Skin-Habitat

'Architecture –the expression of man himself—at once flesh and spirit.

Architecture is elemental, sensual, primitive, brutal, terrible, mighty, dominating.

But it is also the embodiment of the most subtle emotions, a sensitive record of the most refined sensations, a materialization of the spiritual.'³¹

The habitat of the traditional nomad is already made of animal skin. Cowan, for example, reminds us that the 'Black Tent is a variation of the legendary *beyt es shaar* [house of hair] of the Bedouin.'³² The Mat-skin, as well, uses 'woven or animal materials for the awning.' Every single piece of furniture or utilitarian object is likewise made of animal skin, thus emphasizing the close relationship of the nomad with his animals. This brings another dimension to the comparison with the neo-nomad who similarly fashions his habitat with the efficiency that supports mobility. If the habitat of the neo-nomad, has now shrunk to the clothing because of, for example, privacy issues such as extensive surveillance, his relationship with the surrounding seems accentuated. The neo-nomad is craving to build up a social environment and social relationships. He has invented automobiles, internet, and entertainment robots [The AIBO of Sony for example]. These

²⁹ Paul Rodaway, *Sensuous Geographies, Body, Sense and Place*, London 1994, p042, quoting A. Montagu, *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin*, 1971

³⁰ *Ibid*, p043

³¹ Hans Hollein, *Absolute Architecture* [in] Ulrich Conrads, *Programs and Manifestos on 20th-century Architecture*, 1971, p181

³² P Cowan, *Nomadology in Architecture: ephemerality and movement in the construction of dwelling*, <http://puffin.curtin.edu/~cowan/nomad/>

inventions singularly promote the connectivity with the other [information], as well as defend the individual from any kind of physical connection. This can lead to the idea that people are like billboards, flat, and with no soul. The aggressive world [media] leads to a politics of 'immunity.' This protectionist politics prevents people to break the barriers of identity, which is the basis for the construction of communities.³³ People protect themselves and form ersatz communities of individuals with similar possessions, a situation that does not imply communication in any way. Their skin, or protective envelope, expresses the struggle to fit in. If originally the tattoo is a sign of belonging to a group, today it represents the last remaining belonging of the individual. They certainly are attached to it, for that they fear disappearance. The community becoming larger because of globalization, the individual struggles to meet a balance.

Thus hybridization at every level...

Tension of the border, a pouch

According to Paul Rodaway, 'The wearing of clothes, and especially gloves, can also mask or reduce tactile sensations.'³⁴ He means that the wearing of such outfits can reduce our ability to perceive the surrounding space, the various geographies. Alternatively, the clothing-architectures of Lucy Orta translate the close relationship between the body and the social environment. They are master art pieces that, along with the 'paraSites' of Michael Rakowitz, respond inventively to the problematic of the wandering homeless population, a consequence of our malfunctioning societies. Both of them, Orta and Rakowitz, address particular nomads of our cities. Each artist's project further investigates the notion of protective layers, membrane, what I call architecture of skins, shelters, and portable houses, kinetic and tensile structures. If Orta talks about clothing, emphasizing the idea of the transportable, Rakowitz seems to stress on the aspect of communication. By adding pockets to the paraSITE shelters, Rakowitz allows 'the user to display messages to the public,'³⁵ like a tattoo on one's flesh. The projects not only engage the notion of space and appropriation of space, and territoriality, but are also statements, or screams, for identity. The skins [cloth, fabric, membrane, inflatable, outfit, portable...] reveal existences.

³³ Roberto Esposito, *Communauté ne signifie pas identité, mais alterité*, [Community Means not Identity but Otherness] Article in *Le Monde*, Mardi 19 Decembre 2000, p018

³⁴ *Ibid*, p048

³⁵ Michael Jonathan Rakowitz, *paraSITE*, Master of Science in Visual Studies, MIT, 1998

Skin again... We exist because of the envelope, the image, which is drawn, written, or projected on it. Our skin is a state of mind, a habitat, and our identity, the last private space for free and personal expression. As Orta says:

To be homeless in a media culture such as ours is therefore to be rendered invisible; to melt literally into the margins and framework of the city. "Out of sight, out of mind" is an English saying that holds some credence here, an aphorism that has a more pertinent meaning to those disenfranchised members of society who fall through this gap. The Refuge Wear city appearances that I staged from 1993 challenged that act of social disappearance, by rendering the invisible, visible once more.³⁶

However, the idea of appearance, disappearance, and denial is common not only to the homeless population, but also to many others – strangers, hybrids, mutants, and nomads.

Dissolving

From the skin which is a vector of identity, to the idea of the envelop, one can now perceive all the metaphors, word games, and association of ideas that can be implied. An identity, which is visible or not, can indeed refer to ideas of material and immaterial, visible and invisible but sensed. Wodiczko already emphasizes the mental immateriality of the stranger-nomad noticing that, 'In sum, the state of being a stranger accumulates as an experience with no form, no language, no expression, and no right to be communicated, and thus becomes a dangerous psychic symptom.'³⁷ Truly, the stranger feels rejected, so he is always on the move. To go back to him, the thin-skinned hybrid, also a stranger, starves for recognition. He acts so as not to be transparent anymore. What is containing him and his space, the skin or envelope, gains a texture that can protect [against the elements for example], or can allow exchange between the outside world and the inside one. The skin appears also as an element that is layered since as Kristeva writes, 'Without a home, he [the stranger] disseminates on the contrary the actor's paradox: multiplying masks and "false selves" he is never completely true, nor completely false...'³⁸ The skin functions like a veil, veiling, revealing, enhancing... dissolving one's identity

'Emotions à fleur de peau...' I disappear...

³⁶ http://studioorta.free.fr///lucy_orta.html

³⁷ Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles, Writings, Projects, Interviews*, MIT, 1999, p009

³⁸ Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, Columbia University Press, New York 1991, p009

The veil, which is ‘a piece of opaque, transparent material worn over the face for concealment, for protection from the elements, or to enhance the appearance’... is also ‘Something that separates, screens.’ Something veiled lacks ‘Clarity or distinctness.’ ‘A mask, disguise, pretense...’ Accordingly, because it allows a visual game, the veil suits the hybrid. Hence the hybrid, veiled, is semi-distinguishable, noticeable because incongruous among the local population, desirable or unwelcome. The hybrid-neo-nomad, also because he is unable to define who he is, wears many veils, thus adopting many identities. He is like a chameleon. The veil because of its strong aesthetic potential [nature, transparency, fabric, color and cut] is a metaphor of the hybrid’s changing mood, identity, and skin. It articulates a particular boundary condition, that is, an overlap of adjacent spaces, which permits negotiation between one and another. The veil expresses the character of the hybrid’s social space.

Skin. Skin-clothing and clothing-habitat. Clothing has mixed with new technologies to fit our needs. Many designers and manufacturers have created cyber suits, travel wear, and envelopes that suit our nomadic experience, protects us, enhances our perception or gives us emotions that we seem to have lost. Final Home for instance has designed a suit with a double layering of pockets that can be filled with newspapers [for insulation] or possessions in anticipation of any job loss, or in case of travel. The clothing habitat becomes a suitcase. The anatomy of the skin as well informs us about the human need for regulation and protection. Clothing, like skin, translates emotions such as fear, and desire. The hybrid, thin-skinned neo-nomad, can wear, I imagine, clothes that protect him, revealing his emotions by inflating or deflating, for example, accordingly to data emitted by sensors. Intelligent clothing and wearables³⁹ where technologies can work as intelligent assistants, can also ‘augment realities.’ Sensations have to be rediscovered and the skin [clothing, envelope, armor] is the mediator between two spaces.

Negotiation

The skin is the physical means of constant negotiation with the outside world. It is porous – allows transactions, heats, blemishes. It signifies, at another level, the sense of adaptation of the hybrid, neo-nomad. Naturally, all species can adapt to circumstances, and environments. The hybrid adapts, meaning he changes, alters his identity to adjust, suit or fit in an environment. The

³⁹ The group ‘Wearables’ at the Media Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
<http://wearables.www.media.mit.edu/projects/wearables/>,

surroundings, prevalent and dominant, force the species [hybrid] to change. In ‘The Mutant Body of Architecture,’⁴⁰ Following the idea of the body and what contains it, George Teyssot talks about incorporation:

As Drew Leder reminds us in his pursuit of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s analysis of perception, the etymology of this world, from the Latin corpus, means ‘to bring within a body.’ Incorporation is what enables us to acquire new abilities; these abilities can settle into fixed habits. As time passes, these repeated habits are definitively ‘incorporated’ and disappear from our view. They become enveloped with the interior of a body-structure from which I inhabit the world.

The hybrid however is a stranger with a skin-armor. He wants to adapt to the new country where he landed as much as he would like to assert his identity. In his struggle for being a part of the society and not lose his identity, he is claiming for freedom. The sense of adaptation of the hybrid is therefore subject to resistances. It is not passive. The hybrid, the stranger, the neo-nomad masochistically move away when they become too incorporated, or when they have incorporated too much of another place. Place is never theirs. They escape anonymity. The hybrid, among other species of the same kind, is thus always in transit, protecting, masking, or over-displaying his realities. He is living in a dream world, a bubble, disconnected but hyper sensitive.

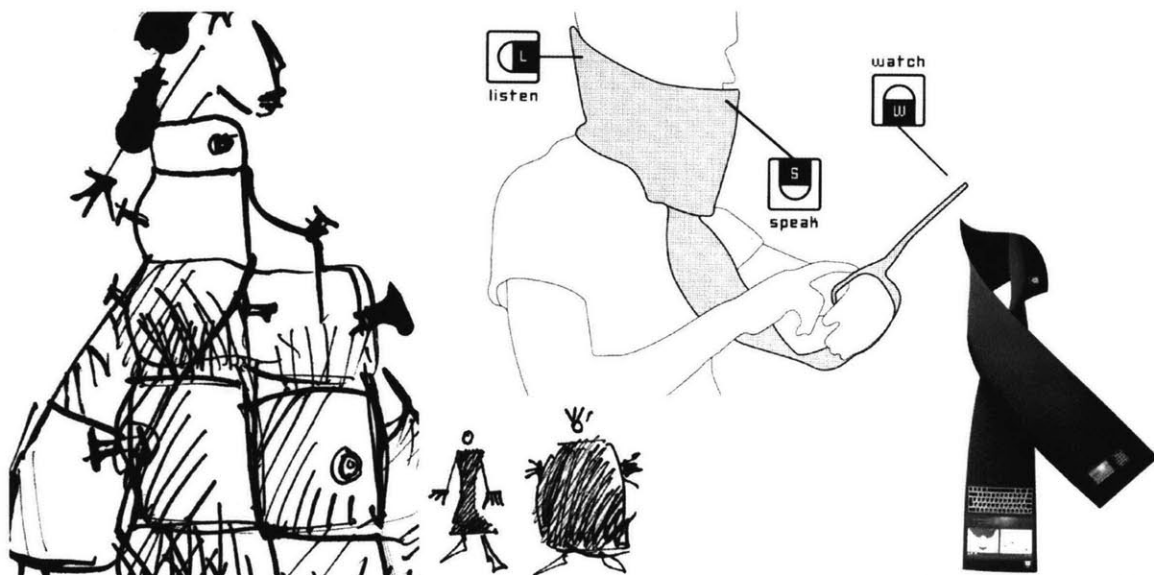


Image 5 \ Intelligent clothing

⁴⁰ [In] architectural probes, Diller + Scofidio, *Flesh!* [‘The outermost surface of the ‘body’ bordering all relation in space], 1994, p015... Quoting D. Leder, *The Absent Body*, p031

ZONE 003

Dérives

Nomadic behaviors imply spatial relationships that are challenging the traditional notion of home as being doomed to inertia. As the wheel of time turns, as the herds move, new territories are explored. So home is exported, transported, and readjusted. Prospects, time, identities and spatial qualities are therefore subject to adaptation to new environments. Nomads, we all are. It is in our human nature. Hence, what does it mean for the space in which we evolve, physically and mentally?

Thin Cities⁴¹

The city of Sophronia is made up of two half cities. In one there is the great roller coaster with its steep humps, the carousel with its chain spokes, the Ferris wheel of spinning cages, the death-ride with crouching motorcyclists, the big top with the clump of trapezes hanging in the middle. The other half-city is of stone and marble and cement, with the bank, the factories, the palaces, the slaughterhouse, the school, and all the rest. One of the half-cities is permanent, the other is temporary, and when the period of its sojourn is over, they uproot it, dismantle it, and take it off, transplanting it to the vacant lots of another half-city.

And so every year the day comes when the workmen remove the marble pediments, lower the stone, walls, the cement pylons, take down the ministry, the monuments, the docks, the petroleum refinery, the hospital, load them on trailers, to follow from stand to stand their annual itinerary. Here remains the half-Sophronia of the shooting galleries and the carrousels, the shout suspended from the cart of the headlong roller coaster, and it begins to count the months, the days it must wait before the caravan returns and a complete life can begin again.

Free to wander | Wander for freedom

As an illustration of what is the essence of ‘home’, the city of Sophronia described by Italo Calvino expresses our human nature, what is everlasting, by the metaphor of the wheel and other moving devices that are always in motion – but controlled; while what can appear as the most permanent, the physical aspect of the city [buildings and institutions], is doomed to disappear,

⁴¹ Italo Calvino, *Invisible cities*, New York and London, 1972, p063

and to reappear somewhere else, maybe not in the exact same way. Each part of the city may not be able to live without the other. The idea of ritual that the waiting implies can also remind us of nomadic civilizations that are also based on profound traditions and relationships with the environment. However, the city of Italo Calvino, as a soul and a body, is perpetually in motion.

When Constant Nieuwenhuys created the New Babylon city, he intended to engage people with their surroundings in a dynamic way. Constant was involved in the Situationist International movement that aimed to challenge the inertia of the world, the cities and their inhabitants. New Babylon, as a result, is inspired by a Gypsy camp, a structure that implies nomadic, ever changing, and adaptable architecture. Even if the formal proposal compresses geographical distances [people would roam in a smaller territory, the city], the intention was really to explore the proposition that nomadism is being inherent in us – mobility is a need. Nomadic behavior is in fact the expression of our freedom. According to Constant, ‘It is obvious that a person free to use his time for the whole of his life, free to go where he wants, when he wants, cannot make the greatest use of his freedom in a world ruled by the clock and the imperative and fixed abode.’ Although artificial and man-made, the city of Babylon would ‘force’ the people to mobility: a state of being that has to be recovered. The dictatorial approach of Constant is however pointing at the origin of our increasing mobility: the search and expression of freedom. From the conquerors to the web surfers, we are all looking for independence. Moreover, as Ashley Benigno states in ‘Deleuze and Guattari and Techno-nomads:’

At the end of the day, the use of a "nomadic" discourse, be it technologically orientated or otherwise, is always underlined by other concerns of a social and political nature. The quest of the modern nomad has always been to break borders and boundaries, to escape the narrow confines of the fixed identities imposed by nations, religions, economic status and sex. The nomad seeks a freer world in which to invent him or herself, a richer, fuller, more playful existence.⁴²

The set of rules constructed along the way by nomads, mutated hybrids, allows for them expansion, discovery, and freedom of expression. The hybrid, for example, always oscillates between two sides. Accepted or not by each or both cultures, he will never fully submit to fuse with the crowd, because his difference is his identity. Moreover, the fact that he withdraws

⁴² Ashley Benigno, <http://www.rhizome.org/object.rhiz?1538>

himself from rigid structures, gives him the choice of mobility, and of adaptation. The rules he has set are consequences of his philosophy. Nomads indeed learn how to adapt and, therefore, how to build a sense of home anywhere. These skills, such as adaptation, negotiation and decision [the ability to distinguish necessities], are built through the history of events. They are also the minimum necessary structures that encourage nomadism.

Home? Adaptation, negotiation, and decision

What does 'sense of home' mean? The notion of Home does not inevitably imply settlement. It suggests the idea of adaptation. Traditional nomads, who also feel at home everywhere they go, have, for example, a very accurate sense of adaptation, adaptation being based on the knowledge of their environment which is built over time. In order to feel at home, then, anyone should become familiar with the surrounding space. The awareness of the environment erases, in fact, the possible fears inspired by the unknown. Hence, nomadic cultures, such as these of sailors, wanderers, conquerors, and neo-nomads have an excellent understanding of the place they evolve in. Their geography is built through the optimal use of their senses, which help them recognize or feel a place. They consequently feel 'at home' [at ease] wherever they go because they have a sense of where they are roaming. The technologies of today [cyber suits, wearables, portables...] have the same function as the educated senses of the traditional nomad. They allow the neo-nomad to map his geographies, so he can adapt and feel at home.

Additionally, in order to feel at home, one seems to attach importance to the knowledge and connectivity with his history. Using various ways, the nomad, or neo-nomad as well, recalls his roots. He collects memories gathered along his paths [objects, pictures, mail, new technologies...]. He reinvents rituals that are no longer. In the case of the migrant, or the hybrid that is at once global and local, home has a split character. As Abdelati Zeyati writes, Migration '[...] Also suggests a shift from a previously fixed identity to a self-awareness of one's multiple and simultaneous location[s]. The latter point is significant in that it marks the initial ingredients of what it means to constitute the interstice of two realities,'⁴³ this interstice that I call ecotone. In his text, *The 'Re-Birth of Nomad Culture: The Case of Moroccan Migrants in France*, Zeyati talks about the media, as a factor of negotiation between the physical location and the imaginary one. Memories of the past are now better conveyed through television and video. Furthermore Zeyati writes, 'As Nacify [1993] indicates, 'Through controlling 'there' and 'then' [Moroccan

⁴³ Abdelati Zeyati, *The Re-Birth of Nomad Culture: The Case of Moroccan Migrants in France*, <http://www.lhup.edu/library/InternationalReview/2%20A%20Ziyati13.htm>

Migrants] can control 'here' and 'now' [p.132]. That is the power of giving themselves a voice, a location and a place from which migrants contain nostalgia and alienation and turn them into an active articulation of the self, the homeland, and the context of living.' Technology again permits connectivity with history and thus allows the formulation of what is home. If Hybrids, this kind of neo-nomad, particularly negotiate between the mental _memory_ and physical geographies _real living situation_, any nomad irrevocably negotiate with the environment.

So far we have looked at the notion of home as being irremediably linked to the notion of adaptation, the act of modification to suit new conditions. Adaptation implies subsequently the skills of negotiation. Both are intrinsic qualities of any nomadic culture, traditional or neo. If the idea of adaptation is however natural, nomadic species, due to their continual exposure to various conditions, have particularly developed their adaptation skills _that technology also fosters. The idea of negotiation leads further to the concept of meeting with others, to the idea of otherness, and then decision.

Feeling at home means also being recognized. In international environments for example, I feel at ease because the notion of otherness [stranger] is not part of the discourse. In an international environment, I am not a stranger; I am accepted. Being empowered, meaning making the space ours is inherent to the idea of home as private space. The fact that physical boundaries dissolve, the idea of home as a private space becomes critical. With the new technologies spreading around the globe, the issues of privacy have affected the space we are living in. The infinite big has invaded the infinite small and vice versa. Web, video surveillance, satellites, all contribute to the making of the world George Orwell depicted in his famous novel, Nineteen Eighty Four. The more private space has shrunk to the minimum, the clothing, or even the skin, skin-billboard. What ever defines the private space, skin or membrane, is a sign of territoriality and identity.

The construction of a space by response to a situation, a space-reaction, made of any membrane for example suggest again that the idea of home has consequently less to do with the locality, but more with the sensed geographies, and their interpretation. Among others, one has to negotiate his private space and make strong decisions about protecting a minimum vital, home, self. The traditional nomads, and the city-nomads of Orta for example are transporting a minimum belonging. However, this minimum belonging, enclosed in a 'bubble', allows not only the freedom of roaming; this transportable space delimited by the tent, the skin-armor, identifies also each nomad.

Identities in motion

‘The activities of scavengers and the growing numbers of what one reporter described as their ‘gaily decorated’ shopping carts have played a role in altering the public perception of homeless individuals. Their visibly purposive movement through the city gives them an identity as actors in the urban space.’⁴⁴ In *Critical Vehicles*, Krzysztof Wodiczko elaborates on the identity of the homeless population, also wanderers. The envelope, as much as mobility, defines. Something in movement in an environment rather static or something dreadfully colored in the aseptic, and uncolored building environment, will draw attention. It is a matter of contrast. The Hybrid in particular, who refuses to be a mere blend, finds his identity by distancing himself from places. Comparisons, contrast, and movement also build distinctions, therefore identities.

Identity as a set of permanencies is an invention of our modern societies. As a matter of fact, human nature is built on mix and movement. We are already the product of two others for example, and our knowledge is based on curiosity, discoveries and conquests. Identity then is subject to changes, alteration and/or development according to movement and the pace of life. Subsequently, the idea of home and comfort [static] that is assimilated to the concept of identity [in motion] becomes obsolete because it is built as a constant.

The notion of travel, brought up by James Clifford⁴⁵, emphasizes the travel experience and knowledge, which can be positive or negative, as being inherent to cultures. Travel allows for encounters and the reshaping of cultural identities, which reflect subsequently onto the building environment. Hotels and airports are the places of high concentration of people on the move. They are places of transition, interstitial spaces, ‘borderlands’. They express the space of overlaps that affects one’s identity. Movement infers speed, time, travel time, and time spent somewhere. At anytime, the identity of any living organism gets redefined by the environment it happens to be in for a moment, for example a cell, or an airport. However, importantly enough, it is the time [pause] when the nomad physically settles for a moment, which is going most likely to affect his/her identity. As soon as he stops, he react to the new environment he is in, and adapts to it, try to build a home or a sense of it, meaning comfort.

⁴⁴ Krzysztof Wodiczko, in *Critical Vehicles*, Writings, Projects, Interviews, MIT, 1999, p082

⁴⁵ James Clifford, *Routes, Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, 1997, p033

Clifford states, 'I hang on to 'travel,' as a term of cultural comparison precisely because of its historical taintedness, its association with gendered, racial bodies, class privilege, specific means of conveyance, beaten paths, agents, frontiers, documents and the like. [...] And I prefer it to terms such as 'nomadism,' often generalized without apparent resistance from non-Western experience [Nomadology: a form of postmodern primitivism?].'

I would argue that travel and nomadism are different. I hang on to the word nomad because first, unlike travel, nomadism embraces the notion of rituals, their invention and perpetuation. Today also, we invent our rituals. Secondly, nomadism implies the knowledge of the surrounding environment, and therefore a strong sense of adaptation. Thirdly, and probably more personal, the image of the nomad has its importance because a part of my memories. I have, as a matter of fact, developed the 'nomad' idea along with the bits of romanticized history I have collected from my past. Memory, however affected, plays an important role in the evolution of our movable identities.

Identity and the notion of home is not always to be built and associated with anything physical, therefore permanent. Why then can't we feel at home somewhere else? It is often because comfort is associated with habit and rituals that have been constructed through generations. Nomadic civilizations for example possess strong rituals. These traditions can be perpetrated, although altered [because adapting to the environment], anywhere. It is also how any migrant would express his identity, by referring to traditions he had memorized. However, these rituals are often physically altered, invented [like the phone booth in Chinatown, Boston], and abandoned when judged inadequate. The child of the migrant would always feel he does belong to the country where he has lived most of his life. The sense of home is therefore in constant evolution. Feeling at home also implies the idea of acceptance by the other. Home is thus not self-centered. The sense of who we are implies a dialogue with ourselves, and with others. Motions, mental like memories, physical like travels and dialogues, virtual like the web, all shape identities. Identities therefore can be metaphorically represented by a living organism, which grows and shrinks according to the environment [with scarce or abundant victuals] it happens to encounter.

Zone 004

Landscapes

Rape of Geographies

To the uninitiated and the romantic, the word ‘nomad’ suggests roaming, wandering, moving about, crossing man-made boundaries, freedom. A traditional nomad is, on the contrary, barely free because he roams within a constructed path and a defined space. The world of the traditional nomad is in fact determined by survival. In order to survive, then, the traditional nomad memorizes and learns about the surrounding environment. As a consequence, it is within a known, limited and defined geography, that the traditional nomad relocates himself, constantly, but without being affected. Mentally he is at peace because he feels at home. The word ‘nomad’ calls to mind the word geography, geography being a collection of landmarks, landmarks having also to do with memory and the particularities that affect it.

Alternatively, the neo-nomad is aiming not only for freedom and expansion of his geographies, but also for building a place where he is comfortable – that he in fact recognizes. Explorer, or forced to explore, the neo-nomad is someone who struggles with the idea of home as being a factor of inertia, meaning imprisonment, anonymity, and death. The hybrid is a neo-nomad who fundamentally translates this fear of lethargy. His geographical spaces are based on dualities [first, he is a mix], if not multiplicities. He is rejected, or withdraws himself from places to others. He roams to find a home but it is his wandering that defines his identity. Ceasing to travel would signify ceasing to exist, so the hybrid has to be an eternal traveler, an eternal newcomer, an eternal stranger. Neo-nomadism, contrary to nomadism, thus faces the impossibility of being contained [circuit]. Looking for distinction, neo-nomads – like hackers, techno-nomads, and rebels also, rape geographies because they penetrate new lands that are not accepting them.

Seeking to define the geographies of the neo-nomad, would be trying to identify his space[s], the space he roams in, his private space and the space of confrontation within himself or with the others. Are the geographies of the neo-nomad transportable or expandable? Although, he has roamed across the world, the geography of the neo-nomad is reduced to a bubble, be it called home ‘home’ or ‘minimum vital space.’ His mental geography seems however infinite. By looking closely at the meaning of physical and mental geographies, I am trying to grasp a bit of his landscapes...

Physical geographies

The author of ‘The New Geography,’ Joel Kotkin while focusing on the case of the United States, writes about a phenomenon that is spreading rapidly and worldwide: the technological

development that comes along with the global economy. Believing, like me, that to everything exists a counter balance, he develops the idea that ‘In reality, place—geography—matters more than ever before. If people, companies or industries can truly live anywhere, or at least choose from a multiplicity of places, the question of where to locate becomes increasingly contingent on the peculiar attribute of any given location.’⁴⁶ According to him, places that people choose have to be incredibly attractive qualitatively. Nevertheless, attributing a quality to things comes along with the idea of comfort and comfort often is related to certainty. Thus, populations are comfortable with their history because they know and/or understand it. The past is so present in people’s future that many idiotic solutions, like applying a pseudo-cultural and recognizable pattern on a building tower for example, emerges from this symptomatic loss of people’s convictions. People, fearing the unknown, respond by over emphasizing the past and inventing rituals. However, because of our natural sense of adaptation, populations have already adjusted to new technologies, which become part of a familiar everyday space with its traditions [known] applied to it.

Mental geographies

Mental geographies are spaces of projection. They allow one’s imagination to wander in an infinite space, which is nevertheless limiting because physically inaccessible. A mental geography represents the beyond. For balance, there will always be a mental geography in juxtaposition to a physical geography. For instance, a physical barrier will allow the imagination of the physical space on the other side. Mental geographies can also be punctuated by the imagery of recognizable entities of physical geographies; for example, the memory we have of a house and the dreams relocating elements and people in various orders or disorders. If mental geographies are reminiscences of existing landmarks, they nevertheless allow the escape from realities. Mental geographies are thus essential for the exploration of the extreme. Sometimes dangerous, they are yet the expression of freedom. Mental geographies allow invention, and mixing. They have no boundaries. The exploration is not limited. So is the reinvention of memory. The memory of the hybrid and the neo-nomad similarly reflect this freedom because it is not bound to physical realities.

The Mixed geography is the overlap and mix of both mental and physical geographies in that the places, worlds, or universes projected are real and possibly accessible. It allows the perception of

⁴⁶ Joel Kotkin, ‘The New Geography: How The Digital Revolution Is Reshaping The American Landscape,’ New York, 2000

both at the same time, a physical environment and remote places that can be at least imagined, if not distorted or framed by the screen that alters realities. The Net is an example of mixed geography in that it allows us to reach remote people that exist, and real places. The Communicating Scarf of Naziha Mestaoui, Yacin Aït Kaci, and Christophe Beaujays [and this comes back also to the idea of skin, clothing, tent and habitat], is also an example of a physical device that permits the reach of other places. It is 'allowing the wearer to be at once here and potentially everywhere but still within a private sphere of communication.'⁴⁷

Mixed geographies are also the place of encounters, the space of tension, decompression, the place of departure and arrival. There, cultures mix, and form a new blend, a zone of another kind. Mixed geographies are the expression of the boundary that is not a line anymore but a space on its own, an ecotone, a newborn space that relies on the adaptation of new species to exist.

Mixed geographies are the space of the hybrid and the neo-nomad

Reminding me of...

The Straits... They are physically representing the tension between borders. Not man made boundaries, straits also distinguish themselves from other natural boundaries. Water being a fluid, the boundary condition is quite impossible to trace, although very much perceptible. It has a 'trace-spirit'. The tension of the strait as a space of exploration and transit is thus illuminating of our human notion of territoriality.

Neo-nomad, expression of the edge...

⁴⁷ Paola Antonelli, 'Workspheres, Design and Contemporary Work Styles,' New York, 2001

Conclusion

From where I stood, looking at the highland landscape, it was clear that the geography of the glens reinforced the custom of the duthus⁴⁸. I concluded that that's what a national landscape is. You move into a place, and after a few generations, it has changed you, and you have wrought your culture, using the landscape as an anvil. But nothing lasts forever. If you are evicted from this landscape, the first thing you might do is to get drawn into the cycle of revenge. Another thing you might be able to do is to start again—and is that not what the national idea of the United States was? Or you can depend on your memory, as a nomad has to do. The tartan, the bagpipes, and the whisky are like the songlines of the highlanders, even if, when you look closely, you can see the fingertips of the marketing people. The colors of the vegetation, the sound of the mountains, the taste of the water—that is what tartan, bagpipes and whisky are. They are the landscape now: and in the beginning we are all nomads.⁴⁹

Life is movement, for a fact... and... Even Cain killed Abel the nomad as if, since the beginning, we have tried to discipline our human nature, which is to be... Nomads. As a result, the invented territories and borders have led to the notions of otherness, enclosures, and supremacies. Thus the study of the Hybrid, in between, challenges these notions of boundaries since he has none.

The space of the hybrid is an ecotone, layered, inflatable, made of membranes, tattooed, ever changing, masking, blurring, veiling. The space is transportable, a part of his body. The skin of the hybrid, this individual in confrontation with others, has acquired many thicknesses. The skin and its metaphors thus represent the hybrid and the neo nomad world. Like the image of the traditional nomad, the neo nomad tends to prefer an ascetic mode of living. Not only does it enable mobility [light load], it is a possible reaction to an aggressive environment like, for example, the violent media environment of Times Square in New York.

⁴⁸ Earth, clan, center.

⁴⁹ Paul Shephard, *The Cultivated Wilderness, or What Is Landscape*, MIT Press, 1997, p117

His space, which shrinks or expands, is an abstraction of his duality. Postcards, tools, technologies, clothing... allow his displacements, mental and physical, which are a consequence of his hybridization – contact, confrontation, and cross-cultural encounters. Not attached to any place he moves, always a stranger to other. Hence, the status of stranger ‘lui colle à la peau,’ meaning ‘sticks to his skin,’ like an identity that sticks to you no matter what.

The neo nomad, however, builds his space and a sense of belonging, which is tied to the rediscovery of what he is, and why he is, him, lost in the global realm. In global societies cultures identities will not blend together. Cultures, operating like the Hybrid, will change, transform but not disappear. Globalization would never mean the loss of someone’s identity, not only because of the human-nature-like act of looking for balance through cultural resistances, opposites, contraries, but also because identities will rebirth, multiply because of the number of encounters people will experience through travel. Travel and experience, motion and nomadic experiences will again shape our identities like, for example, voyaging for inquiry have shaped the nomadic civilization of explorers. A neo-nomad is in a sense a nomad because of the human sense of adaptation triggered through experiencing.

As Cowan writes⁵⁰:

Being in the world', then, does not necessarily require fixation to place, as Heidegger implied in the influential essay "Building Dwelling Thinking". Ritual and the performatives of the tent dwelling provide sufficient consistency for human civilisation. Heidegger's association of peoples' attachment to physical place resonated with the ultimately unsustainable notion of 'Blut und Boden' [Blood and Soil] of National Socialism, which inferred that people's 'blood through race' and 'soil of place' were somehow the essence of belonging to place.

Following Cowan's idea that, regardless of geographical location, 'The tent is a structure which is reassuringly familiar for dwelling,' one can easily make the connection with the architecture of the body and again, the skin. The skin, with its layers, sensors, and porosity, permits the establishment of adaptation skills that are necessary to build a sense of belonging, anywhere. Cowan again gives the example of Roland Barthes who declares:

⁵⁰ P Cowan, *Nomadology in Architecture: Ephemerality and Movement in the Construction of Dwelling*, <http://puffin.curtin.edu/~cowan/nomad/>

Another Argo; I have two workspaces, one in Paris, one in the country. Between them there is no common object, for nothing is ever carried back and forth... Yet these sites are identical. Why? Because the arrangement of tools [paper, pens, desks, clocks, calendars] is the same; it is the structure of the space that constitutes its identity. This private phenomenon would suffice to shed some light on structuralism; the system prevails over the very being of objects.

Being is not about materiality. It lies in the trace-spirit of everything... and in every move. Our identity, our sense of belonging, and our space relies on our sense of adaptation. Thus we are... eternal nomads... thin-skinned.

As the wheel turns, as the herds wanders...

You are...

Nomad

So move on...

Images

Image 1 \ **Global Thinking**

Advertisements for Gucci, Evian and Samsonite found in Wallpaper

Gucci \ 'timepieces'

Evian \ 'L'original,' ©2000 Great Brands of Europe, Inc. evian.com

Samsonite \ 'travel wear,' Travel Pillow Jacket, Fall Winter 1999-2000, Show room via Montenapoleone 2 Milano, Tel.: +39 2 760411, BOX² milano

Image 2 \ **Embodiment, stills**

Stills from the movie directed by myself, Yaz, with Yaz

Thanks to Rash, Joao, Ben and Sanjit,

Music: Gal, Destination NY, Jamila Arabic

Screening at the Brattle, 40 Brattle Street in Harvard Square. Event organized by Julia Scher and sponsored by the Brattle movie theater, 16th May 2001

Image 3 \ **Skins**

Skin, work of the artists Steve Stoer [English, b. 1969] and Rui Garrido [Portuguese, b. 1969]: POST FOLIO POSTSKIN. Prototipo n°3, January 2000, Space-craftsmanship Skinpele, p152-159

Nilsson, 'Seven weeks, nearly an inch long, and weighting about two grams' a neo-nomad in its environment illustrating the envelope, the exchange [fluids, pressure, movement, life]...

Inflatable clothing as protective shell in extreme environment, in that case, for arctic exploration
 Dr. J. L. Etienne on foot to the North Pole, Arctic Circle E. Preau/Syigma, from: Tibor + Maria
 Kalman, (un)FASHION, NY 2000

Image 4 \ **Memory skin**

The Gun and the Gaze, photograph. Copyright Shirin Neshat

<http://www.iranian.com/Arts/Dec97/Neshat/index.html>

Woodabe male dancer from: Marion Van Offelen, Carol Beckwith, Nomads of Niger, London,
 1984

Henna, 'The silaya pattern here represented is a decoration and a talisman of female fertility,'
 from Karl Gröning, Decorated Skin, A World Survey of Body Art, London 1997, p122

'Nagiko writing on her body,' The Pillow Book [Drama/Romance, 126 min, color], Peter
 Greenaway [English, b. 1942], from: <http://www.dcwebster.freemove.co.uk/5frame.htm>

Image 5 \ **Skin habitat**

Lucy Orta, Collective Wear, 1994 from: <http://studioorta.free.fr////index.html>

Lucy Orta,, Refugee Wear, 1994 from: <http://studioorta.free.fr////index.html>

Michael Jonathan Rakowitz, 'Customized Homeless Shelters', from: I.D. Magazine February
 2001, p66

Image 6 \ **Intelligent clothing**

For the mapping of geographies...

Sketches by the author: the space of the neo-nomad that shrinks or expands accordingly to the
 mood which would be captured through sensors.

The Communicating Scarf by Naziha Mestaoui [Belgian, b. 1975], Yacin Aït Kaci [French b.,
 1973], and Christophe Beaujays [Belgian, b. 1972]. Echarpe Communicante [Communicating
 scarf]. 2000. Wool/fabric scarf with computer screen, keyboard, and telephone, length 39 3/8"
 [100cm]. Prototype. Mfr.: N. Mestaoui, Y. Aït Kaci, C. Beaujays, and France telecom,
 2000. 'Conceived as a second skin for communication, this extra-long, detachable scarf is
 equipped with built-in communicating interfaces, including a hands-free telephone, screen,
 keyboard, and camera, allowing the wearer to be at once here and potentially everywhere but still
 within a private sphere of communication. By wrapping the scarf around the neck, the wearer is
 isolated, both physically and acoustically, from the outside world. Inserting the arm into one

length of the scarf, as if through a large bracelet, allows access to the computer,' From: Paola Antonelli, *Workspheres, Design and Contemporary Work Styles*, New York, 2001

Bibliography

Books

- Paola Antonelli, 'Workspheres, Design and Contemporary Work Styles,' New York, 2001
- Charles Baudelaire, 'Selected Writings on Art and Artists,' Cambridge, 1972
- Carol Beckwith, 'Nomads of Niger,' London, 1984
- Scott MacDonald, 'Screen Writings, Scripts and Texts by Independent Filmmakers,' Berkeley, 1995
- Ed van Hinte and Conny Bakker, 'Trespassers, Inspiration for Eco-Efficient Design,' Rotterdam 1999
- Homi K. Bhabha, 'The Location of Culture,' London, 1994
- Francesco Bonami, 'Echoes, Contemporary Art at the Age of Endless Conclusions,' New York 1996
- James Clifford, 'Routes, Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century,' Cambridge, 1997
- Ulrich Conrads, 'Programs and Manifestos on 20th Century Architecture,' MIT Press, 1971
- Karl Gröning, 'Decorated Skin, A World Survey of Body Art,' London 1997
- Tibor + Maria Kalman, '(un)FASHION,' New York 2000
- Julia Kristeva, 'Strangers to Ourselves,' Columbia University Press, 1991
- Loren Knapp, 'Perspective in Human Biology,' Boston, 1998
- Joel Kotkin, 'The New Geography: How The Digital Revolution Is Reshaping The American Landscape,' New York, 2000
- Robert Kronenburg, 'Theory, Context, Design and Technology, Transportable Environments,' London, New York, 1998
- Paul Shephard, 'The Cultivated Wilderness, or What Is Landscape,' MIT Press, 1997
- Adrian Piper, 'Xenophobia and the Indexical Present I: Essay,' Out of Order, Out of Sight, Vol. 1, MIT Press 1996
- Paul Rodaway, 'Sensuous Geographies, Body, Sense and Place,' London 1994
- Diller + Scofidio, 'Flesh, Architectural Probes' New York, 1994
- Paul Virilio, 'The Vision Machine,' London, 1994
- Krzysztof Wodiczko, 'Critical Vehicles, Writings, Projects, Interviews,' MIT Press, 1999

Dictionary

Random House Unabridged Dictionary, second edition

Lectures

Elaine Sturtevant, Talk at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 'Interior and Exterior Visibilities', MIT, April 24th 2001

Magazines / Newspapers

I.D. Magazine February 2001

Le Monde, Mardi 19 Decembre 2000

Prototipo n°3, January 2000

Quantara n° 37 Automne 2000

Wallpaper*, The Stuff That Surrounds You

Novels

William Faulkner, Sartoris

Maupassant, Le Horlà

Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities

Thesis

Michael J. Rakowitz, '*paraSITE*,' Master of Science in Visual Studies, MIT, 1998

Web

<http://lemonde.fr/>

<http://www.rhizome.org/>

<http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/MotsPluriels/>

<http://www.lhup.edu/library/InternationalReview/2%20A%20Ziyati13.htm>

<http://www.dcwebster.freemove.co.uk/5frame.htm>

<http://puffin.curtin.edu/~cowan/nomad/>

<http://wearables.www.media.mit.edu/projects/wearables/>

<http://www.iranian.com/Arts/Dec97/Neshat/index.html>

<http://studioorta.free.fr////index.html>