



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

**Faculty of Landscape Architecture, Horticulture  
and Crop Production Science**

## **Why it felt wrong to remove the glass**

– Investigating site and site-narratives at Regjeringskvartalet,  
Oslo, Norway

*Oskar Airijoki*

## Why it felt wrong to remove the glass

Oskar Airijoki

**Supervisor:** Lisa Diedrich, SLU, Department of Landscape Architecture,  
Planning and Management

**Examiner:** Gunilla Lindholm, SLU, Department of Landscape Architecture,  
Planning and Management

**Co-examiner:** Johan Wirdelöv, SLU, Department of Landscape Architecture,  
Planning and Management

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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this thesis is to find out in what ways site-narratives emerge in the interaction between the human and the site, with Regjeringskvartalet (the site of the July 22, 2011 attack) in Oslo as case study. The purpose of the investigation is to shed light on how immaterial aspects can affect the understanding of the specific site. I argue that while immaterial aspects can affect design decisions in relation to the specific landscape, they are often ignored by the designer. The investigation and interpretation of the site are accomplished by a site visit applying the approach of the travelling transect in combination with Gadamer's hermeneutic aesthetic theory. Resulting in six main parts systematically presenting various site-narrative. Thereafter, these narratives are discussed in relation to key concepts of landscape studies and Gadamer's concepts of play, festival and symbol. The site-narratives and the following discussion exemplifies the extended thought process of a landscape designer in the early stages of a design project, showing that subjective and intersubjective aspects of site-thinking hold a significant role in the understanding of site. The paper ends with a reflection on how the knowledge obtained can be applied in design practice and future research, presenting the concept of photographic locality. However, the paper foremost presses the advantages of applying Gadamer's spectatorial participation to design practice, indicating that designers themselves play an important role in the construction of site and therefore also in the understanding of site.

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## MOTIVATIONS

### *SETTING THE STAGE FOR AN INTERPRETIVE CASE STUDY*

#### INTRODUCTION

In July 22, 2011, Anders Behring Breivik detonated a bomb at the entrance of Høyblokken in Oslo, thereby killing 8 people. Breivik continued to the island of Utøya where he killed 69 people from the political youth organization Worker's Youth League<sup>1</sup> before being apprehended by the police. The attack caused a great trauma both to many Norwegians as well as to people over the globe.

An early autumn morning in 2019, I woke up just as the night train from Bergen pulled in at Oslo Central Station. The conductor knocked at the door to the sleeping compartment to make sure that I was awake. I got dressed, stepped off the train and thus began the investigation into the site of Regjeringskvartalet. This investigation was not easily performed. There was a weight on my shoulders as I walked through this symbolically heavy landscape trying to perceive stories that have amalgamated with the site for over eight years. However, even though it is sometimes painful, I believe it is necessary to thoroughly investigate and discuss how traumatic events, like the July 22 attack, affect the commonly lived landscape and our relation to that landscape.

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<sup>1</sup> In Norwegian (bokmål): *Arbeidernes ungdomsfylking*

## *INTENT*

In this paper I work with a deeply loaded site that is marked by terror. My interest in loaded landscapes is rooted in the knowledge of the central position they hold in the mind and heart of people. Throughout my education and career I have participated in a number of site visits, alone and with colleagues. Furthermore, I have partaken in seminars and informal discussions on the subject. From these occasions I have recognized what seems to be a common denominator within landscape architecture practice. This characteristic cannot be described as anything but a heavy focus on the material landscape. In other words, landscape architects often focus on the materials, shapes and forms of the landscape. However, embedded within the material landscape are numerous immaterial aspects and stories. By focusing on the material aspects of the landscape these immaterial aspects are often overlooked. I argue that if we do not see immaterial aspects, we do not see the impact they have on the material landscape. However, if we investigate and interpret these immaterial qualities and stories, we could greatly benefit in our understanding of landscapes in general and sites specifically.

In order to bring these two worlds together this investigation centers around the interpreting (human) subject. The human subject is essential, because immaterial aspects need the human perception and interest in order to be perceived. In other words, you have to be interested in immaterial aspects in order to find them. In addition, and as we shall see further on, the material world and the immaterial stories meet through the human subject, combining into site-knowledge.

It is my firm belief that we can create more appropriate landscape design through this combined understanding and increased site knowledge.

## ***RESEARCH TOPIC & QUESTIONS***

In this paper I will study the site-narratives of Regjeringskvartalet. The aim is to find out in what ways site-narratives emerge in the interaction between the human and the site. As will be seen, immaterial aspects can affect the understanding of the specific site, and they can also affect design decisions in relation to that landscape.

The main research question is: how do site narratives emerge in the interaction of a person and a material site, and how does this interaction affect the material site?

Followed by three sub-questions:

- (1) What narratives are brought to light within and in relation to the site?
- (2) How do the site-narratives affect and interplay with the site? And vice versa.
- (3) How can the resulting insights contribute to a more site-responsive understanding of landscape design?

In order to answer these questions, I build a framework for interpretation by transecting the site, documenting and gathering material. Furthermore, I critically interpret the material by applying a theoretical perspective based upon philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutic approach to aesthetics. The thesis then continues into a discussion of the relation between landscape and landscape designer.

## ***PREVIOUS SCHOLARSHIP***

Landscape architect Alexander Henriksson master's thesis "(con)temporary space"<sup>2</sup> applies the travelling transect (in his text called the deviant transect) to the harbor area Nyhamnen in Malmö, Sweden. Furthermore, his theoretical framework is in some cases similar to my own framework. For example, his understanding of Doreen Massey's concepts of space and place. In addition, his work focuses on relational aspects of the landscape, which in other words could be described as immaterial aspects. However, unlike this paper, Henriksson does not focus directly on the act of interpreting, but rather on the mapping of landscapes.

Henriksson has together with scholar of landscape architecture Mads Farsø written the article "Defined by Deviations,"<sup>3</sup> wherein they focus on the method of the travelling transect. This article has been an interesting source of information regarding the method applied in my paper. It has also served as an alternative witness to the application of the travelling transect method, apart from the works by the original authors.<sup>4</sup>

Landscape architects Caroline Axelblom and Sophie Wiström's "Reconquer Reconquista"<sup>5</sup> provides a third example of the travelling transect method. This project studies narratives in relation to a river in the Buenos Aires-area, Argentina. The narrative approach of Axelblom and Wiström has been inspirational in the search of relevant scholarly literature. However, their approach aims towards planning and designing narratives, rather than towards conducting a site-specific study in order to fully understand its narratives.

Moreover, scholar of landscape architecture Lisa Diedrich's dissertation "Translating Harbourscapes"<sup>6</sup> has been a great source of inspiration and a guide into the theoretical

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<sup>2</sup> Alexander Henriksson, "(con)temporary space – conceiving open space in Nyhamnen - Malmö," (MA. project, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Mads Farsø & Alexander Henriksson, "Defined by deviations: the Traveling Transect as a bodily research approach to appropriate and disseminate places". *SPOOL* 3, no. 1 (Nov 2016): 7, <https://doi.org/10.7480/spool.2016.1.1356>.

<sup>4</sup> Original authors are Gini Lee and Lisa Diedrich. See chapter "The Travelling Transect."

<sup>5</sup> Caroline Axelblom and Sophie Wiström, "Reconquer Reconquista & the space of opportunities" (MA. project, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, 2019).

<sup>6</sup> Lisa Diedrich, "Translating harbourscapes. Site-specific design approaches in contemporary European harbour transformation" (PhD diss., University of Copenhagen, 2013): 45.

perspectives applied in this paper. Diedrich's text has also put light on the role of design in academic research.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, there exist several research projects concerning the July 22 attack.<sup>8</sup> However, these projects are more aimed towards social scientific research, rather than landscape design research.

## ***LIMITATIONS***

One of the fundamental limitations in this thesis is that I only look at what Roland Barthes describes as “significant features”<sup>9</sup>. This choice resonates with Les Roberts's concept of the deep map (see chapter “The travelling transect”). In his words, the concept of “Deep mapping [...] is as much a process of archaeology as it is cartography.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, I have chosen to leave things in the ground. In archeology you plot your site of investigation, aware of the impossibility of excavating everything. Furthermore, you acknowledge the possibility of future knowledge allowing more advanced investigations. These two reasons are applied similarly in this thesis. It is impossible to dig up the entirety of the site. This limits the investigation by leaving that which is deemed not significant, or not *as* significant as other parts, behind. The narratives overlooked, or the interpretations not performed, are left for future and more advanced investigations.

As we shall see in the chapter on hermeneutics, you can never fully extract all meanings of symbols when interpreting them. Therefore, the interpretative chapter is merely touching on the top of the ice-berg of meaning embedded in the site. This connects to the above-mentioned impossibility to dig up the entirety of the site. Thus, this paper is not a comprehensive reading of Regjeringskvartalet in all its complexity (something I doubt at all is possible).

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<sup>7</sup> For more information about the role of design and design research, see footnote 16.

<sup>8</sup> “Forskningsprosjekt og rapporter,” Government of Norway, Regjeringen.no, accessed Jan. 14, 2020, <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/sub/etter-22-juli/forskningsprosjekter-og-rapporter/id2009437/>

<sup>9</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: The Noonday press, 1972): 11.

<sup>10</sup> Les Roberts, “Deep Mapping and Spatial Anthropology.” *Humanities* 5, no. 1 (2016): 3, <https://doi.org/10.3390/h5010005>.

Furthermore, I have chosen not to perform arranged interviews or involving other people and their understanding of the site as reference material. This is partly because I want to align with the standard procedure in landscape design, wherein site visits often are performed by the designer alone. Another reason is that my background lies in the studies of art history, and I am experienced in engaging with art based on my own interpretations and pre-knowledge.

A final limitation is that I propose no design in this paper. Instead, I solely focus on attempting to perform an in-depth investigation into the early phases of a design project, a performance that is (or should be) time-consuming enough in itself.

### ***STRUCTURE OF THESIS***

The structure of this thesis is inspired by semiotician and writer Barthes's book *Mythologies*.<sup>11</sup> Barthes presents a number of micro-narratives and concludes with a synthetization and theoretical reflection. In the preface he writes: "what I sought throughout this book were significant features. Is this a significance which I read into them? [...] No doubt, and the reader will easily see where I stand."<sup>12</sup> The structure of this thesis is based on narratives, from which a search for significance is performed.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, this thesis engages in qualitative research, focusing on the specific case of Regjeringskvarartalet. The methodological approach is theoretically anchored in the Travelling transect and performed through me (a landscape architect) visiting the site. In the next step, the findings from the site visit are approached hermeneutically through a theoretical lens consisting of Gadamer's aesthetics and a number of additional key concepts. The result is a qualitative and instrumental case study. The case study is instrumental because it introduces us to a general issue through a deeper understanding of a specific issue.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Barthes, *Mythologies*.

<sup>12</sup> Barthes, *Mythologies*, 11.

<sup>13</sup> A more modern example, also leaning on Barthes's structure, is: Lisa Diedrich & Caroline Dahl "Ile de Nantes 2000–2010: a method for the meantime?" *Journal of Landscape Architecture* 11, no. 2 (2016): 72-83, <https://doi.org/10.1080/18626033.2016.1188576>

<sup>14</sup> Diedrich, "Translating harbourscapes," 32.

In the landscape architectural approach to a site, visits are commonly performed early in a process. Diedrich, referring to scholar of landscape architecture Elisabeth Meyer, writes that “landscape architects frequently refer to the notion of site and would never begin a design without having been on site”.<sup>15</sup> Since the approach of this thesis is that of a landscape architect, the methodology takes the form of the early stages of a design project. Consequently, this thesis can be described by words such as design thinking, or *design research*, as understood by Martin Prominski.<sup>16</sup>

However, this thesis will not result in a design proposal. Instead, this paper connects to the writings of Tim Ingold, who states that “[w]riting, in architecture, is left for what cannot be drawn.”<sup>17</sup> The preliminary site findings will therefore be presented in text, providing something similar to a *thick description*.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Diedrich, “Translating harbourscapes,” 45.

<sup>16</sup> The concept of design research, from the perspective of Martin Prominski, consists of five parts, three of which are relevant in this thesis. The first part, *research about design*, “reflects design work from a distance without changing it, for example through history, theory or criticism.” The second part, *research for design* “also operates from a distance, and researchers act as suppliers of knowledge for design work.” Finally, the third part, *research through design*, is described as “the type of research in which the act of designing is the essential component of the research.” In this thesis I approach the site as if in the early stages of a design project. Additionally, theoretical and critical perspectives are applied in order to understand the current situation. In order to supply knowledge for future design research, but also for future design projects. All quotes from: Martin Prominski & Hille von Seggern, eds., *Design research for urban landscapes: theories and methods* (London: Routledge, 2019): 34.

<sup>17</sup> Tim Ingold, *Lines A Brief History* (New York: Routledge, 2016): 167.

<sup>18</sup> For a brief description of the concept of thick description see chapter 1 at: Väyrynen, Pekka, “Thick Ethical Concepts”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2019 Edition). Editor Edward N. Zalta. URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2019/entries/thick-ethical-concepts/>>

## THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

In this chapter I present the five concepts for site thinking that will be applied throughout this paper.

### *LANDSCAPE AND LANDSCAPES*

There are many ways of seeing, or perceiving landscape. For example, is there only one Landscape or are there several landscapes? This paper sees landscape through the definition presented in the European Landscape Convention, which states that: “‘Landscape’ means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”<sup>19</sup> This definition is rather straightforward. However, it is worth noting that in this definition a landscape as an area is not merely what is seen, but more importantly what is *perceived* by people. The word “perceive” means, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, “1. to become aware of, know, or identify by means of the senses 2. To recognize, discern, envision, or understand”.<sup>20</sup> In other words, landscape is something known on the one hand through the senses, through seeing and hearing landscape, but on the other hand also by imagining and comprehending landscape. For example, by walking in a landscape you might see pine trees along a path, smell the refreshing scent of pine needles in the air and hear the blackbird sing. In contrast to actually being on the path, and instead of reading the above-mentioned sentence describing a landscape, you might start to build an image in your mind; envisioning what it looks like, where it is located, etc. Or, as written in the introduction to the *Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*: “Clearly, we are dealing with something complicated, and we cannot even say that it is a complicated object because, as many theorists have pointed out, landscape is something that is mental as well as physical, subjective as well as objective.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, landscape is both external and internal in relation to the subject. It is both bound to the subject and exists as something objective. Furthermore, to understand landscape in this way, as partly subjective, suggests

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<sup>19</sup> Council of Europe, “European Landscape Convention and reference documents” Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Spatial Planning Division, (2000): 9.

<sup>20</sup> “Perceive” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Inc., accessed Oct. 23, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/perceive> .

<sup>21</sup> Mick Atha et al. “Ways of knowing and being with landscapes: a beginning.” In *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*. Second edition, ed. Peter Howard et al. (London: Routledge, 2019): xxi.

that, in addition to landscape, there are landscapes. That is, there is a plurality of landscapes, each bound to the person envisioning it.

However, even though these landscapes are subjective and bound to a person, they are also to a certain degree constructed nationally, regionally and locally. This is discussed by, for example, scholar of environmental history Sverker Sörlin in his article “The articulation of territory: landscape and the constitution of regional and national identity”.<sup>22</sup> He argues that landscapes hold characteristics more or less embedded in national self-understanding. This self-understanding is spread throughout national culture by various forms of representation, such as stories, pictures, what is taught in schools, etcetera. This constructed perception of landscapes suggests an inter-subjective understanding of landscapes. In other words, within a culture there is a more or less common experience, and understanding, of the local landscape.

In conclusion, there are three types of landscapes discussed in this paper. First is the physical, objective, landscape that exists without the human mind. Secondly, there are subjective landscapes, mentally and emotionally bound to a person and shaped by his or her view of the objective landscape. Third, there are inter-subjective landscapes, a propagated view of the objective landscape bound mentally and emotionally to a group of people, creating a common understanding of that landscape.

## ***SPACE***

In this thesis I rely on scholar of geography Doreen Massey’s view on the concepts of *space* and *place*. Massey is a scholar of geography and human geography, but also considered influential in other disciplines, for example landscape architecture.

If we look into Massey’s definition we find that space is a “product of interrelations”.<sup>23</sup> Space is, according to Massey, multiplicity formed by a “sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist”.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, argues Massey, space is the gathering of events: “space is always under

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<sup>22</sup> Sverker Sörlin, “The articulation of territory: landscape and the constitution of regional and national identity,” *Norwegian Journal of Geography* 53:2-3 (1999) DOI: 10.1080/00291959950136821.

<sup>23</sup> Doreen Massey, *for space*, (London: Sage Publications Ltd.: 2005), 9.

<sup>24</sup> Massey, *for space*, 9.

construction [...] Perhaps we could imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far”.<sup>25</sup> In other words, space is all stories together, connected to all parts of itself, the node and the web all at once, existing in itself as one of those parts, creating multiplicity. Furthermore, in the above-mentioned quote Massey implies a connection to time important for the understanding of space as she speaks about the *so far*.<sup>26</sup> Space is, Massey argues, dependent on stories *so far*, stories that have reached the here and now, the contemporary, and that are ever evolving.<sup>27</sup> However, space also holds the potential of all trajectories, even the broken or missing relations create constellations.<sup>28</sup>

The two terms space and place are often seen together and are indeed often defined in relation to each other. However, there is a common misconception that these two concepts are different, to the level of contradiction, or being opposites. This misconception is founded in the belief that *place* is something authentic and real, while *space* is something abstract.<sup>29</sup> However, Massey believes that this is not the case and presents an alternative view, namely that it “is not that place is not concrete, grounded, real, lived, etc. It is that space is too.”<sup>30</sup>

## ***PLACE***

Continuing further into the concept of *place*, Massey writes: “What is special about place is precisely that throwntogetherness, the unavoidable challenge of negotiation a here-and-now [...]; and a negotiation which must take place within and between both human and nonhuman [...] This is the event of place.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, place is when and where disparate trajectories and stories are thrown together, meet, or crash. Place is a negotiation, a discussion between parts of space. However, instead of only referring to relations and physical localities, places are also dependent on time, as indicated by place being an event. This dependency on time is contemporaneous, meaning that places must be understood as occurring here and now. Tomorrow a place will have changed into another, or a different, place.

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<sup>25</sup> Massey, *for space*, 9.

<sup>26</sup> Massey, *for space*, 9.

<sup>27</sup> Massey, *for space*, 9.

<sup>28</sup> Massey, *for space*, 12.

<sup>29</sup> Massey, *for space*, 183-185.

<sup>30</sup> Massey, *for space*, 185.

<sup>31</sup> Massey, *for space*, 141.

Next, in order to get a complementary perspective, we will look into scholar of urban planning Robert A. Beauregard's definition of place, which he describes as something that exists in "personal experience, hearsay, and collective memories."<sup>32</sup> In other words, stories, or narratives, entangled in certain locations, together make up a place. These narratives exist in personal experience, collective memory and stories travelling through communities. Since these narratives exist in personal (or inter-personal) experience, Beauregard stresses that there is also necessarily an emotive connection between the subject and the physical location. This connection between human and location is what creates *place*. Beauregard continues by saying that "while these place narratives can be ignored, they cannot be wholly erased. Places are never empty."<sup>33</sup> In other words, the emotive connection cannot be erased; if a location is a place, then it also holds an emotive connection to a person or community.

## ***SITE***

The first concept to present here is that of *site thinking*. According to architect and design scholars Carol Burns and Andrea Kahn in their anthology *Site Matters – Design Concepts, Histories, and Strategies*, site thinking means "thinking about site as a conceptual construct".<sup>34</sup> This notion of site is contrasted with another concept, namely *thinking about site*; a concept which instead emphasizes the site as a grounded physical condition.<sup>35</sup> I base my understanding of site on two scholarly contributions: First, on the preface to the abovementioned book *Site Matters* by Burns and Kahn.<sup>36</sup> The first approach is also found in Diedrich's *Translating Harbourscapes*<sup>37</sup> and Henriksson's "(con)temporary space".<sup>38</sup> I base

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<sup>32</sup> Robert A. Beauregard, "From Place to Site: Negotiating Narrative Complexity," in *Site matters Design Concepts, Histories, and Strategies*, eds. Carol J. Burns and Andrea Kahn, (New York: Routledge, 2005): 39.

<sup>33</sup> Beauregard, "From Place to Site," 39.

<sup>34</sup> Carol J. Burns and Andrea Kahn, eds., *Site matters Design Concepts, Histories, and Strategies*, (New York: Routledge, 2005): x.

<sup>35</sup> Burns and Kahn, "Why Site Matters," x.

<sup>36</sup> Burns and Kahn, *Site Matters*.

<sup>37</sup> Diedrich, "Translating harbourscapes," 42.

<sup>38</sup> Henriksson, "(con)temporary space," 32.

the second part, connecting site, place and narrative, on Beauregard's chapter "From Place to Site: Negotiating Narrative Complexity" in the same anthology as Burns and Kahn.<sup>39</sup>

Concerning the first part, Burns and Kahn's definition of site springs from a critical perspective. They argue that the notion of site is hitherto oversimplified, often described as an "entity contained by boundaries that delimit it from the surroundings."<sup>40</sup> They further argue that "[t]his oversimplified understanding has arguable basis, as every work of physical design focuses on spatially finite places."<sup>41</sup> In order to construct a more complex understanding of site Burns and Kahn present a definition based on three different areas. These three areas are: *area of control* which delimitates a plot of land by property lines, rules and legislations; *area of influence* which consists of "forces that act upon a plot without being confined to it"<sup>42</sup>; and *area of effect* which refers to the domains that are impacted after a design is performed. The first, area of control, is the one most commonly referred to as *site*.<sup>43</sup> However, by approaching the concept of site from these three perspectives Burns and Kahn acknowledge that sites are more than just a plot of land, or property, and that sites are influenced by far more than just their proprietor. In other words, sites are interlaced in the weave of urban space and they cannot exist in isolation.

In order to go deeper into the concept of site, connecting it to the concept of place, I use notions of Beauregard who writes that "Sites are only way stations between place and place".<sup>44</sup> That is, sites are something between two places that are located at the same physical location but differently in time. Beauregard elaborates: "The most likely scenario is the turning of place into site in order then to turn site into place. The connecting element is always the site. The initial place has to pass through the site [...] to emerge as another and different place."<sup>45</sup> Here we observe the dialectic between place and site; site is the location where a place is transformed into a different place, the physical location remaining the same.

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<sup>39</sup> Beauregard, "From Place to Site," 39-58.

<sup>40</sup> Burns and Kahn, "Why Site Matters," x.

<sup>41</sup> Burns and Kahn, "Why Site Matters," x.

<sup>42</sup> Burns and Kahn, "Why Site Matters," xii.

<sup>43</sup> Burns and Kahn, "Why Site Matters," xii.

<sup>44</sup> Beauregard, "From Place to Site," 42.

<sup>45</sup> Beauregard, "From Place to Site," 55.

Since place holds an emotive aspect, a connection between location and human, the act of creating a site is in a way an attempt to reshape, or in worst case scenario, to remove this connection; to rewrite the narratives. However, as Beauregard writes, narratives cannot be removed, only ignored.

This is where the position of the planner and designer becomes visible, at the becoming of a site. “Sites [...] do not appear initially as fully rationalized. [...] The site is created through the acts of planning and design”.<sup>46</sup> Beauregard continues: “Planners and designers take control of a place by distilling its narratives. They eliminate the ambiguities that might derail the project by casting doubt that it is the best and only viable option. Their intent is to create opportunities for action.”<sup>47</sup> In other words, sites do not happen by themselves; instead, they are constructed into a rationalized location by planners and designers.

## ***NARRATIVES***

The concept of narrative is very broad, as it signifies on the one hand a transferring of information, and on the other hand the information itself. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines narrative as “the representation in art of an event or story”.<sup>48</sup> Reading scholar of English studies H. Porter Abbott’s *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* we find that “**narrative** is the representation of events, consisting of *story* and *narrative discourse*; **story** is an *event* or sequence of events (the *action*); and **narrative discourse** is those events as represented.”<sup>49</sup> In other words, first there is a story (the event/the action); subsequently, there is the narrative discourse (the representation of the event), and finally there is the narrative (both the action and representation of the action).

However, the concept of narrative is slightly more complex, because, contrary to what one might think, Abbott states that the story does not exist previous to the narrative. Rather, the story comes to life through the narrative and “is always mediated – by a voice, a style of writing, camera angles, actors’ interpretations – so that what we call the story is really

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<sup>46</sup> Beauregard, “From Place to Site,” 41.

<sup>47</sup> Beauregard, “From Place to Site,” 41.

<sup>48</sup> Merriam-Webster, “Narrative,” accessed Nov. 7, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/narrative>

<sup>49</sup> H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 19.

something that we construct.”<sup>50</sup> In other words, the story is not the same thing as an objective life-event, but it is rather something that has occurred and subsequently been shaped by the mind of a subject. In fact, Abbott states that the concept of narrative cannot be used in order to interpret life itself, but only to examine the representations of life.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, it is worth noting that I do not interpret Regjeringskvartalet as it is lived in the exact moment. Rather, I interpret representations of Regjeringskvartalet.

The concept of narrative is applied in the case study as a tool for arranging the material gathered during the site visit. The arranging of the material is systematical rather than linear, inspired by Abbott’s narrative mediators, such as angle, style, voice, etc.<sup>52</sup> In other words, the site-narratives have different significant characteristics and are divided into chapters accordingly.

## **METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this chapter I develop my thoughts on the methodological approach applied in this paper. The chapter is divided into three parts, one section presenting Gini Lee and Lisa Diedrich’s Travelling transect. The second part constitutes an introduction to interpretation and then continues to a more in-depth view of hermeneutics. Thirdly, I present a synthesis wherein I describe how the method and theory are used in the field.

Briefly described, the method of the travelling transect concerns how the designer travels through the landscape. Meanwhile, hermeneutics takes on the role of binding the gathered material together and poses a critical stance towards the method of travelling transect, me as observer, and my pre-knowledge. These two parts (travelling transect and hermeneutics) are only divided here so that the reader can understand the two concepts more easily; in reality, they are intertwined.

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<sup>50</sup> Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 20.

<sup>51</sup> Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 36-37.

<sup>52</sup> Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 20.

## ***THE TRAVELLING TRANSECT***

In *The Routledge Research Companion to Landscape Architecture* scholars of landscape architecture Lee and Diedrich describe their methodology for site visits inspired by the research of Alexander von Humboldt. The method is primarily an ethnographic investigation, but it has been applied in several landscape design studies as well.<sup>53</sup> The method consists of three stages; pre-travel, site visit, and post-travel evaluation. The performance ends with a synthetization and a form of presentation – the *tableau physique*. In the following, I explain all stages.

Pre-travel is similar to the hermeneutical concept of pre-knowledge. Pre-travel thus consists of gaining the experience of a guide and/or the gathering of site knowledge from literature and other sources. In this stage a line is drawn across a map with the site of interest as a point on that line.<sup>54</sup> Included on this line are further points of interest that might enrich the understanding of the site; in this case our interest in narratives.<sup>55</sup> The line, or the transect, should start and end outside of the property lines of the site, so that the site's relation to its *area of influence* is taken into consideration.

The second phase of the investigation consists of travelling along the transect, drawn in pre-travel, being “always receptive for deviation”.<sup>56</sup> That is, when travelling the designer is always aware of when the route is diverging, since following the line will most likely prove impossible due to conditions on route, such as buildings blocking the way, or even getting lost.<sup>57</sup> But foremost, from the search of deviation and for things that spark one's interest. In fact, each deviation enriches our understanding. Deviating from the pre-drawn transect is basically deviating from the pre-known. This is a vital part of the travelling transect method, as Lee & Diedrich affirm: “Deviation opens onto topics of all sorts, taps into discourses,

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<sup>53</sup> For examples see chapter “Previous Scholarship”

<sup>54</sup> The straight line later transformed into a deviant, unruly line, opens up for an interesting discussion from the perspective of Ingold's *Lines*.

<sup>55</sup> Gini Lee and Lisa Diedrich, “Transareal Excursions into Landscapes of Fragility and Endurance : a contemporary interpretation of Alexander von Humboldt's mobile science,” in *Routledge research companion to landscape architecture*, eds., Henriette Steiner and Ellen Braae, (New York: Routledge, 2019): 95.

<sup>56</sup> Lee and Diedrich, “Transareal Excursions,” 95.

<sup>57</sup> This connects to getting lost as a beneficial process. Seggern & Prominski, “Empty Moments,” 40.

launches transareal thinking and triggers interpretation of site findings—this is where we start to ‘think together’, in Humboldt’s words, and where new knowledge starts to arise.”<sup>58</sup> The route walked, the deviation, is then drawn on a map in order to document the shift between the planned-itinerary and the actual walk.

The travelling, including phenomena that encourage further investigation, are documented by various tools. These tools vary based on the preconditions, availability and the experience of the specific person. My investigation relies on photography and notes, with the addition of a few sketches. Lee and Diedrich also specifically mention “samples captured in plastic bags”.<sup>59</sup> That is, collecting material samples, which of course depends on what is found at site.

The third phase, post-travel evaluation, is described by Lee and Diedrich in the following quote:

in studio, we develop our collection of raw materials—photos and small films, sketches and annotations, models, material samples and interview notes—which we rigorously sort, combine, interpret and synthesize<sup>60</sup>

Thus, depending on what materials are brought from site back to the studio, a form of archive starts to build up. This archive in turn leads to a form of physical site-understanding. Furthermore, in an earlier article on the travelling transect, Lee and Diedrich write together with Ellen Braae that “much knowledge is produced ‘in between’ the tools or in their intersection.”<sup>61</sup> This indicates that the sorting of materials is sometimes related to *deviating* from the transect, since even in the sorting process, deviations from standard procedure can challenge the pre-known and yield interesting new perspectives. For example, when “plants [...] pressed further reveal their abstract shapes, also producing imprints on the paper of the press book, as ghosting atmospheres of plants transformed through desiccation to become the

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<sup>58</sup> Lee and Diedrich, “Transareal Excursions,” 95.

<sup>59</sup> Lee and Diedrich, “Transareal Excursions,” 95.

<sup>60</sup> Lee and Diedrich, “Transareal Excursions,” 95.

<sup>61</sup> Ellen Braae, Lisa Diedrich, and Gini Lee, “The Travelling Transect: Capturing Island Dynamics, Relationships And Atmospheres In The Water Landscapes Of The Canaries” *Nordic Design Research Conference* no. 5 (2013): 199.

collection of site elements in miniature.”<sup>62</sup> Here we see that the gathered and pressed plant produces a new imprint when combined with a new material. The point is that there is still potential for the creation of new knowledge in this last evaluative phase.

Finally, the method suggests the making of a so-called *tableau physique*, inspired by Humboldt’s historical model.<sup>63</sup> However, in this thesis I will deviate from Lee & Diedrich’s *tableau*, partly due to the fact that my investigation is mainly based on text, but also because the concept of *tableau physique* implies an ordering of physical objects while the goal of this paper is to investigate the immaterial aspects of site.

Instead, I will borrow the concept of a *deep map* from Roberts, who describes it as “[i]n its most quotidian sense [...] deep mapping can be looked upon as an embodied and reflexive immersion in a life that is lived and performed spatially. A cartography of depth. A diving within.”<sup>64</sup> The concept of deep mapping also holds the “sense of the fundamental *unmappability* of the world the ‘deep map’ sets out to map”.<sup>65</sup> In other words, the deep map is an attempt to present the complexity of spatial life, not by reducing complexity, but by displaying it in its fullness. The deep map tries to purvey the experience of site by being something “*more-than-representational*”<sup>66</sup> and that it is “[o]ur role (as readers, viewers, consumers, users) [...] to take up the invitation to “dive within”<sup>67</sup>.

## ***HERMENEUTIC AESTHETICS, GADAMER’S PLAY, FESTIVAL AND SYMBOL***

The second method used to guide the interpretation is a hermeneutic approach. There are many variations of hermeneutic approaches. This chapter first presents a general view of hermeneutical interpretation based on scholar in philosophy of humanistic sciences Søren Kjörup’s *Människovetenskaperna*<sup>68</sup> and scholar in pedagogy Per-Johan Ödman’s *Tolkning*,

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<sup>62</sup> Braae, Diedrich and Lee, “The Travelling Transect,” 196.

<sup>63</sup> Lee and Diedrich, “Transareal Excursions,” 95-96.

<sup>64</sup> Roberts, “Deep Mapping” p 6.

<sup>65</sup> Roberts, “Deep Mapping” p 5.

<sup>66</sup> Roberts, “Deep Mapping” p 4.

<sup>67</sup> Roberts, “Deep Mapping” p 3.

<sup>68</sup> Søren Kjörup, *Människovetenskaperna: Problem och traditioner i humanioras vetenskapsteori* (Roskilde:

*förståelse, vetande*<sup>69</sup>. Thereafter, I continue into a specific account of philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer's views on aesthetics from a hermeneutical perspective, based on *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other essays*.<sup>70</sup> Another source of information on Gadamer and his hermeneutic aesthetics is scholar of philosophy Nicholas Davey. Since his writing on Gadamer's theories is in line with this paper, I have chosen to use his article throughout this text.<sup>71</sup>

Kjørup describes hermeneutics as the act and the science of interpretation.<sup>72</sup> Interpretation is essential in daily life in order to understand society and how to act within it. An example will clarify this: a road sign does not in itself have a meaning, but it does have an attributed meaning of leading us to a specific location. In other words, the road sign was created for a specific reason, with an intended meaning. Every time we follow the sign and arrive at the expected location the meaning of the road sign as a way-finder is strengthened. On the other hand, if the road sign leads us to the wrong location, our understanding of the road sign changes; we would no longer trust it, and our interpretation of it would change. This means that the interpreter is participating in the act of creating meaning, because at every interpretation the road sign's meaning is either confirmed or transformed.<sup>73</sup>

Of course, this example is rather simple, and the meaning of the road sign is generally well known and trusted, and the interpretation therefore more or less automatic. Ödman describes this as an intersubjective understanding of its meaning.<sup>74</sup> That is, we as a collective have a common understanding of the sign's meaning. But there are more complex situations when interpretation is not as straightforward, for example when there is a phenomenon that we do not understand, like a poem, an election, or even a landscape. These phenomena can often be

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Samfundslitteratur / Roskilde Universitetsforlag, 2008).

<sup>69</sup> Per-Johan Ödman, *Tolkning, förståelse, vetande: Hermeneutik i teori och praktik* (Stockholm: Norstedts Akademiska Förlag, 2007).

<sup>70</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other essays*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

<sup>71</sup> The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy is an open for all, online encyclopedia, established 1995, with peer-reviewed entries by qualified experts. Accessible at (2019-11-27): <https://plato.stanford.edu/>.

<sup>72</sup> Kjørup, *Människovetenskaperna*, 233.

<sup>73</sup> Ödman, *Tolkning, förståelse, vetande*, 57-59.

<sup>74</sup> Ödman, *Tolkning, förståelse, vetande*, 57-59.

interpreted in several different ways, as they hold several different meanings given to them by their interpreters. The given meanings are, in their turn, grounded in *pre-knowledge*, that is, the interpreter's understanding of things in relation to the poem creates new meaning, new understanding, and therefore also new knowledge.<sup>75</sup> This means that hermeneutic knowledge is subjectively based. However, within societies there are institutions, such as schools, that aim to create a common base of knowledge; or in the term of hermeneutics, a common horizon of knowledge. This means that even though interpretation is subjective, it is also, within a society, based on a more or less common understanding of the world.

Within hermeneutics, interpretation is seen through the form of a hermeneutic circle. Ödman describes the circle as a movement from part to whole and whole to part; a contextualizing and de-contextualizing process; and a totalization and de-totalization process.<sup>76</sup> This means that the interpretation of, for example a site, is dependent on the site's situation in the greater landscape, but also on the site's existing as its own locality.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, a part of the site will inform us of the entirety of the site, while the entirety will inform us on the part.

Ödman here connects his reasoning on interpretation in general to hermeneutics and the writings of Gadamer specifically. However, I will from here on elaborate by reading Gadamer himself as well as Davey's synthesis of Gadamer's notions about hermeneutical aesthetics.

### ***GADAMER'S HERMENEUTIC AESTHETICS***

Gadamer's views on aesthetic experience are primarily based on the experiencing of art. However, since landscape architecture can be seen as a form of art, the site is here analogue with the artwork.<sup>78</sup> According to Davey, the hermeneutical aesthetic perspective holds that the experience of art is in a way an experience of meaning. Therefore, the experiencing of art comes about by understanding the work of art. This leads to an interconnection between

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<sup>75</sup> Ödman, *Tolkning, förståelse, vetande*, 57-59.

<sup>76</sup> Ödman, *Tolkning, förståelse, vetande*, 99.

<sup>77</sup> This aspect is seen in the method of travelling transect, where the transect starts and ends outside of the site, thus taking the greater landscape into account.

<sup>78</sup> John Beardsley, "A Word for Landscape Architecture," *Harvard Design Magazine* no. 12 (2000), accessed Nov. 21, 2019, <http://www.harvarddesignmagazine.org/issues/12/a-word-for-landscape-architecture>

aesthetics and hermeneutics.<sup>79</sup> In other words, if we see the site as analogue to the artwork, the aesthetic experience of that site is an experience of meaning. In order to fully experience a site, we need to understand that site; and in order to understand we need to interpret.

Gadamer continues to introduce three key terms that aids us in to better understanding of the process of interpretation. These terms are *Play*, *The Festival* and *The Symbol*.<sup>80</sup>

### ***PLAY***

By using the concept of *Play* Gadamer denotes the perceiving of the artwork, or the site, as a drama, an event, a sport, or the playing of a game.<sup>81</sup> However, the concept of Play should not be confused with a trivial game or pastime. Davey describes how Play contains several necessary aspects for the play to take place: “[play] draws spectator, player, intention, equipment and convention into the one event.”<sup>82</sup> In other words, a work of art cannot be understood solely from the intention of its creator, the materials it is built from, or the people occupying it – a site must be understood from a multitude of voices and therefore also interpreted in that fashion.

Furthermore, Gadamer argues that works of art are in a way dramatic, but in contrast to a regular drama, his conception of play bridges “the distance separating the one who plays and the one who watches the play.”<sup>83</sup> In other words, works of art put something in play. The site brings the visiting person into the play, the spectator becomes a participant.<sup>84</sup> Or with Davey’s words, “spectatorial participation”<sup>85</sup> which Davey tells us “demands immersion in

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<sup>79</sup> Nicholas Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2016 Edition), ed., Edward N. Zalta, accessed Nov. 27, 2019, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/gadamer-aesthetics/> .

Note: since this is an online article, there are no page numbers. In order to quickly finding the quotes I suggest using the search function at The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy-webpage.

<sup>80</sup> Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, 22.

<sup>81</sup> Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, 24.

<sup>82</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

<sup>83</sup> Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, 24.

<sup>84</sup> Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, 23.

<sup>85</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

that which cannot be fully anticipated or controlled by individual consciousness.”<sup>86</sup> The spectator that enters a site is entering a game, and s/he becomes one of the participants bringing *Play* into being. The spectator necessarily contributes in the unfolding of the entirety of the work of art. In short, the experiencing of site is also the playing of that site. This leads to, in Davey’s words, the aesthetic spectator being “swept up by her experience of art, absorbed in its play and potentially transformed by that which spectatorship helps constitute.”<sup>87</sup>

### ***FESTIVAL***

The second aspect in Gadamer’s scheme is *the Festival*, a concept which attempts to bring forth the communal aspects of the experience of art. Gadamer writes that: “Festive celebration [...] is clearly distinguished by the fact that here we are not primarily separated, but rather are gathered together.”<sup>88</sup> Gadamer here emphasizes that the experience of art is distinguished by a togetherness, in contrast to being separate. We are participating in something beyond ourselves. The notion of the festival, when applied to landscape, suggests that the experience of a site is always something more than subjective, rather being something collective. Gadamer continues to describe how time influences the festival and vice versa, and how different forms of time affects our understanding of the art work.<sup>89</sup> Davey describes Gadamer’s concept of the festival as suspending “work-time” and initiating “play-time”.<sup>90</sup> This can be seen as a transforming from gainful employment or household work into leisure time or social gathering outside of work. Davey continues to state that this shift in the sense of time changes how, and in what order, events emerge, and “[i]t is in such time that an artwork ‘comes to stand’ irrespective of whether it is a painting, drama or symphony.”<sup>91</sup> However, Davey means that it is not only the artwork that comes to stand. He continues to write that “[j]ust as the artwork comes to stand in the festival, so too does the artwork bring its spectators to stand as a community”.<sup>92</sup> The festival’s shift in time, together with the sense of

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<sup>86</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

<sup>87</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

<sup>88</sup> Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, 40.

<sup>89</sup> Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, 41-42.

<sup>90</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

<sup>91</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

<sup>92</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

community, changes the subjective position in relation to the collective. The work of art brings people together, breaks with the notion of the everyday or the regular, and brings similarities to light. Davey writes that:

The artwork's communicative capacity awakens the realisation [sic] that in as much as I understand myself as being addressed, I must acknowledge that I already belong to something larger than myself. The artwork *festivises* [sic]: it reveals our personal indebtedness to past and future communities of meaning.<sup>93</sup>

As noted above, the artwork seen through the festival locates us in a community and in an already existing intertemporal meaning tradition. It lifts forth our common horizons of knowledge and connects them to previous and future, continuously evolving, cultures.

### ***SYMBOL***

*The Symbol* is the third concept in Gadamer's aesthetics and with it he brings the speculative into the experience of art. Gadamer writes: "the symbol is that other fragment that has always been sought in order to complete and make whole our own fragmentary life."<sup>94</sup> This tells us that Gadamer's symbol lifts out the fragmentary of art and of our own life, but yet connects with the notion of completeness. We will return to this notion of completeness, but in order to better understand the symbol we can contrast it with the sign, or using Gadamer's term, allegory. The sign, or the allegory, refers to something outside itself, a "reference [that] must be known in advance."<sup>95</sup> The symbol on the other hand refers to something internal. For example, a road sign refers to something outside itself, such as a crossing, while a symbol suggests reading in-between the lines and finding a further symbolic meaning. Connecting back to Gadamer's notion of completeness, the symbolic meaning is never completely given, since there is always the premise of further meaning. Here, I stress, is also where the notion of the speculative becomes apparent, because the symbol premises that the art work holds more meaning than it gives at the onset. Or, in Davey's words: "[t]he symbol is resonant with the suggestion of meaning because it constantly invokes what is not immediately given. This not-given does not exist apart from the given but is inherent within it."<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

<sup>94</sup> Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, 32.

<sup>95</sup> Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, 32.

<sup>96</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

## ***THE TRAVELLING TRANSECT AND HERMENEUTICS IN PRACTICE***

Following is a description of the synthesis of the traveling transect method and the hermeneutic theory of Play, festival and symbol.

Previous to the actual site visit I looked at online maps and briefly updated myself on the layout of the city and my general knowledge of Oslo, including the events on July 22. Furthermore, I studied the methodological and theoretical concepts of my study closely, in order to have them fresh in mind while at the site. Subsequently, I travelled to Oslo with notebook and camera in order to perform my investigation.

The basic approach to the site visit was to follow the guidelines of the travelling transect with a hermeneutic way of thinking. In other words, I was looking for further meaning inherent within the elements encountered during the transect. In practice, I walked along the streets of Oslo keeping my research questions in mind. Whenever a thought or feeling that I deemed significant, even if there was the slightest significance, I took a note, a photograph, or both. The difficulty was to tie this thought, or emotion, to the physical encounter.

The approach lead to big amounts of information which were difficult to interpret there and then. Therefore, the notes and pictures that I took were gathered in order to save my thoughts for later processing. During the gathering of information I mentioned every photography that I took in my notebook, and in a way the photographs also tell something about my notes. These notes often described the mood of the specific scene, the lighting, or other aspects that seemed significant. While the photographs told a similar story but added a perspectives and complexity to the process.

Throughout the investigation the hermeneutic thinking placed my knowledge of the site and aspects of landscape architecture, among other things, in context with my research questions. I, the investigate subject, was the melting pot of things seen, heard, felt or thought at site, as well as the theories, method and research questions of this essay. This placing in context worked in two ways, first, the concepts of Gadamer served as a critical perspective, more precisely the hermeneutic framework helped to dissect the interpretation. That is, to investigate why and how different interpretations were performed. Secondly, Gadamer's

concepts aided in deepening the investigation. Play, the festival and the symbol guided my thinking by pointing to critical aspects of interpretation and has thus deepened my understanding and subsequently my experience of the site.

The division of narratives into chapters is thematical, as is seen in the chapter on narrative. Narrative theory recognizes style, voice, etc, as narrative features.<sup>97</sup> When I performed my site visit there were certain features that more than others stood out. As I was studying my gathered material, after the visit, I realized that I would have to find a way to present my material in an understandable way – for the reader as well as for myself. As I identified the main styles, or voices, which affected my site transect, the following narratives stood out for me (each given a separate chapter). They did not stand out by themselves – rather, I constructed these narratives, being informed both by pre-knowledge, attentive observation during the site visit itself, and my research questions. My creation of these narratives is in accordance with the method of Travelling transect, the structuring of experience into narratives is legitimate.

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After this immersion into theoretical concepts and the methodological framework, we will now proceed into investigations of the case study, namely that of Regjeringskvartalet.

## **ON-SITE THINKING**

### ***A CASE STUDY OF REGJERINGSKVARTALET***

I first present six site-narratives from Regjeringskvartalet. These six narratives mark the start of my travelling transect. However, the narratives are not presented chronologically as if following the line of travel, but systematically. Thereafter follows an interpretative chapter that contains significant features in discussion with the theoretical concepts and methodological framework I have previously presented.

Regjeringskvartalet, located in Oslo, Norway, in the vicinity of Akersgata, is a building complex with surrounding urban landscapes. This complex constitutes the main center of the

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<sup>97</sup> Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 20.

Norwegian government. It is also one of the sites targeted in the terrorist attack 22 of July 2011. The attack killed eight and severely damaged site and buildings. An investigation into the damaged buildings revealed that renovation was possible. Yet, a political decision in 2012 set in motion a new plan for Regjeringskvartalet. At the time of writing the process of developing the new Regjeringskvartalet is under way.

### SIX NARRATIVES

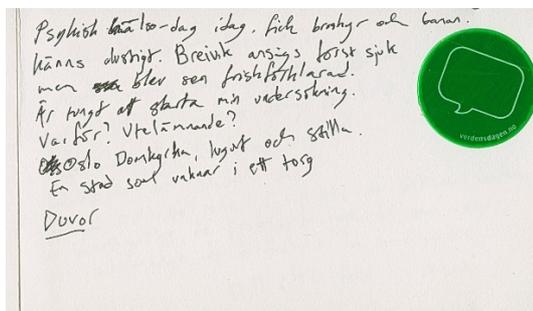
This subchapter is divided into six parts, or six narratives. During the visit to Regjeringskvartalet I identified these site-narratives. Thus, the following chapter is primarily associated with the first research question; what narratives are brought to light within and in relation to the site?



City map of Oslo

## ***THE KILLER***

When walking across the open areas of Regjeringskvartalet, experiencing and documenting, I felt uncomfortable due to the fact that the terrorist walked a similar route and probably also in a similar fashion of documentation. This walking in the footsteps of a murderer affected my entire visit to Oslo. It started early that day. I became very self-conscious about my investigation and several questions arose. Is this investigation morally defensible? What does it imply to walk in a murderer's footsteps? I worried about what people would think of me walking this route and writing a thesis on this subject.



*Notes and green sticker*

Since I arrived early in the morning to Oslo the city was waking up as I started my transect. My starting point, at Oslo Central Station, proved to be very busy with people at that time of day. As I exited the station building and stepped out into Jernbanetorget I was met with a cold morning and dim lights. But also, by a friendly woman dressed in green. She walked up to me and handed me a small leaflet informing me that today, October 10, is World Mental Health Day. I continued walking but could not keep from remembering the discussions in media during the court procedures debating whether or not Breivik was suffering from a psychiatric disorder during the time of the attack. The first psychiatric team deemed him mentally ill, while the second team deemed him as of sound mind.<sup>98</sup> The encounter with the woman in green, the media debates, and it being the Mental Health Day, seemed almost as too much of a coincidence. Maybe it was only proving how uneasy I was to walk in the footsteps of Breivik.

As I continued the walk I found out that in Oslo, as in most cities, there is a well-practiced routine in the mornings. When walking down Torggata it was quite busy despite the early

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<sup>98</sup> Öyvind Strømmen, "Anders Behring Breivik," Store Norske Leksikon, accessed Nov. 14, 2019,

[https://snl.no/Anders\\_Behring\\_Breivik](https://snl.no/Anders_Behring_Breivik) .

hour. The first sunlight could be seen and the damp from the pavement began to evaporate. People were unloading vans and trucks and carrying boxes into the nearby shops. Yet my mind was firmly locked in the discomfort of walking along a line where a murderer had previously walked, even if he did not walk along Torggata, and even if thousands of other people had walked that street since. I saw the trucks with engines on in the city center and my mind leapt to the attack in Stockholm 2017, when Rakhmat Akilov drove a truck into the main shopping district killing five people. My mind was so occupied with thoughts of the two attacks that I chose to sit down at a café and gather my thoughts in order to be able to focus on the task at hand.



*Early morning Oslo*



*White tent*

Walking further I arrived at Youngstorget and Youngs gata, from where I continued onto Hospitalsgata. At first, I thought I had arrived at a construction site and that I would have to turn around. There were high wooden fences and a big tent covering a construction site. However, there were a few people and cars trafficking the road. I became interested and walked further, realizing at that point that Hospitalsgata goes in almost underneath Y-blokket

through a tunnel with two big openings to the sky above.<sup>99</sup> The area in the tunnel had been designed for cars and not for pedestrians, even though it was possible to walk there. The area was dark and damp, with an atmosphere that was contrasted and enhanced by the openings above that were letting in crisp light and air. This was the first location in my site visit where I found loose materials; pieces of asphalt, gravel, and shade-loving plants. I got the feeling that I was in the underbelly of Regjeringskvartalet, as if this was the dark side of the site I meant to visit, where all the bad memories lingered. The darkness, the anonymity, and the loneliness of the site put me in an uneasy mood. I walked on and faced a small building with surveillance cameras and guards. At that point in time I felt somewhat safer, yet worried. I looked forward to going out into the daylight. But at the same time, I worried about what the guards would think of me, since I was coming from the darkness underground, and this made me tread carefully and not photograph or take as much notes as I would have if I came from another route.



*The underbelly*

When exiting the tunnel underneath Regjeringskvartalet I found myself almost at the core of the site I came to investigate, the square in front of Høyblokken.<sup>100</sup> But in order to enter the square I first had to walk through a road block, consisting of concrete obstacles that prevent cars from getting in and barriers that lower into the ground for letting cars pass through. There were also guards and surveillance cameras. These precautions gave me yet again a sense of

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<sup>99</sup> A modernistic style building built in 1970, inspired by the UNESCO building in Paris, by Erling Viksjø.<sup>99</sup>

Ulf Grønvold, "Regjeringskvartalet," Store Norske Leksikon, accessed Sep. 11, 2019,

<https://snl.no/Regjeringskvartalet>

<sup>100</sup> A modernistic style high-rise building by Viksjø built in 1959.

Grønvold, "Regjeringskvartalet."

safety. The site was protected from attacks, and I was being protected with it. The concrete obstacles that stopped cars from entering were green and shaped in soft forms; one even had an integrated bench. It was as if the barriers were inviting me in, making me feel welcome and offering me a seat to rest. However, all these precautions also sent out a strong sense of vulnerability. The barriers and the surveillance cameras were all there because the area was not deemed safe. I got the feeling that anyone, even myself, was seen as a potential threat (especially when documenting the site). I felt a mix of safety and unease. I felt as if I was welcome but still not wanted.



*Video of explosion*

Standing in front of Høyblokken I could see the traces of the attack still visible on the buildings, as the windows were barred and the façades were damaged. However, the strongest presence of Breivik and the attack was found at an information center inside Høyblokken. The entire locale showed traces of the explosion. One room displayed photographs of the victims; the next room a timeline of the events that took place July 22, 2011. Furthermore, there was a video feed from a surveillance camera that showed Breivik driving up to Høyblokken, getting out and leaving the vehicle, which later exploded. To stand just next to where the bomb had exploded and at the same time see the video affected me deeply; broken glass, debris and smoke had once filled the space where I was standing. In an adjacent room there were several pictures of Breivik during his court trials, along with some of the objects that he wore during the attack. Finally, there was a huge photograph, covering the entirety of a wall, of the island Utøya, connecting Regjeringskvartalet and the information center to the island where Breivik continued his attack. When I left the information center it felt surreal to breath fresh air at a site where such a terrible act of violence had been committed. However, it also felt as if the story of Breivik ended after the visit to the information center. During the entire walk up and

till that place my mind had been occupied by thoughts of walking in his footsteps, but those thoughts dispersed after the visit to the information center.

### ***THE DEAD***

The memorial underneath the linden trees was the first place where the realization that many had died during the attacks struck me, even though I knew this from before. The memorial was framed by two still mirrors of water. White concrete with glass formed a walkway into the memorial and there were big surfaces covered with small pieces of loose tumbled glass on both sides of the walkway. On the right-hand side, facing the front of the memorial, there was a large wall of glass with the name and age of all the people who died in the attacks. The names were joined so that they almost formed an entity rather than many separate fragments, but they were still visible as individual parts. Since the wall was made of glass I could see the remaining linden trees and Høyblokken behind the names of the dead. Also, through the glass, I registered a person with a small cart sweeping the leaves around the memorial. Someone was caring for the site.



*The memorial*

When walking on the opposite side of Høyblokken I noticed the outlines of a big clock on a distant building showing no time, because it had no arms. Although a vague symbol, I found it striking with a clock, at this site, that did not show the time, almost as if there was no more time. It became even more significant when I entered the July 22 information center, where, in one of the rooms, the broken clock was echoed by another broken clock; this one with a

shattered face and also no arms. My experience was that aspect of time is central in Regjeringskvartalet.

Inside the information center, there were several reminders of the people who died during July 22. In one room, with maybe the harshest reminder, hung portrait photographs of the victims. The photographs formed a clear memento of the people, in various ages, who lived their lives as any other with families and friends; but no more. Some frames held only a white surface, not revealing the faces of those persons, in accordance with their families' wishes.

The surveillance camera feed of Breivik leaving the car with the bomb also proved to be a clear reminder of those who died by his hand. The explosion visible in the video killed the first victims that day. I was sad to see the explosion, knowing that people died right then and there. The surveillance video first showed in real time how Breivik drove the car, parked and left. The video then sped up till right before the explosion. This change in tempo once again reminded me of the broken clocks and the importance of time; those sped up minutes were the last minutes of peoples' lives.

In the adjacent room there was a lot of information, but also the previously mentioned photograph of Utøya, which covered almost the entire wall. This photograph presented a connection already implicit, but emphasized it, made it crystal clear. Regjeringskvartalet was from now on bound to Utøya in my mind. The two sites became intertwined. Also, the photograph yet again manifested how time had become frozen.



*Utøya*

Before exiting the information center, I spent time in a room that contained documentation covering the time after the attack, with people gathering in the streets with flowers. There

were, and still are, many people remembering what happened and remembering those who died.

When I walked away from Regjeringskvartalet, along my pre-drawn line, I walked through neighborhoods north and north-west of the site. Early on I took a wrong turn and found myself outside the memorial cemetery. This happened by accident, but still it brought my mind back to the information center and the portraits of those who died. When I walked further, along Wessels gata, I stopped in the street. There was broken glass on the ground, probably from a bottle, but still it held great significance for me. When I was at the memorial I did not collect any loose material, because it felt wrong to bring the tumbled glass with me. To then find pieces of glass in the street, shattered into sharp pieces, was startling. It was as if the memorial and the memories of July 22 was following me.



*The cemetery*



*Broken glass*

## ***THE SURVIVORS***

The first impression of survivors was that the site was still there; Høyblokken was still standing and the linden trees were still alive. This was the most direct and concrete sign that site, society, and people survived the attack. A more abstract indication of this was the guards and the surveillance cameras, although I was ambivalent about them. Their presence told me that there are things worth protecting, that there are survivors. In this abstract sense the people crossing the open space, or visiting the information center and the memorial, were also survivors.

However, there were also tangible evidence of the survivors of the attack. The strongest evidence of this were the video interviews with people who survived the attack on Utøya. Several of the interviews took place on Utøya, where the survivor told what, and at the same time showed where, the attack had taken place. The fact that these interviews were displayed in the information center in Høyblokken, and that there was a big photograph of Utøya in the same exhibition, further connected the two sites. Regjeringskvartalet and Utøya were intertwined, and the survivors' stories from Utøya affected Regjeringskvartalet and vice versa.



*Linden trees*

Furthermore, in a big room at the information center there was a time-line of the attack. In relation to this line there were excerpts from social media together with several photographs that in one way or another depicted survivors; people fleeing the attack by swimming away

from Utøya; people with blood in their faces after the bombing at Regjeringskvartalet; and people leaving flowers in remembrance of those who did not survive.

### ***THE RE-CONSTRUCTION***

When I walked through Oslo I sensed a kind of motion forward towards, or a looking into, the future. Coming from Youngstorget and walking up Hospitalsgata I met big construction fences in a discrete green color that blocked the way. There were also signs redirecting traffic. When I continued Hospitalsgata I walked underneath some sort of construction half way through demolition. There was a cut displaying the insides of some sort of bridge. Next to it there was the huge white tent I previously mentioned, with openings for ventilation, covering a construction site. Underneath that tent lay the future of Regjeringskvartalet, or at least the start of what would be. It felt strange to see such a big tent, taking up the space of a building. Even more strange was the idea of this being a white sheet, a secret, a sort of tabula rasa, in the middle of a location that should be transparent and public.



*Construction-cut*

Continuing underneath Regjeringskvartalet, into the underbelly, I felt as if I was seeing the deteriorated side of the site. Here I found the first loose materials; crumbling asphalt, gravel, and plants growing where they were not supposed to. I began to see what could motivate the planning and rebuilding of the area. When I left the tunnel and went out into daylight the feeling of deterioration left me. However, there was a sense of temporality lingering over Regjeringskvartalet. The barriers blocking vehicles looked misplaced, as if they were put there in a hurry. Two people in construction worker's gear walked past me. The memorial in

front of Høyblokken is developed as a temporal memorial.<sup>101</sup> It will be there during the construction of the new Regjeringskvartalet, until a permanent memorial can be established. The façade of Høyblokken was covered with a weather protection with a print similar to the original façade. I perceived the print as a sort of representation of the future and of how the building would look when the renovation was completed. In contrast, Y-blokken did not have any weather protection. On the other hand, it had barred windows, repairs in plywood, and a doorway restricted for construction workers. It was clear that Høyblokken was to be kept, while Y-blokket looked ready for demolition.



*Høyblokken*



*Y-blokken*

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<sup>101</sup> The memorial was built 2018, designed by 3RW arkitekter. It is temporal due to the rebuilding of the district. When the new development is complete a permanent memorial is to be built. “Midlertidig minnested for 22. juli hendelsene i Regjeringskvartalet \ 21.12.2017,” 3RW arkitekter, accessed Nov. 20, 2019, <https://3rw.no/midlertidige-minnestedet-i-regjeringskvartalet/> .



*Future*

When taking a detour up around Y-blokken and in behind Høyblokken I found a vantage point from where I could perceive a large extent of the construction site. Next to the vantage point were the openings to the tunnel underneath Regjeringskvartalet. I could see down at where I previously walked. At the construction fences delimiting the vantage point there were posters displaying the future plans for the site, with images displaying a sunny and green spring scene with flowering cherry trees. However, I doubted the idyllic scene of the posters, when the reality of the site seemed so messy and temporal.

### ***THE COMMEMORATION***

During my site visit I was struck with impressions of surrounding buildings, constituting what I here call the narrative of the commemoration. This narrative is present in significant features, for example buildings, that had dominated the site long before the attack.

I walked along Karl Johans gata and found myself next to Oslo Cathedral. The church doors were closed, and people were passing by. There was an atmosphere, or a historical presence, at the immediate vicinity of the cathedral. The cathedral is and has historically been an institution and a center of faith. The heavy stones of the church indicated that it has been standing here for a long time and will continue to do so, thus constituting a solid presence in contrast to Regjeringskvartalet.



*Oslo Cathedral*

I continued walking and arrived at Youngstorget, where I faced Folkets Hus, housing a workers' union with close ties to Arbeiderpartiet. The building, I later learned at the information center, was damaged in the explosion at Regjeringskvartalet, even though there are two blocks in-between. The building was built in concrete and in what I at the time thought of as a socialistic style. At the foot of the building I found a relief with a picture and the text:

Freedom and life are one [-] in commemoration of the women and men in the labor movement who gave their lives in the struggle for freedom 1940-1945.<sup>102</sup>

These few words inscribed on a building effectively connected present time with the struggle for freedom in the second world war. During the war Norway was occupied by national socialist Germany, a fact which yet again brought my mind to Breivik, who also held a national socialistic world-view.

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<sup>102</sup> Author's translation. Originally: "Frihet og liv er ett [-] til minne om de kvinner og men i arbeiderbevegelsen som ga sitt liv i frihetskampen 1940-1945"



*Folkets hus*

At the main square in front of Høyblokken I was embraced with the architectural style of the site; Y-blokken's arced shape, not often found in buildings, was embracing the space in front of it through its curvature. In contrast to its general shape, details of the building also caught my attention, in particular the pebbles integrated in the façade material, which looked like a riverbed. I could not see Høyblokken in its entirety due to the weather protection covering the front of the building during the (re-)construction phase. However, the building still mirrored ideals of the time it was built; standing on pillars in a Le Corbusier manner, the front façade in a simple raster pattern, and the side façades with big drawings sand blasted into the concrete. The ground material was laid in a triangular pattern in dark and light stone, bringing me yet again back to Stockholm, this time to Sergels torg, a square close to the attack in Stockholm in 2017. The ground pattern at Regjeringskvartalet was contrasted by two large water mirrors with arching sides. Almost identical in shape, they presented a classicistic style, which was strengthened by the linden alleyway leading up, between the water mirrors, to the entrance of Høyblokken.



*Water mirrors*

## ***URBAN CONSTELLATIONS***

I identified this narrative as the moments when neither of the above-mentioned narratives played out. It took place in between various stories and only in hindsight appear as parts connected to a whole.



*Pigeons*

What I first encountered that brought the narrative of urban constellations to mind was the Oslo cathedral. More specifically what I noticed was a flock of pigeons, some sleeping on ledges, others walking around on the road next to the church. There was a van driving slowly on the road and the pigeons moved haphazardly. Close by, the big doors to the church stood closed. Inscribed on the doors was a text together with religious images in relief. The inscription reads: “the pure of heart, the poor in spirit, the merciful, the peaceful, those who mourn, the meek, those who are persecuted, the mocked”.<sup>103</sup> I remember this text inscribed on the door as clarifying, not because I understood any deeper meaning, but rather because it in a way sharpened my attention to my surroundings.

In the tunnel under Regjeringskvartalet, in the underbelly, the previous sensation from seeing the pigeons and the church doors made itself apparent yet again. The openings to the sky let in a crisp morning light, making it easier to continue walking. At the same place there were

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<sup>103</sup> My translation. Inscribed text in Norwegian: “De rene av hjertet, de fattige i aanden, de barmhjertige, de fredsommelige, de som sørger, de saktmodige, de forfulgte, de som spottes.” The inscription is composed of parts from the Sermon on the Mount. “Matthew 5:3-11, New International Version,” Holy Bible, BibleGateway, accessed Dec. 3, 2019, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+5%3A3-11&version=NIV> .

further writings, this time graffiti on a wall. However, I could not read it due to the many layers of text. This many layered text was illegal. At the same time, there were legal spray-painted lines and scribbled words on walls and streets, working as guidelines for the construction of the new city plans.

Having exited the tunnel and found myself standing in the open space in front of Høyblokken I reflected about the fact that there were less people moving in this area than the previous areas I had walked through. I had the feeling that this was combined with a Norwegian flag I saw hanging slack in the middle of the open space in front of Høyblokken, with no wind to fill it. Of course, the absence of people as well as the slack flag was partly due to it being working hours as well as it being calm weather. However, my feeling that people avoided the place was somewhat affirmed when I later met with a Norwegian woman who worked nearby. She told me that she had crossed the open space in front of Høyblokken the morning of the attack. But, eight years later she still walked detours around the site.

## **INTERPRETING THE NARRATIVES OF REGJERINGSKVARTALET**

So far, I have presented six site-narratives within Regjeringskvartalet. Now I will interpret them according to Gadamer's theories concerning symbol, play and festival. The symbol gives us the opportunity to read between the lines of the above narratives, investigating further potential meanings within the narratives as well as searching for further connections between site and narratives. Play allows us to further investigate the six narratives and their symbolic meanings from the aspects of its participants, the spectator, the rules, etc. The Festival allows us to further investigate the six narratives and their symbolic meaning. But from yet another vantage point, the Festival brings the discussion into a realm of collective experience and makes us take the aspect of time into consideration. This chapter will mainly focus on research question number two: how does the site-narratives affect and interplay with the site? And vice versa.

When I first started walking along the pre-drawn line of the travelling transect I felt like a spectator, someone there to observe from a critical distance. From this feeling a fear was awoken, a fear of the moral implications of walking in the footsteps of a murderer. At that time, I was aware of my worries obstructing me, as a spectator, from perceiving the site fully. However, it was not my worries that obstructed me. In fact, it was the notion of spectatorship

that was clouding my perception. When I sat down and gathered my mind I realized that rather than being a spectator, I was involved in what Davey calls spectatorial participation.<sup>104</sup> I had not considered that my worries belonged to a spectator, someone attempting to stand outside the events taking place. Instead, by being a participant, or spectatorial participant, I put myself in the midst of the event; without me the site visit would not play out the way it did. Thereafter, my worries did not obstruct me as much from experiencing the site, but rather opened a certain door to it. This door lead to an important insight concerning the investigation. Namely that, since I was part of the playing out of the site, the play was affected by me, and thereby also the site-narratives. This made the continuing walk more manageable.

By walking and observing I participated in the play, or the drama, and I became yet another part in the totality of the site. This drama of the site, or the putting into play, was initiated from the very beginning of my investigation. That is, the very first preliminary research on the site made me part of it. This includes my early speculations, discussions, notes, readings, etc. Here it is fitting to point to a quote from Davey concerning the festival: “I must acknowledge that I already belong to something larger than myself. The artwork *festivises*: it reveals our personal indebtedness to past and future communities of meaning”.<sup>105</sup> In other words, by investigating the site of Regjeringskvartalet I became part of a collective, belonging to something larger than myself. Furthermore, the indebtedness to past and future communities of meaning became evident in relation to the early research and preparations concerning the site. For example, the theoretical concepts and the methodological framework in this paper are constructed in an academic tradition and builds upon the ideas of other people. This creates a connection to what Burns and Kahn refer to as the site’s area of influence.<sup>106</sup> The connection consists of the fact that the theoretical concepts and the methodological framework are also part of the site’s area of influence. They affect the site even though they are outside its physical limitations. Furthermore, this reasoning indicates that while I am writing I am still part of the drama of the site. Even though I am not at the site, I am still within the site’s area of influence. My interpretation affects my own view as well as that of potential readers and thus might affect the site.

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<sup>104</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

<sup>105</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

<sup>106</sup> Burns and Kahn, "Why Site Matters," xii.

At this time, it is worth noting that we are not discussing site in a static sense. Rather, we are discussing site in the sense of theater, of a play being played out, of actors coming and going, the set changing, and maybe even a part of the audience walking out. In other words, we are discussing Regjeringskvartalet as it is changing with the passing of time. In connection to this, Gadamer and Davey write that the festival changes how we perceive time, that it initiates “play-time”.<sup>107</sup> There is a difference in how time has been perceived throughout the process of site-interpretation in this thesis. I have identified the actual site visit (in contrast to the preparation and interpretation phase) as the most successful material to analyze in connection to Davey’s concept of time. Therefore, I hereon by focus on the site visit, leaving the preparation and interpretation phases aside for the moment.

During the visit to Regjeringskvartalet there were several occasions when the aspect of time was in focus. One occasion was when encountering the broken clock described in the chapter “the dead.” The clock opened up the interpretation to the theme of time, which then lingered in the narrative. The aspect of time was yet again in focus in the narrative fragment telling of the surveillance camera. But time was also a factor in the portraits of the dead, and in the photograph of Utøya. Arguably, the clock was merely an object of the site and does not in itself affect the conception of time, or initiate play-time. But, as we have seen, interpretation in general, and Gadamer’s aesthetics in particular, brings the interpreter into the equation. The clock in relation to me and my pre-knowledge initiated the interpretation as that of broken time. However, we should also acknowledge the site as essential in this interpretation and in the initiation of play-time. The clock is a part of the totality of the site, and it is the dynamics of part to totality, according to a hermeneutic understanding, that allows for interpretation.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, Davey writes that play-time “[i]t is in such time that an artwork ‘comes to stand’”.<sup>109</sup> When the site comes to stand it becomes distinct. Or, in a simile, coming to stand is when a theatric drama is being played out in-front of you, rather than you reading the script.

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<sup>107</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

<sup>108</sup> Ödman, *Tolkning, förståelse, vetande*, 99.

<sup>109</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

Play-time, as described by Davey, is something that connects strongly to a sense of community.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, on the subject of experiencing an artwork, “Gadamer emphasizes that within experience [...] one is always participating, perhaps unwittingly, in something beyond oneself.”<sup>111</sup> In Regjeringskvartalet and its surroundings this experience of something beyond oneself, something belonging to the community, was manifest in several locations. It was manifest in, for example, the union workers’ building, wherein people organize themselves in order to strengthen the rights of workers. Another example of the manifestation of communal aspects is the cathedral, since religion has been a gathering force for millennia. Regjeringskvartalet in itself also purveys a sense of the collective, since it is the location of government, the location where the will of the people is expressed by election and manifested by elected representatives. This particular sense of the collective also implies power. Within the large collective of Norway, parties are tasked with forming a government in order to govern the nation. This notion of power is also symbolized in the physical landscape by monumental buildings with distinct architectural styles, the large open public space, concrete barriers, surveillance cameras, and guards. Even the governmental website confirms this view, stating: “The governmental quarter represents a significant symbolic value linked to the rise and development of state power in modern Norway. The buildings show the social and architectural ideals of different eras, and changing plans and frameworks.”<sup>112</sup> However, the monumental buildings do not only tell us about the collective and its power. The buildings become a memory not only of the attempt to destroy property. They also symbolize an attack on the political system and the collective majority. Most likely Breivik targeted Regjeringskvartalet due to its political and national importance; because of the site’s position of power, and because he disliked the collective majority’s political ideas.

However, there were also symbols of people coming together in a collective stance against terror at Regjeringskvartalet. There were big photographs inside the information center, which were created at manifestations after the attack, depicting people standing in front of a sea of

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<sup>110</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

<sup>111</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

<sup>112</sup> Regjeringen.no, “Kunst, arkitektur og bygninger i regjeringskvartalet.”\_Author’s translation.

Original text: ”Regjeringskvartalet representerer en betydelig symbolverdi knyttet til fremveksten og utviklingen av statsmakten i det moderne Norge. Bygningene viser ulike epokers samfunnsmessige og arkitektoniske idealer, og skiftende planer og rammebetingelser.”

flowers. Outside Høyblokken, the memorial formed a distinct symbol of community as I walked through Regjeringskvartalet, partly due to the knowledge of the attack, but also due to the design of the memorial. This division between knowledge and object design (the memorial) indicates something interesting. The pieces of glass make up a large part of the memorial. However, without my pre-knowledge of the site, the glass does not symbolize what it does. On the other hand, with my pre-knowledge, that the very same space once was covered in broken glass, the symbolic meaning of the glass becomes distinct and closely tied to the history of the site. The glass becomes physical bits and pieces of a collective memory that tries to convey what happened the day of the attack. Furthermore, pieces of glass are also integrated in the walkway of the memorial. This forces a visitor to walk on glass in order to enter, further simulating the glass covered streets on the day of the attack. If we look to the symbolism above, we find that walking on glass also implies walking on shattered memories.

### ***THE GLASS NOT GATHERED***

As we have seen in the theoretical chapter on hermeneutics, interpretation is a way of creating new knowledge.<sup>113</sup> However, it is important to remember that this interpretation is not leading away from the object, or the source of the symbolism. Rather, if we see it through the Symbol (see the chapter on hermeneutics), the symbolism is found within the object, as a deeper meaning. For example, the pieces of glass at the memorial mentioned above were identified as a symbol for the broken glass from the attack. This is a meaning within, not referring to something outside of itself. As we find this meaning in the symbol of broken glass from the attack, we also reach our current horizon of knowledge; or in other words, we have gained knowledge. However, as we reach our horizon of knowledge, the horizon moves, or as Davey writes: “an artwork can always mean more”.<sup>114</sup> This means that we have a new horizon of knowledge, and that the glass as symbol is still resonant with withheld meaning. This we also see above, in the further meaning of the glass as a symbol for shattered memories.

However, even though the glass was identified as a significant symbol at the site, I did not collect any. In the chapter on the travelling transect, collecting materials is described as an important part of the method. Yet, when I was at the memorial I could not convince myself to

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<sup>113</sup> Ödman, *Tolkning, förståelse, vetande*, 57-59.

<sup>114</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics."

do it; even though there were large amounts of glass and a few pieces missing would not have been noticed. I did consider collecting a few pieces in order to return them at a later visit to Oslo, but still it felt wrong. Part of the reason it felt wrong was because the glass is part of a narrative that describes a tragedy and crime that has put its mark on the site physically as well as in people's minds. Furthermore, this symbol of the glass constitutes a common understanding and a common memory of the site. It reminds visitors of the day when the site changed, when it was forcefully loaded with a new meaning. This common memory indicates an intersubjective understanding of the glass as one of the many symbols of what happened at Regjeringskvartalet (and Utøya). In other words, the reasons for not collecting the glass are complex and definitely connected to its symbolical meanings.

### ***LARGER THAN MYSELF AND POLITICS OF PLACE***

I believe that one reason the glass is so symbolically important is its connection to the entwined concepts of space and place. Place, according to Massey, constitutes a negotiation of the sum of trajectories at a specific location at a specific time.<sup>115</sup> If we combine this with Beauregard's view of place we find that these trajectories are "personal experience, hearsay, and collective memories."<sup>116</sup> This in turn connects place to the concept of narrative, since a narrative is the representation of stories; or the telling of memories and personal experience. In other words, a place is a location where a negotiation between narratives is taking place.

If we continue reading Beauregard, we understand that the concept of place also involves an understanding of the concept of site. Thus, in order to investigate the importance of the glass from the perspective of place, we need to understand the glass's connection to site. The concept of site, from Beauregard's understanding, is a threshold between one place becoming another place. For him, site is the location of transformation.<sup>117</sup> In the very recent history of Regjeringskvartalet the site has gone through a very drastic transformation. When Breivik attacked Regjeringskvartalet it was the *site* of one of his attacks. Previously in the paper we have seen that Regjeringskvartalet is a location of political power, a form of politics that Breivik opposed. The attack was aimed at this political power, specifically towards

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<sup>115</sup> Massey, *for space*, 141.

<sup>116</sup> Beauregard, "From Place to Site," 39.

<sup>117</sup> Beauregard, "From Place to Site," 55.

Arbeiderpartiet, in order to promote Breivik's own political motives.<sup>118</sup> To connect back to the concept of site, we could describe the attack in the terms of narrative and place. The attack on Regjeringskvartalet interrupted the negotiation of trajectories of the place and forcefully attempted to remove the narratives of Arbeiderpartiet. According to this theory we can describe it as Breivik transforming the place into a new site by interrupting and removing previous narratives.

Since the attack not much has changed at Regjeringskvartalet. The site has in a way remained more or less the same site that it became at the time of the attack. However, it should be said that there have been discussions of new plans concerning the site.<sup>119</sup> But, the complexity of the site has made the process of renewal challenging.<sup>120</sup> A few changes have been made, such as barriers blocking traffic, weather protection on Høyblokken, and establishing the memorial and the information center. Furthermore, some of the discussed future plans have been put into action.<sup>121</sup> But so far, the new plans have created temporal constructions that makes Regjeringskvartalet into an even more distinct site; specifically, the building fences delimiting the area, and the big white tent covering an entire city block. These building fences, the tent, and even the memorial, are temporal; they exist in the meantime, until the site can become a place again. Until then the site is still lingering in a state wherein the memory of the attack dominates the narratives. This lingering becomes evident in many of the site-narratives in this investigation, for example "the survivors" and "the dead". However, there were also narratives that persisted through the attack. One of them is the previously discussed narrative of Regjeringskvartalet as a location of political power. Since Regjeringskvartalet has long been the center of political power, this symbolism existed before the attack and continues to do so since the site will continue to be the location of the Norwegian government. Furthermore, within the site of Regjeringskvartalet, new places has been created since the attack, for example the memorial.

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<sup>118</sup> Martin H. W. Zondag et al., "Dette er Breivik-dommen," NRK, Aug. 24, 2012, accessed Jan. 13, 2020, <https://www.nrk.no/227/artikler/dette-er-breivik-dommen-1.8294711>

<sup>119</sup> Grønvold, "Regjeringskvartalet."

<sup>120</sup> Max Sohl Stjernberg, "Y-blokka – ett norskt trauma," *Arkitekten*, Nov. 11, 2019, accessed Nov. 27, 2019, <https://arkitekten.se/nyheter/y-blokka-ett-norskt>

<sup>121</sup> "Nytt regjeringskvartal," Statsbygg, accessed Nov. 27, 2019, <https://www.statsbygg.no/Prosjekter-og-eiendommer/Byggeprosjekter/Regjeringskvartal-nytt/>

## ***WHY IT FELT WRONG TO REMOVE THE GLASS***

As we have seen, the glass as symbol holds a significant role in the construction of site-narratives. Furthermore, we know that a place is the negotiation of entangled narratives. This tells us that narratives are of great importance in the construction of place. In other words, symbols are part in constructing narratives, which in turn are part in constructing places. This indicates that the glass as a symbol holds a crucial part in the construction of the memorial as a place. In this tangle we find clues to why it felt wrong to take the glass away from the memorial. To remove something from a site is one thing; a site is, as Beauregard writes, the distilling of narratives.<sup>122</sup> When distilling, the act of removing is essential. But, to remove an important part from a place is something else. The most extreme case of object removal from a place is to remove one of its trajectories; one of its essential parts active in the negotiation, and therefore active in the creation, of place. However, in this case, we are discussing a few small pieces of tumbled glass. Arguably, they are not in themselves essential for the existence of the memorial. Of course, in a large amount they create an essential part of the place. But, as mentioned, a few missing pieces of glass would not have been noticed, especially if later returned. However, from hermeneutics we know that our understanding depends on the parts in relation to the totality. From this perspective, the glass, no matter the amount, becomes part of the totality of the place. This indicates that a few pieces of tumbled glass actually can be essential to the memorial as a place.

There is an additional connection that further elucidates why the glass holds such an importance in this investigation. As we have seen throughout this thesis, the glass holds a significant symbolic meaning. This symbolic meaning, understood from a hermeneutic point of view, is a subjective meaning. We have also seen that the symbol is important in the creation of the memorial as a place. This tells us that the creation of a place is, throughout the process, strongly influenced by the subject that identifies the location as a place. This connects well with Beauregard's definition of place as something that holds an emotive connection to the subject.<sup>123</sup> Thus, we understand that removing an important part of a place is, in a way, to remove something important connected to oneself. But, if we enrich the

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<sup>122</sup> Beauregard, "From Place to Site," 41.

<sup>123</sup> Beauregard, "From Place to Site," 39.

perspective with the concept of the Festival we find that the memorial as a place is not solely something subjective. In the chapter on hermeneutics we find a quote by Davey:

The artwork's communicative capacity awakens the realization that in as much as I understand myself as being addressed, I must acknowledge that I already belong to something larger than myself. The artwork *festivises*: it reveals our personal indebtedness to past and future communities of meaning.<sup>124</sup>

This suggests that I belong to something larger than myself. However, if we look back, we understand that it was not only me that was affected. As we have seen, the subject is closely connected to the concept of place. This indicates that, if I as a subject belong to something larger than myself, then the place as (per definition) dependent on me, also belongs to something larger than itself. Therefore, both subject and place belongs to something larger than their respective selves. This “larger than myself”, as Davey writes, relates to “our personal indebtedness to past and future communities of meaning”.<sup>125</sup> The glass in itself, and as a part of the entirety of the place, suggests a meaning beyond my pre-knowledge; to something that relates to past and future communities of meaning. For me, as a person, this larger than myself points towards society and cultural meaning-making. In order to investigate this larger than itself when it comes to place, I look to the definition of landscape (see chapter: Landscape and Landscapes). In the definition of landscape, we find a clear connection to the intersubjective form of landscapes. This connection lies in the fact that a *community of meaning* basically is the defining characteristic in an intersubjective landscape; within a culture there is more or less a common experience, and understanding, of the local objective landscape. This train of thought has taught us that the glass as a symbol, the place of the memorial, and the local landscape, all hold intersubjective meanings. Furthermore, the three concepts mentioned above, the symbol, the place and the landscape, are all interconnected. They are all part of constructing each other; the symbol defines the place and the place defines the landscape. But, the landscape also defines the place, which in turn defines the symbol. The symbol also colors the understanding of the landscape, and vice versa.

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<sup>124</sup> Davey, “Gadamer’s Aesthetics”

<sup>125</sup> Davey, “Gadamer’s Aesthetics”

This investigation into the inter-connectedness of symbol, place and landscape could go on further. However, what this tells us is that there indeed is a strong relation between the glass as a symbol and its surroundings. This in turn points us to an understanding of why removing glass from the site felt wrong. The glass as a symbol is part of defining both small-scale and large-scale physical areas, and not only for me personally, but also for the collective. Admittedly, the glass was only in small pieces, but they symbolize something greater than themselves. This symbolization interacts with people in the adjacent community and therefore also affects their view of the place and the landscape. Therefore, in a way, removing glass would be to remove part of the understanding of the place for a large group of people.<sup>126</sup> Here, I think it is worth to note that the method of the travelling transect is not advocating the removal of important objects from sites in order to weaken the sense of place. Rather the opposite, the method suggests that the traveler gathers objects in order to create new connections. In a way, these new connections are the construction of a stronger sense of place and a better understanding of that landscape. However, I believe that it is interesting from a methodological perspective to consider that the act of gathering materials in itself can hold a symbolic meaning. Removing a few pieces of glass would probably not have destroyed neither the place of the memorial, nor the understanding of the surrounding landscape. This fear could be connected to the fear identified earlier that day, of walking in the footsteps of a killer. In this example we see that, since symbols are related to the interpreting subject, the symbolic meaning is directly connected to me. I, the subject, am part of constructing the symbolism of removing the glass, and my fear of the consequences affects my interpretations and my actions.

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<sup>126</sup> Similar to this discussion, National Geographic writes on the archeological topic of whether or not it is acceptable to remove the remains of people found at historical gravesites. See: Mark Strauss “When is it Okay To Dig Up The Dead?,” *National Geographic*, Apr. 7, 2016, accessed Dec. 2, 2019, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2016/04/160407-archaeology-religion-repatriation-bones-skeletons/>

## ***THE ASPHALT GATHERED***

One place where I did find and collect loose material was the tunnel, the underground, also by me called the underbelly of Regjeringskvartalet. The tunnel was a dark part of the transect, all though at some locations there was natural light shining in through large openings in the tunnel ceiling. Through these openings I could see parts of Regjeringskvartalet and thus orient myself. The light also lead me to a steel construction, maybe a ventilation system, centrally placed in the tunnel. Near the construction the asphalt had crumbled and there were plants growing in the cracks under the sparse sunlight. I collected a few pieces of this asphalt. These pieces of asphalt are, or were, part of the ground material, the road that I walk upon. When I think about it, their appearance is rather strange. They are somewhat round, but coarsely shaped. Furthermore, their color is oily, yet matte, black mixed with a few small sparkling particles; it is a composite material. When I handle the big part of asphalt it breaks into three smaller pieces.

It is interesting that this dark and unwelcoming place, where asphalt is crumbling into pieces, also is one of Regjeringskvartalet's weak points. When reading about the new plans for the area it is impossible not to read about the planned destruction of Y-blokket.<sup>127</sup> There have been a few alternatives presented; some want to keep the entire building due to its value as a cultural heritage, others argue that keeping it is the right thing do from an environmental perspective. However, the current plan argues that the tunnel underneath parts of Y-blokket is a security risk, and therefore there is a need for a new building. This scenario suggests the building of a park above the tunnel where Y-blokket today resides.<sup>128</sup>

With this in mind, the pieces of asphalt become a symbolic part of Y-blokket. They are, on the one hand, part the foundation of the building. On the other hand, by crumbling, they are also a reason for its future destruction; they prove that this part of the construction is weak. Furthermore, the darkness of the underbelly convinces us that this part of the site indeed is a security risk. However, here my interpretation halts slightly; this interpretation of darkness is easily performed without reflection. Because, the symbolism of darkness is strongly situated in our society and often perceived as dangerous and evil. For example, in the novel *Heart of*

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<sup>127</sup> Stjernberg, "Y-blokka – ett norskt trauma."

<sup>128</sup> Stjernberg, "Y-blokka – ett norskt trauma."

*Darkness*, when Marlow travels along the Congo river deeper into the jungles, deeper into metaphorical darkness, in the end he finds unexpected horrors.<sup>129</sup> However, the tunnel was actually trafficked quite frequently both by cars, bikes and people walking. Furthermore, security cameras and guards were present. These aspects indicated at least a slight sense of safety. However, security guards and cameras, as we have seen before, also indicate the need for protection from something that is potentially unsafe. Thus, the conception of the underbelly as a not fully safe area felt relevant.

If we connect back to the discussion on materials gathered and not gathered, we see that the glass left behind is part of unfolding the place called the memorial, while the collected asphalt is removed from the site and thus not participating in the direct creation of place in the underbelly. However, if we look to the concept of area of influence, we find that it is possible for a site to be influenced from a distance. Therefore, the collected asphalt influences the underbelly similar to how the glass influences the memorial, even though the asphalt is displaced. In other words, the pieces of asphalt, even though not present at the site, can still affect the unfolding of the place of the underbelly. This indicates a kind of dialectic between interpretation and site. The glass that was not gathered influences the interpretation while the gathered asphalt influences the unfolding of the place. However, the difference being that the gathered asphalt does not directly, at site, aid in the process of interpretation and unfolding of the place called the underbelly, while the glass not gathered still allows for visitors to the memorial to construct their own sense of place.

### ***UNFOLDING THE PHOTOGRAPH***

Even previous to the attack there has been a connection between Regjeringskvartalet and Utøya, due to the island's historically strong relations to Norwegian politics.<sup>130</sup> However, the attack created a stronger and more commonly known connection. This relation is both mental, existing in for example people's minds and memories, and, in a way, physical. An example of this physical connection is the big photograph of Utøya found in the information center. This photograph forms a distinct bond by bringing the island into Regjeringskvartalet. The island

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<sup>129</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Minneapolis: MN: First Avenue Edition, A Division of Lerner Publishing Group, 2015).

<sup>130</sup> "Utøyas historie," Utøya non-profit organization, accessed Nov. 13, 2019, <http://www.utoya.no/historien>.

now exists within this other site, and Regjeringskvartalet is now hosting, or integrating the island into itself. This view of the photograph as a physical connection between two sites could be disputed, since it is merely a representation of, and not in itself, the physical island. However, a photograph is physical in its materiality, from existing as color on paper, or being viewed on a screen. Therefore, it is near impossible to view a photograph without its materiality affecting the way we perceive it.

The photograph is also physical in a more abstract way. The light that reflects off of the object depicted in the photograph is fundamental in the process of creating a photograph. Therefore, the island depicted, at some point in time, has existed within physical reality. This understanding of the photograph connects to what Roland Barthes writes: “One day, quite some time ago, I happened on a photograph of Napoleon’s youngest brother, Jerome, taken in 1852. And I realized then, with an amazement I have not been able to lessen since: ‘I am looking at eyes that looked at the Emperor.’”<sup>131</sup> This Jerome has existed, and it is his eyes that Barthes are seeing. Similarly, the island of Utøya, depicted on the photograph at the information center, has existed (and of course still does) and I was looking at it within Regjeringskvartalet.

This way of seeing the photograph is beneficial when applied at site visits, since it allows us to accept the picture as somewhat truthful. However, apart from the photograph looking similar to that which is photographed, that is, apart from the photograph as a representation, the photograph also exists as a symbol. If we have the pre-knowledge to recognize the island, then the photograph by depicting Utøya also symbolizes Utøya. This way, specifically in the context created by the information center, the photograph becomes a symbol of the July 22 attack at Utøya. Thus, telling viewers of the events that took place that day and also further connecting the two sites.

Furthermore, the photograph of Utøya is a physical memory, at least symbolically, from the day it was created. This memory springs from one person seeing an object or an event, looking through the camera, pressing a button, releasing the shutter, and creating a

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<sup>131</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Vintage, 2000): 3.

photograph. The importance of these symbolic memories is further strengthened by the table with cameras, carried by people at Utøya during the attack, displayed in the information center. The display of the cameras implies that it is not just the photographs that are important, but also the tools for creating these digital memories. What we are seeing when viewing the photograph is not just a representation of the island. It is also a scene from the photographer's life; a small part of a second frozen and then framed. In other words, the photograph is a symbol of the photographer being at that place at that time. From the photographer's perspective the picture might very well be a personal memory. But for me, viewing from the outside, the photograph is a memory of a person being there and seeing the island.

If we connect back to the photograph as a frozen part of an instance and view this idea through the perspective of the festival, we see that the photograph is truly a break with time as we know it. The photograph obviously affects time, also evident in the above quote by Barthes. Furthermore, it makes it possible for people to come together into a collective. The photograph presents one person's view of the place framed and frozen for all to see. The photograph of Utøya travels, from being a subjective experience, into becoming a common perspective on the island. However, the photograph does not become a common perspective merely through the act of creation, but it needs also to be publicly positioned, in this case in the information center at the site of Regjeringskvartalet. Furthermore, by being a common perspective, the photograph is actively a part of creating the intersubjective understanding of both Utøya and Regjeringskvartalet.

The photograph has, in the identification of narratives at the site, been part in establishing the interconnectedness between Regjeringskvartalet and Utøya. If we look at this phenomenon through play, the drama of the site is unfolding. But the drama of the photograph is frozen. At the same time the photograph is a property in the drama of Regjeringskvartalet. That is, the photograph of Utøya is part of the unfolding of Regjeringskvartalet. However, it is not only the photograph as a material, or property, that is connecting the two sites. The photograph in itself contains a narrative, telling a story and representing life. This narrative, due to the circumstances of the July 22 attack, connects to the narratives of Regjeringskvartalet. Briefly, the narrative of the photograph consists of the island Utøya after the terrorist attack. It is a dark silhouette of an island in dim evening light. There is some activity in the form of nimble

waves and a few lights, but overall the scene is quiet and somewhat ominous. On the one hand, the narrative within the photograph is a form of intertextuality, or a part of, Regjeringskvartalet. That is, the photograph is a narrative part of Regjeringskvartalet, but at the same time it is referring to something outside of the site. On the other hand, this internal narrative of the photograph breaks with the narrative experience of Regjeringskvartalet in different ways. For example, the photographed scene unfolds in the evening while my site visit to Regjeringskvartalet took place during day-time. This two-folded photograph leads to a confusion in narratives; the depicted island belongs to the site, but at the same time not. Subsequently, this confusion creates a changeability, where the site is either Regjeringskvartalet by itself, or Regjeringskvartalet connected to Utøya. This changeability makes it difficult to imagine one of the two sites without the other. It is as if they exist as one, fluctuating, site.

## ***THINKING ABOUT SITE***

### **REFLECTING MOTIVATIONS FOR DESIGNING SITES**

This chapter consists of two sub-chapters thinking about site. The first sub-chapter recapitulates the two first research questions, while the second sub-chapter looks to the third research question and ways forward.

### ***REFLECTING ON RESEARCH QUESTIONS***

The objective of this thesis has been to study a loaded site by visiting it myself, because I wanted to find out how site-narratives emerge and how the site is changed by the site-narratives and vice versa, in order to inform readers on how to consider more than just the physical aspects of a site. Of the three research questions posed, the two first have been discussed extensively throughout the paper. However, following is a brief recapitulation of the answers to the two first research questions.

The first question is: what narratives are brought to light within and in relation to the site? This question mainly relates to the chapter “Six Narratives”. Within this chapter are six narrative structures; the killer, the dead, the survivors, the re-construction, the commemoration and urban constellation. Together they form an understanding of Regjeringskvartalet. However, in addition to the six narratives, I argue that an additional narrative, namely this text, is also of great importance to the understanding of Regjeringskvartalet. In other words, this paper has in itself emerged as an overarching site-narrative.

The second question is: how does the site-narratives affect and interplay with the site? And vice versa. The relating discussion can be found in the chapter “Interpreting the Narratives of Regjeringskvartalet”. Briefly recapitulated, the site is a complex locality where art, politics, terror, death and memory are intertwined into the every-day urban weave. It is impossible to follow a single thread, or narrative, of the weave without finding another thread crossing in another direction. However, it has become apparent that the site throughout is strongly situated in the memory of the July 22 attack.

Regjeringskvartalet is in its current state saturated with visual cues and stories of the attack, almost as if the site itself has become a memorial. There are less people moving around and there is also a sense of remembrance which rests over the site. However, there is also an internal struggle between the site as a memorial and as a new urban center of government. The plans for re-construction contrasts with the site as a memory, which is manifested in the public debate on whether or not to keep Y-blokket (“The asphalt gathered”). If these plans were to be completed, it would most likely lead to the narratives of the site taking a strong change of direction. My guess is that this would weaken the narrative of the attack, which could be a way of neutralizing the lingering agency of Breivik (“Larger than myself and politics of place”). But on the other hand, there is a risk that this could be seen as a means to ignore, or forgetting about, the problem. That is, it could be seen as if the site is re-made instead of kept in order to deal with the traumatic memory of the attack. In one way, the temporality is positive, because it means that there will be a memorial during the rebuilding phase. It is better with a temporal memorial than having no memorial at all. A temporal memorial will hold some of the memories of the old place, bringing them into the new, yet to be built, place. In this way, the memorial site acts as a translocator of memories by bringing, or holding, some memories in place throughout the building process (“Why it felt wrong to remove the glass”). However, what disturbs this view of the memorial site is knowing that, in the end, it most likely will be removed and a new memorial will be built.

In-between the struggle of memory and re-construction there are narrative moments. Inspired by Kahn I call these moments urban constellations<sup>132</sup>, found in the chapter with the same name. These constellations, or moments, tell us of the site in a broader sense; as something playing out in the everyday. They bring me as an observer (in spectatorial participation) into the present site, in a way separated from the historic site and from any future plans, yet at the same time located in the urban weave and thus part of the totality of the site and the city. In other words, the site is not only the memory of terror. Nor is it fully absorbed in future plans of construction. The site exists at all time, in all instances, and influenced by all narratives.

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<sup>132</sup> Burns and Kahn, “Urban Constellation,” 294.

## **DIRECTIONS FORWARD**

In this sub-chapter I take into consideration future directions forward. The chapter is divided into four discursive parts; first, a recapitulation of the travelling transect and Gadamer's theories in combination; second, the photograph viewed in connection to locality; third, the photographic locality taken into the digital realm; fourth, a discussion on the site-knowledge obtained in this paper. After these four main points follow three insights connected to the paper, and a few paragraphs on possible future research. This section therefore relates mainly to last question: (3) How can the resulting insights contribute to a more site responsive understanding of landscape design?

### ***TRANSECTING KNOWLEDGE***

Davey tells us that the experience of site is the experience of meaning.<sup>133</sup> Thus, in order to fully experience a site, we need to understand what the site is telling us. If there are aspects of the site that we do not fully understand, we have to interpret those aspects based on our pre-knowledge, thus gaining new site-knowledge. On the other hand, the travelling transect springs from the transecting line as a sort of placeholder for the pre-known. The method teaches us that deviation is essential in order to open up for potential interpretation and thus a path to new knowledge. As I have shown in this paper, Gadamer's theories and the travelling transect have many similarities, and thus I argue that both could and should be applied in order to design. The traveling transect searches for the aspects that we do not understand, while Davey and Gadamer's aesthetics aids us in the act of understanding these aspects. This combined way of seeing site can be described with Davey's term spectatorial participation ("Interpreting the narratives of Regjeringskvartalet"). With the concept of spectatorial participation we acknowledge the fact that we are not solely observers of a site. Rather, by searching for deviation, we are taking part in the site and the drama that is being played out at that locality and time. With my proposed Gadamer-travelling-transect synthesis, we are able to locate and understand emerging site-meanings, thus gaining deeper site-knowledge.

An additional interesting connection between the two methods is found in the gathering of materials. As we know, this is a central feature in the travelling transect. From the perspective of Davey and Gadamer we have seen that whether or not to gather a material became a

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<sup>133</sup> Davey, "Gadamer's Aesthetics"

significant matter of discussion (“The glass not gathered,” “The asphalt gathered” and “Why it felt wrong to remove the glass”). In fact, a central part of this paper emerged from this dialectic. The authors of the travelling transect state that when sorting materials in relation to sketches and photographs, new connections are often found. Furthermore, the authors state that new knowledge can be found in between the tools of documentation.<sup>134</sup> Here, the addition of a hermeneutic method has aided in the investigation on how these connections are found and created.

### ***PHOTOGRAPHIC LOCALITY***

If we instead look to the tools of documentation, we find an intricate connection to photography. Photography holds a significant role in the understanding of the totality of the site, and even more so in the investigation of its immaterial aspects. If we consider the chapter “Unfolding the photograph” we see that the photograph of Utøya has an ambivalent locality; the depicted island belongs to the site, but at the same time not. Subsequently, there is a confusion in narratives that in turn creates a changeability of site. On the one hand, Regjeringskvartalet stands by itself; on the other, Regjeringskvartalet is connected to Utøya.

As we have seen in the chapter “Unfolding the Photograph”, narratives emerge in relation to the photograph of Utøya. These narratives are not necessarily present at the physical site, but they re-present the site. In other words, they present the site again, but as something different from the physical locality. Yet, the photographic narratives that emerge are strongly connected to the actual site. This way of understanding I call *photographic locality*. The concept acts as a focal point in the discussion of the material and the immaterial landscape.

The photographic locality is to a certain extent material but at the same time an illusion of materials. In other words, the photographic locality exists between the material landscape and its immaterial aspects. For example, the photograph of Utøya is located within the *area of control* at the site of Regjeringskvartalet. However, the depicted landscape is another locality, located somewhere else; it is the island of Utøya. Consequently, the photograph itself (the picture printed on paper) is physically part of Regjeringskvartalet, while the depicted island is

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<sup>134</sup> Braae, Diedrich, and Lee, “The Travelling Transect: Capturing Island Dynamics,” 199.

not. This tells us, that even though the photograph is located within the area of control of the site, the proprietor of Regjeringskvartalet cannot change the actual island of Utøya.

The photograph is an important documentary tool that landscape designers often use in order to establish an understanding of site. For example, in the evaluation after a site visit photographs are often viewed in order to refresh one's memory and to look back at how the site "actually" looked like. However, the site has changed over time while the photograph has not. In other words, what I am actually re-visiting when I look through the photographs from my visit to Regjeringskvartalet is not a real site; it is a *photographic locality*. By using the term, we acknowledge that the location depicted does not exist outside the photograph. That is, the dusk photograph is connected to Utøya, but exists only within that photograph. Therefore, the photographic locality is liminal; it does not exist exclusively in the photograph, nor does it exist exclusively in the real world.

Another aspect of the photographic locality that indicates that it is separate from the physical site is the frozen frame. That is, the surrounding areas are not given, and we are only allowed to see what is within the frames of the picture. In the photograph of Utøya we only see a small piece of space. What happens behind and to the sides of the photographer is out of sight. This indicates that what is within the frame of the camera is under the control of the photographer; what the photographer cannot see he or she cannot control. Furthermore, it is impossible for anyone viewing the photograph at a later time to see more of the scene that played out at the time the shutter closed. Thus, seeing a photograph is also imagining what is outside the frames. Our pre-knowledge in combination with the photograph establishes our understanding of the site. It could be argued that if we are presented with further photographs from the same place and time we could gain a broader understanding of the location. However, our horizon of understanding would merely be pushed to those two photographs in combination. We would have more knowledge, yet we would not be able to see what went on outside the frames of those two photographs.

This hidden *space* happening outside the frames of the photograph can be seen in relation to that of Massey's space. That is, space is all stories come together, something connected to all

the other parts of space, existing in itself as one of those parts.<sup>135</sup> The photograph is a story, connected to all other photographic stories. Furthermore, space holds the potential of all trajectories and even the broken or missing relations create constellations. The hidden world outside of the frames of the photograph is in a way these missing relations. Together, the framed photograph and that outside of the frames creates a constellation, a form of photographic space.

### ***PHOTOGRAPHIC LOCALITY IN THE DIGITAL REALM***

Since the attack there has been several texts and photographs published by various news media. Today, eight years later there are still images and text published relating to the site at various news media sites,<sup>136</sup> but also at social media sites such as Instagram. We have previously discussed photographic locality, a locality that is vague in its materiality and realness. The photographic locality discussed in this paper is printed on paper and hangs at the information center. However, many of the photographs that are presented in media, and almost all photographs shared in social media, are digital.<sup>137</sup> This indicates that the sites of Regjeringskvartalet and Utøya also exist digitally. When a site exists in the digital realm it often consists of a photograph with site-specific qualities (sometimes in combination with text) that is uploaded online in social media or at a web-page. Digital photographs are in many ways similar to photographic localities but are also different. For example, the photographic space is shorter, or more dense, in the digital realm. This densification of space in the digital especially contrasts with the physical world, since in the digital realm a photographic locality can more easily accumulate than in the physical world. For example, when adding photographs of a site at Instagram, the old photographs of the same site remain. Thus, the digital photographic locality begins to accumulate several versions of itself. In contrast, if the physical site is reconstructed the old features of the site are often removed. In the case of Regjeringskvartalet we can see tendencies of this in the decision to demolish Y-blokket. There is simply not enough room in the physical world to both keep the building and satisfy the area-requirements of the new plan. Meanwhile, in the digital realm, Y-blokket will

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<sup>135</sup> Massey, *for space*, 9.

<sup>136</sup> Stjernberg, "Y-blokka – ett norskt trauma."

<sup>137</sup> For example: Maiken Svendsen and Øystein Tronsli Drabløs, "Statsbygg har brukt nesten åtte milliarder på regjeringskvartalet," NRK, accessed Dec. 19, 2019, <https://www.nrk.no/kultur/statsbygg-har-brukt-nesten-atte-milliarder-pa-regjeringskvartalet-1.14787644> .

exist as a site both in its current state and in its future re-designed state. This site-density in the digital space produces interconnections that, among other things, link between new and old. For example, there are hashtags on Instagram that form nodes, which in their turn gather themes and discourses in the form of pictures and photographs.<sup>138</sup> These nodes allow us to easily access all images of a site, and a press of the finger will move you from that node to another linked node. These links are similarly found in the real world, in the form of symbols and narratives embedded in the landscapes. For example, at the site of Regjeringskvartalet, the photograph of Utøya clearly links the two sites together. Furthermore, the pattern of the pavement in front of Høyblokken links Regjeringskvartalet to Stockholm. But the speed with which we can experience a new photographic locality is much faster in the digital realm.

Thus, by observing the digital accumulation of narratives in the digital re-presentations of Regjeringskvartalet we could construct a more complex understanding of the physical site. Subsequently, a complex understanding could give landscape designers access to perspectives, and ways of using the site, that are previously not known.

### ***MAPPING OUT SITE-KNOWLEDGE***

The photograph brings us into the more-than-representational way of thinking. With the words of Burns and Kahn: “representation is not about depicting reality, but about making knowledge.”<sup>139</sup> I agree. In other words, the photograph is in this paper seen as an epistemic documentation, or a construction of knowledge. However, the photograph is not seen merely as a representation of the site, but also as the site *re-presented*. This presenting-again brings forward the photographic locality in its own sense. Furthermore, it tells us that the photographic locality is both about constructing and situating knowledge. The situating ties the (immaterial) knowledge to a (material) site. In other words, the photographic locality is a way of understanding a physical location as the formation of knowledge. This way of thinking also applies to the digital realm. By visiting a web-page with photographs and other information concerning a certain site we are also visiting a version of that site.

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<sup>138</sup> These nodes are constructed by users uploading a photograph to the social-media-service with a written comment that adds a tag, in this case “#Regjeringskvartalet.” Subsequently, other users of Instagram can enter that hashtag in the social-media’s search engine and find all images marked with this tag.

<sup>139</sup> Burns and Kahn, “Why Site Matters,” 288.

The design process does not benefit from seeing site-knowledge as something external being applied on the site. Rather, we should embrace knowledge tied to a physical location as site-knowledge. Burns and Kahn write: “The site provides for a situation that guides what knowers do and how the known responds and can be understood. Site thinking understands knowledge as embedded within specific ways of engaging the world.”<sup>140</sup> The narrative has been a main tool in the approach to gain site knowledge in this paper. The definition of narrative tells us that a story is an event, or an action, while narrative is the retelling of this event. However, Abbott also states that the story comes into being through the narrative.<sup>141</sup> In other words, the story does not exist unless the narrative also exists; a story is not an objective life-event. Thus, we begin to understand that the investigation into site-narratives does not tell us an objective story of any events that took place. In addition, narratives are by their very nature subjective. This tells us that all narratives in this investigation are constructed by me, and as such, when I have investigated them I have gained insights about my own site-knowledge, based on my pre-knowledge and my pre-drawn transect line.

This investigation of the self and into on-site knowledge connects to a question previously posed by Farsø and Henriksson. In relation to site visits they ask: “What is noticed, understood and taken into account, and what is disregarded or even left unnoticed?”<sup>142</sup> The answer that I propose is that the disregarded and unnoticed might be the travelling subject itself. If we relate this to the above discussion on narratives we find that a more critical perspective of ourselves as an influence on sites is a relevant topic (since site-narratives are affected by the subject searching for them). Furthermore, when we consider what Davey calls spectatorial participation we are encouraged to see ourselves not only as spectators, but also as participants. Spectatorial participation brings us closer to the event as we understand that we are part of the playing out of the drama of the site. In contrast, if we rely too heavily on representations of site, we do not experience the site or the events playing out to the same extent. Spectatorial participation points out that what is happening here and now is important. We are not only perceiving site being played out from a critical distance; we are actually part of the playing out of the site.

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<sup>140</sup> Burns and Kahn, “Why Site Matters,” xv.

<sup>141</sup> Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 19.

<sup>142</sup> Farsø & Henriksson, “Defined by deviations,” 7.

### ***THREE INSIGHTS***

As mentioned before, landscape architects are generally well equipped and aware of their surrounding landscapes. In this paper I have tried to elucidate immaterial aspects inherent in sites and landscapes in order to increase and nuance this awareness. Through a case study with accompanying reflections, this paper presents alternative ways of site-thinking in order to open the (already existing) debate on site visits in design for further discussion. In order to facilitate the transfer of knowledge into design practice, I here list three concise insights from this paper.

The (objective) landscape is a physical entity that exists and encompasses us all. From a hermeneutic perspective (critically engaging with oneself, one's pre-knowledge and way of interpreting the world) we find an additional multitude of landscapes, each bound to a subject and his or her way of interacting with the surrounding world. This paper presents an example of this interaction between the author and the specific case. From this example we understand the impossibility of a human subject being able to see the objective landscape. Rather, what the example tells us is that the subject experiences a subjective landscape, filtered through his or her persona and pre-knowledge.

Photography can aid us in more than merely remembering the shape of the physical landscape. It can serve as an entryway into the world of immaterial aspects that affect the landscape. The concepts of photographic locality and digital realm present us with two examples on how sites extend into other realms, outside that of the material. Furthermore, these two concepts might give us an indication to the full extent in which we ourselves are participating in the constructing of sites.

Finally, this paper engages with a site marked by a traumatic event elucidating the lingering traces and memories. Since landscape designers are closely engaged with these loaded sites we hold a responsibility to reflect and engage with these traces and memories. In other words, landscape designers have a responsibility to care for our collective landscape.

## ***FUTURE RESEARCH***

This paper presents several lines of enquire into future research. Following are a few paths that I would like to engage with in the future.

A central aspect of this paper is the combination of the travelling transect method with a theoretical hermeneutic understanding based on Davey and Gadamer. This synthesis present new possibilities and perspectives on landscape visits. However, it is important that this approach is looked at critically, in order to more fully understand its benefits and shortcomings. Following is a brief critical discussion on the method-theory-synthesis of this paper, that hopefully opens up for a debate and future research on the synthesis.

First, this paper is based on Gadamer's texts as well as a reading of these texts by Davey. In order to gain a more precise understanding of aesthetics and hermeneutics in combination with the travelling transect, a more in depth reading of Gadamer and other theorists in the field of hermeneutics and aesthetics would be productive. The second parameter that could be looked into in more detail is the fact that hermeneutics originally is designed in order to interpret text and that Gadamer's aesthetic hermeneutics is primarily aimed towards art. Interpreting landscape is not identical to interpreting a text. Language as a symbol is different, in a way more fixated, in contrast to the landscape as a symbol. Thus, by building a more extensive understanding of hermeneutics and aesthetics the synthesis with the travelling transect would be more precise, leading to a more complex understanding of the site.

The concepts that Gadamer and Davey write about, Play, Festival and Symbol, could be more extensively investigated. For example, the concept of time is discussed through the festival. Time is a complex concept that contains many aspects that would be of interest in order to understand a site. One of the aspects of time that is lacking in this paper is investigating and understanding the site over time; that is, visiting and revisiting the site at different times of day, different seasons of the year, etc. Taking more time to investigate the site would surely lead to a deeper understanding of both the site itself as well as the synthesis of method and theory.

Another aspect of the festival that could be investigated more thoroughly is the sense of community, of standing together and how this affects the experience and understanding of the

site. Therefore, a social scientific investigation looking at how people act and communicate at the site would be interesting. Bringing a group with the purpose of making interviews and hearing about other peoples' perspectives and understandings of the site would most likely also yield results beneficial for the method theory synthesis.

It would also be interesting to investigate further if the understanding of the immaterial aspects of a site are important in not just loaded sites but in everyday landscapes as well. I am inclined to believe that immaterial aspects are of special importance when landscape architects design landscapes that serve philosophical-existential functions. However, this view would need to be supported by further studies.

Finally, as this paper has argued, immaterial aspects of sites are often overlooked in the design process. The site investigated in this paper has proved to hold several immaterial aspects that play a major role in the understanding of the site. Thus, it would be interesting to further investigate how this deeper understanding of immaterial aspects of a site affects a design proposal. In other words, it would be interesting to take the material gathered by the travelling transect and Gadamer and Davey's hermeneutics into a design proposal.

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