ruin s of wilder ness

the sensual spaces in between

Sanna Jonsson Buttery
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abstract

Ruins and derelict places have since long fascinated and attracted humans. With my starting point in the wild vegetation and the spontaneous activities taking place on derelict land and in industrial ruins, I explore with help from the theoretical sociology, what creates not only this fascination but also fear. The purpose of the thesis is to explore and exemplify how the industrial ruin as a place outside the restrictions and control as well as design intentions of modern society can be used as an inspiration in a landscape architecture context.

The modern city consists of areas and places with a well defined purpose. A piece of derelict land or a disused building is instead ambiguous, undefined and open for new purposes. However described in negative terms, these places are often perceived as places of mystery and magic.

Spaces with structures and systems of order which differ from the conventional systems challenge our perception of reality. They question an order we take for granted, suggesting that there might be other possibilities. This might be unsettling, but also creates a place free from conventions and social rules.

The vegetation is an important symbol of the new or alternative order prevailing on derelict land, which contributes to the chaos that invites the spontaneous use of these spaces. This chaos is also the key to the activities that take place here. The lack of order and control invites physical challenges and play without thought of consequences. The derelict space is a setting for adventurous play, flea markets and privacy, but also for parties and other activities beyond the law.

The industrial ruins symbolise places where civilisation has failed, which is the reason to the attraction, but also to a feeling of danger. Introducing design features that encourage more conventional outdoor activities, without restraining the existing ones, can be a way of including the industrial ruin in the park structure of the city.

sammanfattning

Förfallna byggnader och ödemark har länge fascinerat och attraherat människor. Med utgångspunkt i den vilda vegetationen och de spontana aktiviteter som övergiven industrimark hyser, undersöker jag med hjälp av den teoretiska sociologin vad denna fascination beror på och vilken funktion dessa platser fyller i det moderna västerländska samhället. Målet med uppsatsen är att ge argument för och exempel på hur industriruinens oplanerade karaktär kan användas som inspiration in ett landskapsarkitektoniskt sammanhang.

Medan staden i övrigt består av områden och platser med ett väldefinierat syfte, är en byggnad eller en yta som övergetts ambivalent, odefinierad och öppen för nya användningar. Den beskrivs ofta i negativa termer, men upplevs ändå ofta som full av mystik och spänning.

Platser med innehåll och struktur som skiljer sig från gängse konventioner och omgivningar är beskrivna med olika termer, till exempel liminala platser, heterotopia och representationella platser. Sådana förhållanden utmanar vårt sätt att organisera vår värld, och upplevs därför som fria från konventioner och regler.

Vegetationen är en viktig symbol för den nya ordning som råder på övergiven mark och bidrar till det kaos som inbjuder till den spontana användningen av dessa platser. Detta kaos är också nyckeln till de aktiviteter som uppstår, eftersom bristen på ordning och kontroll inbjuder till lek och fysiska utmaningar utan tanke på konsekvenser. Den övergivna platsen är en plats för äventyrslek, marknader och ostörd ensamhet, men också för fester och andra aktiviteter som gränsar till det illegala.

Industriruiner symboliserar platser där civilisationen har fallerat, och däri ligger attraktionen men också rädslan för dessa platser. Att tillföra design som främjar en mer konventionell användning utan att begränsa den befintliga karaktären och användningen kan vara ett sätt att återföra industriruinen till samhället som en del av grönstrukturen.

contents

The modern society is paradoxical. It is an environment promising on one level adventure, joy, power and transformation of the self and the world, but on the same time on another level modernity, by nuclear power, pollution and war fare threatens everything we have and we are.

Modernity is also struggling with discontinuities between the increasing reliance on reason, logic of industrialisation and power of the nation-state and the personal quest for freedom and self realisation. Simply put, Modernity is marked by the conflict between the increasing control, standardisation and surveillance required by growing populations and global systems, and the freedom of the individual and realisation of the self. It is argued that modernity is unable to settle these conflicts between its commitments to liberty and to discipline.

A typical modern phenomenon is the contrast tension within humans, who have been uprooted from their traditional communal setting, transformed into individuals in the urban setting, and cast into a position of autonomous subjects of action. To these humans, society is experienced as a daily constraint upon and ultimately the outer limit to their individual will. The paradox is that the individual never can be fully at home and at peace in society, but neither can he or she live outside it. The study of society is thus the study of the tension between society's capacity to enable and its capacity to constrain (Kuper and Kuper, 1996).

background

I went to England with a vague idea about writing on the picturesque of the romantic landscape parks. As I arrived in Sheffield in northern England, my topic changed. At first sight the change can seem radical, but with hindsight there are several points of connection.

Sheffield is located in the part of England where the industrial revolution started. Rich in iron ore, the city became heavily industrialised in steel industry. When this industry declined, Sheffield, like several cities in north England, was left with a large amount of derelict industrial space.

Arriving in Sheffield, I was immediately seduced by the post-industrial ruins scattered over the city, so tempting behind fences, barbed wires and signs of "access prohibited". Brick, rusty steel, broken glass and burned wood in grass, flowering meadows and bush vegetation among constructions and broken concrete slabs. In the late summer's sun, the derelict land and ruins were flaming with colours; from red hot terracotta to the darkest burgundy and bluish greens.

No matter the size and material of the surrounding fences, there was always a way in. Someone had cut the barbed wire, bent the wire net to crawl under. Occasionally even the metal bars were bent apart, leaving a wide enough gap for a person to squeeze through.

I too, squeezed through. When I entered, it was like I had entered another world, where everything felt new and exciting. It was a space where I had all the time in the world, to explore, look close, touch. All colours felt deeper; patterns and textures were different somehow. It was more than just the beauty of the overgrown constructions – or if the overgrown constructions contained more beauty than just what met the eyes? Little things normally familiar enough to be ignored, like cigarette ends, fallen leaves, ox-eyed daisies, it all felt exciting, worth exploring. But also strange, scary almost, like I was watched, an intruder.

What is it that makes these places between nature and manmade awake these feelings of fascination but also of danger? This ambiguous attraction, which is stronger than many feelings you ever get for a designed space, where does it come from, and why is it important?

When I started to study the subject, my theory was that the major part of the attraction of the sites was the fact that they were overgrown with vegetation, and that the feeling of excitement when visiting originated in the encountering with the wilderness in terms of wild vegetation. To recreate this feeling in a design context was, in my head, very much down to the creation of the visually picturesque.

However, as I kept on reading I realised that it was far from this easy. The major part of the attraction seemed to originate in the wilderness of the site, in terms of land that is not controlled by society and the freedom this creates.

purpose

What is it that makes these spaces of dereliction between nature and man-made awake these feelings of fascination but also of danger. This ambiguous attraction, which is stronger than many feelings you ever get for a designed space, where does it come from, and why is it important?

The purpose of this essay is to provide arguments for and proposals to a development where beauty is based on an enhancement of uncertainty and existing informal uses, rather than on traditional visual beauty. It is a statement in a discussion that is largely overlooked by an architect and designer tradition which is often too focused on the creation of visually appealing public space.

aim

The essay is divided into five chapters, of which the first four are discussing the existing conditions of the derelict sites, considering their wild character the key quality. The aim of this examining part of the essay is to explore the qualities of the wilderness; exploring the purposes of space with no designated purpose. By describing the existing character and qualities of the derelict industrial space and the activities taking place there, my aim is to highlight the importance of spaces of otherness for free, informal activities.

The first four chapters of the essay thus discuss the following questions:

1. What are the qualities perceived in land with no formal value? Which are the experienced values of the void?

The fifth chapter consists of conceptual design entries as a part of the discussion. I here discuss my findings and explore how the post-industrial ruin could be made a public space with a broader use by enhancing the existing qualities with focus on the nature and the informal activities.

2. How to reinstate the wilderness void of the industrial ruin into the city, without it loosing its wild character and integrity?

My aim in this part of the essay is to, with a few conceptual examples, suggest a development based on the uncertainty of the void and its existing, dynamic activities. By realising the qualities of the post-industrial site as a setting for a multitude of uses, rather than for traditional visual beauty, the aim of this part of the essay is design solutions which do not limit the opportunities for alternative uses.

essay disposition

The first chapter describes the modern city in which the post-industrial ruin, or derelict space, is an anomaly. The modern, capitalist society shuns places outside the flow of production, places which, like the ruin, are an endpoint and an unproductive space.

In the second chapter, I explore a variety of alternative spaces. These are, like the ruin, spaces of otherness due to their undefined, dynamic character and alternative systems of order.

The third chapter describes the vegetation, which is the most obvious symbol of the distinction of the post-industrial ruin.

In the fourth chapter I describe the existing post-industrial ruin as a setting for various activities. The traces of uses you see in these places, tell you that the site is used for various informal activities that are removed from public space, due to a character that does not fit in the organised modern society. Thus the description "wilderness" can be used in a wider meaning; a description of uncontrolled nature but also of activities beyond the control of society.

The fifth chapter is a discussion based on my findings and research method.

research design

This essay is the result of a mainly desk based research. Below I explain my choice of literature, and describing sketching as a way of exploring the sites I visited.

literature

Coming from Sweden, urban England is a heavily exploited, densely built and an extremely paved environment. The limited amount of urban outdoor space without commercial purpose made the city feel even more commercial and intense. I was immediately struck by the amount of surveillance cameras, gates and fences. Signs with warnings and restrictions but also advertisements shouted from any direction.

The ruins were an oasis in this otherwise commercial, privatised world. They were a green space, forbidden, unorganised and secret. Compared with the hard, bare urban public space, the ruins contained an amount of details that were irresistibly baroque. The beauty of these places were entirely unintentional, a result of structural changes followed by time and natural processes. It fascinated me that the spaces without intentional design were the by far most interesting.

Within the more philosophical branches of sociology I found literature discussing topics of control and surveillance as well as capitalism as main processes shaping our modern society. Literature by for example Lefebvre (1991) and Foucault (1967) bordered – to say the least – on political philosophy, but were employed in a sociological and also city planning context by other authors in my sources. The sociological literature also discussed the absence of nature on a structural level.

There was, I believed, a strong connection between the perception of primary wilderness – which is the wilderness consisting of nature not visibly affected by human activity – and the secondary wilderness which is land that has been cultivated or built upon, but which then has fallen into dereliction and returned to wilderness. I based this theory on the intense, wild atmosphere of these sites created by the uncontrolled vegetation. When I started studying, the discussion of the derelict land as opposed to culture and civilisation reinforced my theory.

This connection between primary and urban wilderness led me to another field of literature, which investigated people's perception and preferences of wilderness in terms of natural and semi-natural settings. Here I found the works by for example Rachel and Stephen Kaplan, Catherine Ward-Thompson and Andreas Keil.

An article that was very inspiring and that set me off on the topic in the first place, was Anna Jorgensen and Marian Tylecote's article "Ambivalent Landscape – Wilderness in the Urban Interstices" (2007). That article, together with Tim Edensor's book "Industrial Ruins Space Aesthetics and Materiality" (2005) was the starting point of the studies for this essay.

To find relevant articles, I used the Sheffield University database MUSE. Keywords I used were "wilderness", "urban wilderness", "wild", "derelict" and "post-industrial" in various combinations. For non-electronic sources I used the Sheffield University Library and their search engine STAR.

illustrations

I started this project by visiting post-industrial ruins and derelict sites in various parts of Sheffield. As a way to get to know the places, I did sketches on site. The sketches were an important part of the project, both for me to understand the sites, and later to communicate my ideas in the essay.

The originals were monochrome, done with pen on white paper. The drawings in the essay are based on these, but coloured to enhance the atmosphere. It is through the illustrations I visually describe the sites, complementing the written descriptions in communicating the richness of the sites, which make colours and textures essential.

However the colouring and painting are done after visits on site and with help of photographs, sketches and paintings are a relatively free medium allowing the artist to interpret his or her personal perceptions.

All photos and illustrations by the author.

limitations

This part briefly describes subjects which are highly related to this essay or figured frequently in my literature, but which I had to exclude in this project. Many of the subjects are very interesting, and I hope I get the chance to explore them further.

derelict landscape design

There are many projects where the visual character of derelict industrial land has been used and enhanced with a stunning visual result. Duisburg Nord and the High Line in New York are two examples. Often, however, the "re-designing" and "tidying up" in order to make a more accessible conventional public space out of derelict land – unintentionally or intentionally – result in the elimination of the wild character, turning it into a setting to watch, but not to enter. A typical example is Natur-Park Sud-gelande in Berlin, where the visitors only are allowed to enjoy the park from raised walkways. This is to protect the park as a nature reserve, but drastically limits the use.

For this project I was exploring the derelict spaces seen as without value, focusing on them as spaces of urban wilderness. I excluded the aesthetics discussion, in preference for a discussion of purpose and structural use of design.

biodiversity

In this essay I am stressing the importance of vegetation as a link between the primary wilderness and the urban, secondary wilderness of the derelict industrial spaces. There are both physical similarities and symbolic parallels between these two types of wilderness.

However, the fascination of the post-industrial ruins is not only constituted by the wild vegetation, but by the change in power relation between nature and culture that the vegetation symbolises.

I am not going to explain in depth the biological systems of the derelict sites but mainly treat the vegetation as of symbolic value. There is however a lot of studies concerning fallow land, brownfields and wasteland as wildlife habitat.

european perceptions of wilderness

Associations and perceptions of wilderness and the natural environment vary across the world. So does the symbolism of ruins. My sources were focusing on the society of the western world, and the environment I was studying is situated in Europe. Thus I chose to discuss my subject from a west European perspective.

But also within a nationally homogenous group the perception and appreciation of wilderness, natural and semi-natural settings may vary, depending on age, gender, educational background etc. Definitions of what constitutes nature can differ, too. An article exploring the perceptions of wilderness in the Netherlands was for example de Groot and van den Born (2003). Habron (1998) discussed the Scottish perceptions of wild landscapes. Also Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) discussed this, along with several of the authors in the anthology "Wild Urban Woodlands" edited by Kowarik and Körner (2005). This anthology also in a very relevant way highlighted the complications of the character of the urban wilderness between naturalness and artificiality.

representations in art

Ruins have been an important symbol in the western society for more than two centuries (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007). By virtue of their strong symbolic character, they are figuring in several genres of art. However, I chose not to focus on their frequent appearance in art and poetry, but on what they symbolise which is a reason to their popularity.

Heterotopia, surprises and unexpected juxtapositions challenging our settled order, as discussed by Michel Foucault (1967), was interpreted within surrealism. The Surrealists was an art movement originating in the activities of Dadaism during the World War I in the early 1920's. Foucault, through his exploration of the relation between words and things, was linked to this group which included famous artists like Magritte, Matisse and Dali.

The Surrealist movement and their interpretations of heterotopia amongst other, was a subject I hope I get a chance to study further.

the situationists

The *Situationist International* was a group of radical artists and architects founded in 1957. Their ideas were characterised by a Marxist and surrealist perspective on aesthetics and politics, without separation between the two. They advocated experiences of life alternative to those admitted by the capitalist order.

The ideas of the situationists are related to my subject. To study them and their ideas would have been very interesting, but unfortunately this has to wait to another time.

gender

Gender was a recurring theme in my literature. In the discussion on human relation to nature, gender was frequently brought up, both concerning our own human nature and the nature "out there". The relation between nature and humans is seen as distinctly defined by gender, which was clearly explained in literature such as Giddens (1991), Urry (2000) and Giblett (1996).

Architecture and the design of public space are historically male dominated, since men traditionally were active outside the home. The public space was not intended for women. In some of my sources, this unequal power over the public space was argued to be the reason to a public space becoming show cases for power and domination rather than places for meetings and encounters (Cuper and Miessen, 2002). Literature which discussed this was for example Wilson (1992). In discussions on the Other, the Other is sometimes defined as the minority. Feminist writers, like for example Simone de Beauvoir (1988), claims that in a male dominated world, this minority is the women, who then also get the role of the Other.

Despite the gender discussion being such a frequent part of the discourse on public space as well as the otherness, it will not be further discussed here. However, it is an interesting – and highly important – subject that I would like to study further.

definitions of terms and expressions

The purpose of this list is to clarify the meanings of terms and expression as used in this project. The words in the list are subjectively chosen as adequate for the essay, which means that the list somewhat also can be seen as a description of the content of the essay.

The selection of terms is based on the findings.

Adventure playground

A playground based on loose parts. The adventure playground was originally called "junk playground", and is inspired by the play facilities of post-industrial and post-war sites (Norman, 2003).

Adventurous play

Physically expressive play activities in outdoor settings could be said to be carnivalesque activities under more ordered circumstances. Through adventurous play activities children and young people push their boundaries. Exploring their limits by challenging and sometimes over-reaching, they learn their own abilities but also to calculate risks (Keil, 2005).

Beauty, beautiful

Beauty is harmonic and conceived in the shape of the object (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007). It is perceived within human understanding and culture (Rotenberg, 2005).

Capitalism

By capitalism means a system of commodity involving competitive product markets. Capitalism leads to standardisation of objects in order to maximise production (Giddens, 1991). Generally the definition of capitalism is influenced by Marx, who in his definition also stated that capitalism is a mode of production with basically two classes of producers: the capitalists who owned the factory, and the labourers who did not have anything (Kuper and Kuper, 1996).

Carnival

A medieval festivity celebrating the grotesque body as opposed to the controlled hierarchical society. In the carnival there was no spectators or actors, but everybody were participants (Bakhtin, 1968).

Carnivalesque, carnivalesque activities

Carnivalesque is a term coined by Mikhail Bakhtin (1968) referring to a mode that with chaos and humour liberates the assumptions of who is dominating and who is inferior.

In this essay carnivalesque is used to describe activities carried out for the sake of the activities themselves, without intention of a measurable result or thought of the consequences. Originating in the freedom of the carnival, this is activities and situations where the social hierarchies and ready-made truths in everyday life are over-turned.

Commodification

"The act of turning something into, or treating as, a (mere) commodity". A *commodity* in turn is "an article or raw material which can be bought and sold, esp. a product as opposed to a service" (COD, 1995).

Derelict land, derelict space

What I call derelict land or derelict space defines an area which is not in formal use.

The reason for the disuse of the site can for example be that it is awaiting planning permission. But it can also be legal or economic reasons behind; building restrictions or simply that the site is not profitable enough for exploitation, despite sometimes situated close to the city centre.

As I have not done any historical investigation of the sites I visit, I define all sites with no obvious signs of industrial use as *derelict land* or *derelict space*.

Hegemony of vision

In modern society the vision is the highest of the senses. The popularity of photography and the focus on the visually beautiful are connected to the hegemony of vision (Urry, 2000).

Heterotopia

Heterotopia is a space which is distinct from its surroundings due to content, structure or other character. Heterotopia challenges our way of thinking due to a juxtaposition of objects or concepts that do not belong together according to our usual way of ordering (Hetherington, 1997).

Institutions of surveillance

This means for example supervisory control of populations and visible supervision, such as CCTV-cameras, but also the use of information to coordinate social activities (Giddens, 1991). Media, such as newspapers, television and IT gain an increasingly important role as people's eyes and ears but also as a guide and a prolonged arm of the state as well as market driven forces. Michel Foucault stated that surveillance is:

> the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics, that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit complex, form of power, which has as its target populations (cited Abercrombie et al, 2000:141)

Juxtaposition

The combination or arranging of objects. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1995) *to juxtapose* is to place (side by side).

Less purified space

Undefined space with ambiguous character. Purpose and content are not possible to classify or order (Edensor, 2005).

Liminality

Shields (1991) describes liminality as an "in between-ness" designating "a moment of discontinuity in the social fabric, in social space and in history" (Shields 1991:83).

Loose space

A space where the purpose is defined by the users, or a space that invites people to themselves appropriate it without influence by authorities. Loose space is dynamic and often changes with the people using it (Franck and Stevens, 2007).

Mastery play

One of the sixteen types of play as defined by play theory (Hughes, 2006). The purpose of mastery play is to explore mastery of the elements. By playing with water, fire, earth and air in a controlled environment the child learns responsibility and abilities required to handle the elements.

Modernity

Modernity refers to a historical period beginning with a series of cultural, social and economic changes. Some argue that modernity started with the rise and spread of capitalism between 14th and 17th centuries. Others argue that it started with the religious changes taking place in the 15th century (Abercrombie et al, 2000).

There are also variations in the definitions of modernity. Giddens (1991) employs a few key words to describe modern society: *Industrialism, capitalism, institutions of surveillance, expert systems* and the *removal of social institutions*.

In the *Social Science Encyclopedia* (Kuper and Kuper, 1996) modernity is distinguished similarly yet slightly different, by three features:

1. Culturally: a reliance on reason and experience which conditioned the growth of science and scientific consciousness, secularisation and instrumental rationality.

2. Based on the growth of industrial society, social mobility and the consolidation of the nation-state.

3. On a personal level modernity fostered a conception of the individual as free, autonomous and self controlled. The self was also seen as reflexive, which means that the individual examine his or hers own behaviour and alter it according to the conclusions drawn (Kuper and Kuper, 1996).

According to the *Penguin Dictionary of Sociology* (Abercrombie et al, 2000) it is also argued that fragmentation of experience and a commodification and rationalisation of all aspects of life is a result of modernity. This dictionary distinguishes industrial, capitalist economies with a democratic political organisation and a social structure founded on divided social classes as typical for modern society.

Order

Order is a term describing the classification or arrangement of objects according to a system. This system could be for example design conventions, but also indoors-outdoors, natural-artificial or moral concepts such as right or wrong.

Other, otherness

The definition of the "Other" is what defines or even constitutes the self, but also groups, nations and other cultural units (Watson and Hill, 2000). In psychoanalysis the unknown and uncertain but also the subconscious is the ego's Other (Cashmore, 1996)

Various philosophical queries yield various notions of the Otherness, such as *the implicit* according to Husserl, or *the unfulfilled possibilities* according to Marcuse (Cashmore, 1996), both suitable descriptions of the Other of my essay, where the Other is used as a term describing spaces with a character opposite of the certain and defined.

Picturesque

The first aesthetic ideal to suggest that beauty was subjective. The picturesque became a mediator between the two extremes of the Sublime and the Beautiful, as an attempt to address the Sublime (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007).

Post-industrial ruins

In this essay this is all derelict land with remains of industrial structures, buildings and other constructions on it.

The majority of my sites are of this type.

Primary wilderness

"Primary" wilderness is the original wilderness "outside civilisation". Historically this concept is charged with negative feelings and a fear originating in times when human order was inferior to nature. Wilderness hosted threats to human homes and cattle, as well as human lives (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007).

Primary wilderness indicates nature which is not controlled or interfered by humans. There are however a few complications, as pollution, global warming and other indirect processes make virtually all nature affected by humans in one way or another. Also, most nature that is perceived as wilderness is found in nature reserves – areas which are saved on purpose and thereby a part of the control of human society.

I employ the term primary wilderness to define nature outside civilisation, without visible human interventions.

Purified space

Controlled space with one, clearly defined purpose (Edensor, 2005).

Representational space

According to Lefebvre (1991) all space is produced and reproduced by the forces of society. He describes representational space as space lived and formed by the people using it, resisting interference from other, mainly capitalist, forces.

Secondary wilderness

Secondary wilderness is an area which once was cultivated by humans, but which through for example dereliction has returned to wilderness (Konijnendijk, 2005). A typical example is the nature of derelict industrial sites, but also spontaneous reforestation of the countryside.

Semi-public, semi-private space

This is a space that is not fully public or wholly private. Examples are shopping centres and theme parks, but also cafes and cinemas. Typical semi-private and semi-public space are private areas to which the public gain entry by paying, either with a ticket or by spending money while inside. This indirectly excludes people without money (Kupers and Miessen, 2002).

Privatisation of public space leads to another type of semi-private space. A common phenomenon in the USA is an arrangement where the government of economic reasons let a trust take over the maintenance of a public space, for example a park. In return the trust can apply their interventions and regulations on the space. Central Park in New York is an example, where a public park is turned into a semi-private space surrounded by restrictions of behaviour and opening times (Low and Smith, 2006).

Sensual, sensuality

Sensual; "of or depending of the senses only and not on the intellect or spirit; carnal, fleshly". Sensual could also intend "given to the pursuit of sensual pleasures" (COD, 1995).

Sensuality; "the gratification of the senses" (COD, 1995).

Sociology

Sociology is the study of the development, structure and functioning of human society (COD, 1995). According to the *Penguin Dictionary of Sociology* (Abercrombie et al, 2000), sociology integrates the findings of economics, politics and psychology, as social phenomena are not separate but constituted by the intersections of economics, geography, history and psychology. Sociology attempts to find the broader social context in which individuals and events emerge and take place. It can be regarded as a new form of consciousness, particularly sensitive to the dilemmas of a secular, industrial civilisation (Abercrombie et al, 2000).

Sociology is a broad discipline. In my case the sociological literature tended towards philosophical and political thinking and theories.

Sublime

An experience beyond human understanding, and thus marked by struggle and disharmony (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007). The sublime was only to be perceived in the wilderness, as culture was considered unable to produce an environment or object of this magnitude (Rotenberg, 2005).

Tabula rasa, terra nullius

A clean slate, a tablet where all writing is erased (COD, 1995).

Traditionally wilderness and derelict land are seen as a tabula rasa, a space without value. The reason for this is claimed the rise of money society. But even before that, interpretations of early Christian doctrines of medieval times argued that a space not in use by humans was an affront to civilisation and therefore meant to be eradicated (Jorgenssen and Tylecote, 2007).

Theory of loose parts

This is the theory that adventure playgrounds are based on. Loose parts are more stimulating than fixed structures, as they are flexible and therefore have more possibilities for different types of play. Loose parts let the children themselves figure out and build their own play structures (White and Hoecklin, 2010)

Urban wilderness

Urban wilderness is a secondary wilderness, located within the city.

Void

A vacant, empty space (COD, 1995). The meaning of the word is similar to terra nullius, tabula rasa.

Weakly classified space

See less purified space.

Wilderness

I am defining wilderness in a slightly widened meaning than it was stated in the 1964 United States Wilderness Act. This Wilderness Act is the first statutory definition of (primary) wilderness, which was described as:

> an area where the Earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain (cited Habron, 1998:46)

Man himself is a visitor who does not remain describes a relation between wilderness and the human individual, suggesting that in the wilderness the power relation between man and nature is different from the one prevailing within human society.

However, when not indicating the primary wilderness, I employ wilderness in a wider meaning than the 60's Wilderness Act. Thus I would like to deeper explain my interpretation of the sentence *where the Earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man*.

If *by man* in this context is interpreted as *by modern society*, then *untrammelled by man* suggests that the wilderness is an area beyond control of the modern society but also beyond the control of the human individual. In my definition of wilderness, its freedom also includes humans.

Our lives are arranged in and around a society that is so vast, and yet so meticulously planned, that it is perceived almost to exist beyond time. It has been for ever and is never to end. It is built out of materials that do not age, containing everlasting goods and timeless services. Maintained and polished, it is beyond change.

And then there are places where time still exists. Places where it is possible to see the mortality of our society – and of ourselves. Places where time is visible, where it is still allowed to go towards an end, and beyond the end, maybe a beginning. These places are still allowed to have their flaws, their secrets and their chaos. They are places of darkness, uncertainty and smells. But they are also places of light, frailty and colours. And that is why they are irresistible. From time to time we want some darkness to stare into, a blind spot to fantasise around.

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I the pre-packaged city

This chapter describes the modern city in which the post-industrial ruin, or derelict land, is an anomaly. It is a city that strives towards commodification and clearly defined, single-purpose spaces which are easily controlled and maintained. The capitalist society shuns places outside the flow of production. These are places which, like the ruin, are unproductive.

1.1 the perfect control of public space

Modernity is striving towards homogeneity. Areas, or even whole cities, are designed to appeal to a certain type of customer, be it of a certain style, age, gender, class or economic group. The identity of the area is expressed through a certain design, for example modern, ecological, traditional... Within the area, materials, shapes, furniture, colour schemes are chosen to express this particular identity and give a harmonic and authentic impression (Edensor, 2005). In the same way the parks symbolise nature, a tamed and pruned version, easy to handle, easy to maintain (Giddens, 1991). Nature and park nature is generally treated as a background, a visual backdrop for situations and happenings (White and Hoecklin, 2010).

These examples, like the indoor shopping centre, are examples of what you could call a "pre-packaged" experience. This experience should be nice, easy and tranquil. Everybody should feel happy, harmonic and not meet any unpleasant surprises. Shortly: it should be perfect, flawless. Planning and design are focused on safety and visual appeal (Ward-Thompson, 2002).

The experience of this city is smoothened by deodorisation and restrictions of sounds and noise. Fly-posters are prohibited and graffiti illegal and hastily washed away. Planned and well manicured sights between facades and other surfaces which are all kept new and fresh. Together with the tastefully designed signs, reminding you of what this particular place is designated for, this creates a city devoid of sensual experiences, surprises and social interconnection (Edensor, 2005).

1.2 perfection design

A garden for example, or an apartment, that is considered stylish, homely or beautiful, is like the city area arranged according to a prevailing convention of design. Design – whether it is minimalistic, kitsch or Victorian style – is a regime of ordering, and hence requires element placed according to a certain schedule (Edensor, 2005). Features are placed in a particular order; balanced; not to close, not to far, not too bright colours. In the display of a shop window, elements are assembled to strike certain chords and associations within the potential customer. They are placed in a certain way, so that to erase any visible incompatibility or impossible combination – disharmony considered disturbing (Edensor, 2005).

According to the current design schedule, objects – as well as people – belong in their right place. To prevent objects and people from uncontrollably mingling, and to create an environment where they belong, space is being divided into different areas, defined by similarities of contents, structures, people, activities… This is where you live, that is where you work… This is a street; that is a park; this is a square... The public space becomes a sequence of showcases, places for manifestations rather than places for encountering, meeting and interacting (Cupers and Miessen, 2002).

The "fear of disharmony", be it in the form of a homogenous housing area or a neat park, also affects people. A varied mix of different styles and types, gender and ages, together with a mix of unexpected and anticipated situations and activities, stimulates change, openness and acceptance as people grow used to it. It encourages accepting of difference and variation. A homogenous and static environment works the other way. The purified space hosts intolerance towards the mixing of unlike categories (Edensor, 2005). It makes people fear change, and becomes a place where behaviour outside the normal is condemned and outsiders treated as intruders (Franck and Stevens, 2007).

The perfectionism creates space that leaves very little room for spontaneous change. The showcases are finished. Sometimes this type of space is called "purified space". Its opposite, the "weakly classified space", is often described in negative words; it is dangerous, chaotic or dirty. The "purified" spaces have clear boundaries and a clear purpose. They are static. Unintended use of the space, like skating, or spontaneous additions or changes like graffiti or guerrilla gardening are easily spotted and removed (Edensor, 2005).

An example is the nature within the city. It is represented by parks, pocket-parks, trees, bushes and flowerbeds, which are an expression of what urban nature should be like, handed down for generations (Rink, 2005). The intensely maintained park, with its gravel paths, lawns and flowerbeds is kept static, and all unintended attempts of change are prevented or removed.

It is easier to keep the park neat if it is surrounded by hard surfaces or buildings, than if it is situated in the middle of a forest. Nevertheless, without maintenance, the grass will start to spread into the paths and flowerbeds, blurring the edges, and after a while turning the flowerbed into a meadow. People walk across the lawn, crossing the paths. Children play on the lawn, running to and fro, riding their bikes causing the gravel to be transported off the paths, starting blending with the grass. The grass will be worn, and bare patches of soil mixed with gravel will appear, ruining the distinction between lawn and path. This is a state that provokes the sense of order – the perfectionism – and it is perceived as messy, untidy and a shame of its neighbourhood. With its blurred boundaries and less defined purposes, it has turned into a "weakly classified space".

Light from a shop window casting shadows on the pavement.
Stockholm, Sweden

1.3 perfected space and its counterpart

City officials and property investors have similar interests in homogenous, predictable open space and well-ordered environments, easy to build and maintain as well as to survey. The aim to arrange and order the chaotic experiences of the real city until everything is visible, is inherited from a Godly, all-seeing perspective, first manifested in the city planning as axis and endless perspectives of the Baroque (Cupers and Miessen, 2002).

The commodification of capitalism strives towards standardisation to simplify production. This creates a world of standard objects – be it a wide range to choose from – within every area, from the grid layout of urban quarters to the contents of playgrounds, the IKEA furniture in your apartment and your clothes (Giddens, 1991). The commodified building blocks, franchise chains of shops, restaurants, hotels and standardised shopping centres create an environment where all parts are replaceable. New, timeless, national or global, they have no history connecting them to this particular city or town. This gradually creates an environment devoid of a sense of place. It becomes a *non-place*, an environment that could be anywhere, whenever (Cupers and Miessen, 2002).

The single purpose, purified spaces do not have any visible connection to each other. The only link is their existence as a result of their own, individual success. This is not an outcome of the spaces working together as a whole. Instead of creating an area of coherence, where the spaces smoothly run into each other or overlap, the area becomes a pattern of small, individually defined singularities, none of them depending on the surrounding units and easily replaced (Cupers and Miessen, 2002). Instead of allowing a smooth flow throughout the whole area, a movement through the grid or pattern of single purpose units is channelled through the controlled paths and links between the spaces.

But the gaps and interstices which are created between the perfected spaces allow other, undefined spaces to be produced or to remain. Thus the production of homogenous, purified space bears the production of its counterpart, the smooth, weakly defined space, within. Spaces that the order has excluded constantly emerge between the spaces of power and control (Cupers and Miessen, 2002).

1.4 forces of the choreographed city

Outside our home, we are a part of a collective pattern, which resembles the choreography of a theatre. The public space is a theatre set, on which specific social and architectural ideas can be applied (Cupers and Miessen, 2002). The people moving through the public space resemble an ensemble performing individually or in group. Adopted stylised postures, gestures and facial expressions become a performance together with clothes and other accessories. The spaces of the city become stages, and depending of the nature of the stage and the people there, we are encouraged to different behaviour, or if you like: different roles (Edensor, 2005).

However the architecture of public space is affected by the current political or architectural streams, through lived practice "space" is produced and reproduced as "human space". When we follow our repetitive patterns in the city, the pattern of routines that are tried and found socially approved, over time becomes concretised in the built environment, sedimented onto, or eroded into, the urban landscape (Shields, 1991).

The human space is affected by the physical urban space. When the public space becomes more standardised, the input becomes limited. Less details to produce speed up the production process. With fewer details, people do not get distracted which also accelerates the flow. Fewer unexpected happenings offer less opening for spontaneous talks, less reasons to stop and watch. Or stop and think. Less unused space, means less people hanging about slowing the flow. Limited possible routes, offer less chances to get off track (Edensor, 2005).

This becomes a circle: the faster we move, the less we have time to look. To get a message across, it has to be clearly visible and simple. What is subtle or partly hidden is blurring the view and has to be erased.

The modern city is a glossy, right angled castle of control and purity always moving forward, never stopping, never looking back. Youth. Beauty. Trimmed, well defined, polished and smooth. Young, new. Newer, more. Fast, higher, younger, faster.

The application of the all-seeing perspective on the city is also transformed into the time scale. The result is a prospective vision, believed to assure a certain future for the city and of society, thereby excluding all other possible futures (Cupers and Miessen, 2002).

1.5 linear time

The Enlightenment, and with it the rise of the capitalist society, changed the human world. From the pre-modern society largely being arranged around natural, cyclical time, with days and nights based on the rise and setting of the sun, recurring activities and festivities based on the seasons, the capitalist society demanded standardised and precise time. The act of production has a clear linear order, beginning with the extraction of the raw material followed by production and ending with the finished goods. Thus it favours the linear time, which with industrialisation became the dominating time outside the home. Corporations and multinational companies led to standardised time zones and the invention of the clock. With the use of clocks, the measuring of time was no longer in need of external references such as seasons or the position of the sun (Szerszynski, 2002).

But like all linear actions, production bears within itself its own destruction. The action stops with the completion of the task. When you have finished the letter, you stop writing. When all the valuable ore is extracted from the ground the mining activity stops and the mine is deserted. With the outdating of a product, or production becoming more favourable elsewhere, the production stops or is relocated, leaving empty warehouses, factories and industrial spaces behind (Szerszynski, 2002)

In the production society, time is money. Unproductive time; time outside the flow of goods, people, activities and things, is wasted time. It is a society that is constantly striving to increase efficiency, by standardising, simplifying and rationalising. In the same way as time can be wasted, space that does not contribute to the flow is wasted space. Derelict land is unused, thereby without value until taken into use again (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007).

On the linear time line of production, the derelict industrial land is the ultimate end. This is to be compared with subsistence societies, which are characterized by cycles of use and replenishment, and where the harvesting also are seen as making way for the crop of the coming year and thus a new beginning (Szerszynski, 2002).

The derelict industrial land then becomes a nothing, a blind spot as the modern logical solution is to remove all symbols of possible endings. The decay of the city is replaced as the old and disused buildings are demolished or turned into apartment blocks. Human ageing and death is discretely institutionalised.

Different from pre-modern societies, when birth as well as death was something that was dealt with now and then in daily life, these things nowadays are dealt with in wards and care institutions (Giddens, 1991). They are treated in the sequestered environments of hospitals. There are no connections with the cycle of generations or the broader moral issues of the relation between humans and inorganic matter such as waste (Giddens, 1991).

In a society where time is linear, death is completely hidden away. As Giddens (1991:203) suggests: "Death is unintelligible exactly because it is the point zero at which all control collapses". Death can not be seen as anything but what it is: the final loss of control. The greyish, blurry, obscene loss of control that is the end of life.

1.6 the void

With its defined use removed, the derelict land becomes a space of uncertainty. All of a sudden all excluded possible futures, removed by the definition of the future of the factory built there, re-emerge. The derelict land becomes a wilderness. It is beyond control both in terms of the policing of the land (Jorgensen & Tylecote), and in terms of uncertain futures (Cupers and Miessen, 2002)

With the rise of money society, the wilderness and derelict space came to be seen as a space without value. But even before that, interpretations of early Christian doctrines of medieval times argued that wilderness as not in use by humans was an affront to civilization and therefore meant to be eradicated (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007).

But it is seldom a tabula rasa, a terra nullius. Also tarmac opens for possibilities for them who can see them. Van Dijk states "The void means the absence of architecture. The void is the domain of unfulfilled promise and unlimited opportunity" (cited Cupers and Miessen, 2002:83).

The piece of derelict land or the post-industrial ruin is an exception from the organised city fabric. It is a space that is left, an undefined space in the grid of purified, well defined spaces. And as such the derelict space offers an opportunity to get away from the controlled space and the tight schedule of daily life (Cupers and Miessen, 2002). It is a place outside routine.

On top of the structures of industrial constructions is a layer of signs, traces and tracks of another use. It is telling a story; cigarette ends, remnants of fire places, beer and spray cans. The voids are places of a million small stories rather than, like the built space, a single great history. Their meaning is constituted through transitory use, rather than the static built matter (Cupers and Miessen, 2002).

"The void means the absence of architecture. The void is the domain of unfulfilled promise and unlimited opportunity."

The piece of derelict land or post-industrial ruin is an exception from the organised city fabric. It is a space that is left, an undefined space in the grid of purified, well defined spaces. And thus it is a place outside routine.
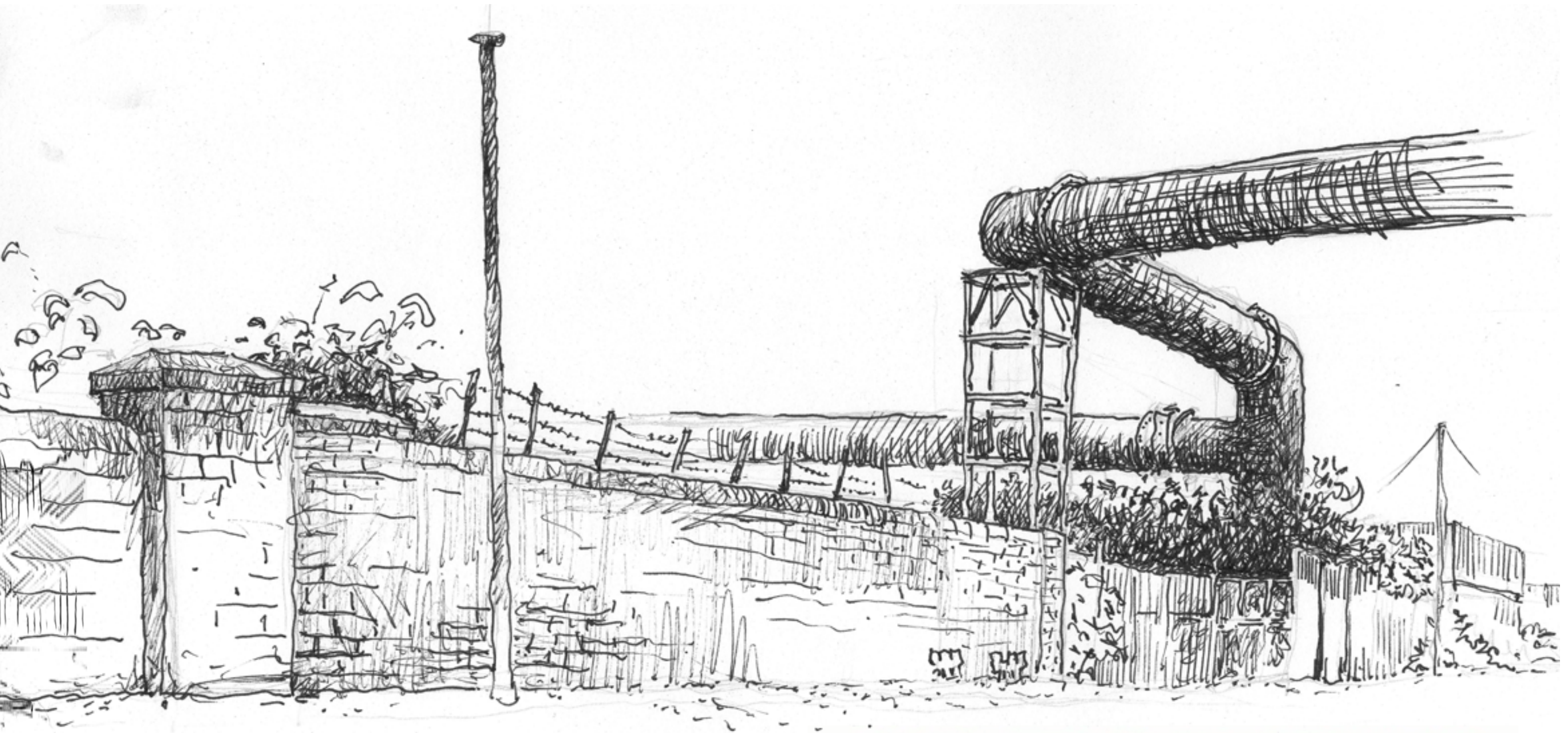
Less details to the products will speed up the production process. With fewer details, people do not get distracted which also accelerates the flow. Fewer unexpected happenings offer less opening for spontaneous talks, less reasons to stop and watch. Or stop and think. And less unused space, means less people hanging about slowing the flow. Limited possible routes, offer less chances to get off track.

II marginal and other spaces

This chapter presents places of otherness, places on the margin which are weakly defined and therefore open for new, unintended uses. These are places that the modern society is unable incorporate, and therefore tries to control or hide. But places on the margin are also places of mystery and fascination.

2.1 marginal space

The production of space makes the system of purified space penetrated by less defined space. Large areas of various purified spaces will have a fringe of less purified space surrounding it, where the space for example might be hard to control due to the distance from the centre, or to classify due to the mixed or ambivalent nature of the space (Edensor, 2005).

On a large scale, this could for example be the less dense industrial areas on the border between the city and the rural countryside around, or the patches of more or less green within the traffic landscape of motorway junctions, roundabouts and railway banks. On a smaller scale it could be the less maintained bushes behind the park, the urban woodland, the derelict industrial land or the spontaneous skate park under the motorway bridge.

These marginal places are typically described in negative terms, but are at the same time imagined as places of mystery and magic, as places of desire and imagination, permitting of surprises and possibilities, mainly because of their weak framing (Edensor, 2005).

The shopping centre is an illustrative example, as it mimics the city centre. But the shopping mall is a controlled area, a semi-public space where all the spontaneous surprises, the dirty and chaotic sites of the public space have been cleaned away, only to be replaced with a carefully arranged imitation. It is the perfect image of the city, without the negative aspects of the real experience; no dirt, no litter, no dog fouling. The shopping centre is designed with one, single purpose: consuming. It is an efficient space without interstices or unused spots, there is no room for loitering, hanging about, wasting time. All disruptions of the consuming experience are removed (Cupers and Miessen, 2002).

A shopping centre will not be as magic, as interesting as the real city centre. It will always feel a little too clean, a little too arranged, the surprises a bit too standardised and the haphazard boutiques are a bit too planned haphazard.

Street art installation at the entrance of a disused pedestrian tunnel.
Leeds, UK

2.2 spaces of otherness

Unclassified space on the margin has been given different names, which all have in common the meaning of outsider, difference, and variation; such as the "other" (Shields, 1991), "heterotopia" (Foucault, 1967), "ambiguous" (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007) or "loose space" (Franck and Stevens, 2007). These places are spaces of *neither/nor* or spaces of *both*, and their ambiguity makes them impossible to order or classify in the conventional system. They are looser defined, and thus opening for the emerging of an alternative way of ordering.

This unclassified space is dynamic, often temporary and sometimes not a place, but a situation that may occur when the physical and social circumstances are right (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007).

Lefebvre calls space which is formed by its users "representational space" and defines it as space that resists the ordering of space, which according to him as a Marxist thinker is a capitalist enterprise devoted to its own ends (Hetherington, 1997). Lefebvre argues that representational space resists and challenges the attempts to organise it, by being:

space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users', but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do no more than describe. (…) space which imagination seeks to change and appropriate (Lefebvre, 1991:39)

Franck and Stevens (2007) describe a similar process when talking about the increasing privatisation, commodification and sanitisation of the public space as forces that homogenise as well as prescribe urban activities and identities, "placing people in the role of passive consumer rather than active creator or participant" (Franck and Stevens, 2007:4). They call the space resisting these mainly capitalist driven forces "loose space".

The beach is a liminal place.

It is also a heterotopic place, in the way people of all types, who's ways usually never cross, blend.

2.3 liminal places

 "Liminality" is a term to designate "a moment of discontinuity in the social fabric, in social space and in history" (Shields, 1991:83). It is an "in betweenness", or a loss of social coordinates, that traditionally is associated with religion, occurring when people are in transition between one station of life to another, or between stages in the life cycle, defined by culture, such as a wedding (Shields, 1991).

Liminal places and moments encourage to behaviour outside the conventional. They are a condition when rules and restrictions of cultural context are put out of order and where anything can happen.

> action can never be the logical consequence of any grand design. (…) because of the processual structure of social action itself (…) in all ritualized (or systematised) movement there was at least a moment when those being moved in accordance with a cultural

script were liberated from normative demands, when they were, indeed, betwixt and between successive lodgements in jural political systems. In this gap between ordered worlds almost anything may happen. (…) That this danger is recognized in all tolerably orderly societies is made evident by the proliferation of taboos that hedge in and constrain those on whom the normative structure loses its grip (cited Shields, 1991:84)

In medieval times, the market and marketplace was a place with strong liminal character (Shields, 1991). It was an important space in society, associated not only with commerce and trade, but through fairs and festivals also with entertainment and ritual performances. It was an occasion that was both a religious, ritual tradition as well as an anti-ritual of festivities and celebrations (Shields, 1991).

The beach is a liminal place, on the geographical border between land and sea, uncertain, changing with every tide. In modern society this is still a free zone for physical, sensual, carnivalesque activities – but on the same time ritualised with its traditions of sand castles, sun bathing and way of dressing (Shields, 1991).

2.4 the carnival and the carnivalesque

The Russian literature critic Mikhail Bakhtin (1968) described the carnival:

> Carnival is a spectacle lived by people who are all participants, actors, not spectactors" and its form "offered a completely different, non official (…) extra political aspect of the world, of man, and of human relations; they built a second world and a second life outside officialdom (cited Shields, 1991:89).

This description has similarities with Lefebvre's (1991) definition of representational space as it is suggested that the representational space as well as the carnival were occasions created by and for the people, and lived and acted without any other purpose than the very living and acting.

On the market or carnival occasions, the existing moral codes and norms of behaviour were tested and challenged as they were overturned and made fun of in different masquerades and plays. The marketplace of the past was a temporary heterotopia, where a world of the unfamiliar, exotic and strange was experienced. It was a place for the pleasurable, where you threw off the social constraints of a society that on all other occasions was dominated by religion and hierarchy (Hetherington, 1997).

The term "carnivalesque" was coined by Bakhtin (1968) referring to a mode which with chaos and humour liberated assumptions of dominant and inferior roles. In the medieval carnival the king was the clown, elected and mocked by all the people, decrowned and travested (Bakhtin, 1968). Carnivalesque activities are activities where the social hierarchies and ready-made truths in everyday life are over-turned (Shields, 1991).

Carnivals were often linked to the cycles of seasons; in the medieval times most people had low control of their own life and feelings, and no control over the nature. The carnivals were characterised by a special language; speech and gestures permitted no distance between encountering people (Shields, 1991) – which must have been a welcome exception in the otherwise strict hierarchical society. The carnivals were a celebration of the corpulent excesses, the flows of the unclosed body with its orifices, disproportionate limbs and obscenely decentred and off balanced formations. This body was a grotesque counterpoint to authority and authority's formal property. The carnival was a way of handling the lack of control in the strict and religious society, and the grotesque body was a symbol of the processes and flows of energies that were not to be repressed (Shields, 1991).

Top: A masquerade rave in an abandoned stone quarry, Sweden

Bottom: Market in a disused railway station, Liverpool, UK

And there there are places where time
still exists. Places where it is possible
to see the mortality - of our society
and of our selves.
Places where time is visible, where

something is still allowed to go towards
an end, and beyond the end, a
possible beginning.
These places are still allowed there flaws.
Their secrets and their darkness.
They are places of darkness, uncertainty
and smells.
But they are also places of light, frailty
and colours. And this is why they are
irresistable

Heterotopia.

When objects are tak-
en from their familiar
context they can achieve
another meaning.

They are free to become
something else beyond
concepts such as dirt and
ugliness.

our lives are arranged in and arou
society—that is so vast and yet so
ticulously planned, that it is perce
want to exist beyond time.

is built out of materials that do not
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less services. Maintained and se
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possible beginning
These places are still allowed there fl
Their secrets and their darkness.
They are places of darkness, uncertai
and smells.
But they are also places of light, fra
and colours. And this is why they
irresistable
From time to time we need some

Illustrations of possible uses of loose space.

Objects that are taken out of use or misplaced remind of the frailty of the order of our society.

2.5 heterotopia

The French philosopher Michel Foucault was the person who invented the concept of heterotopia. The original meaning of the word is coming from the study of anatomy; referring to parts of the body that are out of place, missing, extra, or like tumours, alien (Hetherington, 1997).

As a cultural phenomenon heterotopia is related to utopia, which is a dream version of society. Utopia is a perfected, upside down or otherwise changed version of society. But while the utopia without exception is unreal, heterotopia is very real. In heterotopia you can find any of the other sites, people or situations found within the culture. Foucault (1967) brings up the theatre as an example of a real space where several other – in themselves incompatible – places, times, situations and people are following each other. Amongst other heterotopias which can be found in the western society, Foucault in this paper mentions two opposite ones: the library and the festival. According to Foucault, the library, like the theatre, hosts many places and situations within it. The library, and also the museum, is a heterotopia where the collecting and accumulating of all times, epochs, forms and tastes are based on a wish to enclose all times in this one place, which itself will become timeless (Foucault, 1967).

The opposite of the heterotopia of the accumulating of time, is the heterotopia based on time in its most flowing and transitory form; the festival. The festival is not oriented towards the eternal, but the temporary. Only for a day or two, a field or a town flowers, the experience intensified by its ephemerality (Foucault, 1967).

Behind Foucault's discussions of heterotopia lie two extremes; one of order and one of freedom. The first one is Kafka's *The Trial*, a place of the absolute power of bureaucracy and law. The other one is the castle of Marquis de Sade, a place of unlimited individual freedom without moral or sexual restraints. Here the marquis is acting out his freedom which is defined by a desire to totally control his victims (Hetherington, 1997).

In Kafka's vision, the absolute control is given complete freedom. In the vision of de Sade, freedom is allowed total control. Both are places of heterotopia, where the two opposites freedom and control are juxtaposed, entangled with each other to an extent where it is hardly possible to tell the difference (Hetherington, 1997).

Foucault's heterotopia, which both Hetherington (1997) and Edensor (2005) employ, are places of unsettling combinations of objects and concepts, which challenge our way of thinking and – especially – our way of ordering.

It is this juxtaposition that defines heterotopia (Hetherington, 1997). The juxtaposition unsettles, because it makes things seem out of place. The way unusual things are combined here, challenges all our settled representations. It is challenging our order and sense of certainty (Hetherington, 1997).

Heterotopia is sites of all things displaced, rejected or ambivalent. The challenge by the unusual juxtapositions forces us out of our usual pattern of moving and thinking, as the surrounding things don't give the clues that lead us to the same conclusion time upon time. This demands an engagement, it kicks us out of our usual tracks and habits, forcing us, as a visitor of such a place, to be creative and open minded physically as well as mentally. As Ward-Thompson (2002) states in her article: freedom is always risky. We need to be involved physically, haptically not only visually, to negotiate our way through a free space which is different from what we are used to.

2.6 loose space

Loose space is space that is open for activities different from the intended. "Loose" is describing the unintended, floating activities that make the space open for alternative, undefined uses. Sometimes loose space is created by activities taking place between, paralleling, the activities for which a space where mainly intended. Loose space can also occur when a defined purpose ends, or a fixed use no longer exists, such as in a ruin or derelict site (Franck and Stevens, 2007).

Many of the activities which create loose space are neither productive (like travelling to work), nor reproductive (buying necessities). Instead these activities are a matter of leisure, entertainment, self- or political expression, reflection or social interaction, taking place outside the daily routine (Franck and Stevens, 2007). The loose space is situated in the interstices between the more constraining spaces, being the places in which the city life breathes, opens up, as the spaces offer opportunities for exploration and discovery. The loose space is where you run into surprises, where the chances are for unregulated and spontaneous happenings or for risky or challenging possibilities (Franck and Stevens, 2007).
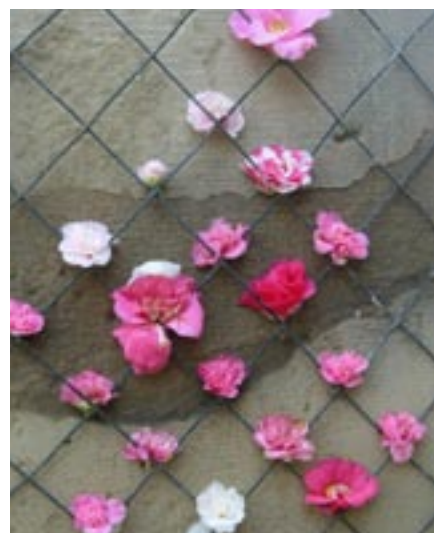
Left: Spontaneous decoration of a concrete wall.

Right: Festival visitors enjoying a water melon on a table out of a concrete block, World War II air base, Germany

People create loose space by taking their own initiative, themselves deciding what a space or feature should be used for. Lefebvre (cited Franck and Stevens, 2007:11) describes representational spaces as "space which imagination seeks to change and appropriate", a description which also fits the loose space. In the loose space, fences can be used for climbing on, low walls to sit on, a fountain used to splash in a hot summer's day. Changes in levels, such as sustaining walls, steps and stairs could be used for skateboarding or free-running (Franck and Stevens, 2007). While the defined, striated or "tight" (as opposite of "loose") space is focused on visual order, the loose space is associated with the haptic – the sense of touch (Ward-Thompson, 2002). As there is no touching from a distance, a space based on the sense of touch demands its visitor to be mentally involved, and totally present in the here and now.

Skateboarding is an illustrating example on how a tight space can be temporarily loosened through action. The features are not changed by skated on, but the understanding of them is changed, loosened. All of a sudden there is a feeling of a multiple of original, unintended uses as the skating shows the potential of the human body to imagine and physically engage a space that previously was perceived plain and empty (Franck and Stevens, 2007).

As long as there is space that is not formally assigned to any purpose, possibilities to experiment and new uses can also rise from lack of choice. Disused space is loose and offers opportunities for activities that have no other location (Franck and Stevens, 2007). In lack of allotments and gardens, urban residents appropriate disused space for the growing of fruits and vegetables. Ruins and urban forests are used for outdoor parties. Disused railway stations can be used for markets and carnivals. Spaces under bridges are turned into skate parks.

As social and physical control can be turned on and off, space can vary in levels of "looseness" when guards or "hosts" go off their shifts, gates are closed or open or the daytime users leave. Space can also loosen with time, as surveillance, uses or maintenance stop. Visual disorder created by disarray or physical deterioration, suggests a less controlled space or no control at all, which opens for interventions and appropriation. Loose parts which can be rearranged can significantly change a space, making it suitable for different uses as well as users, thereby also altering the level of looseness (Franck and Stevens, 2007).

Our lives are arranged in and around
a society that is so vast and yet so
meticulously planned, that it is perceived
almost to exist beyond time.

It is built out of materials that do not age
containing everlasting goods and
timeless services. Maintained and serviced
it is beyond change

And there there are places where time
still exists. Places where it is possible
to see the mortality — of our society
and of ourselves.
Places where time is visible, where
something is still allowed to go towards
an end, and beyond the end, a
possible beginning
These places are still and there lives.
Their secret and the live
They are still and by certainty
and slue
But they are still of light, truth
and colour, and that is what everyone
lives table.
From time the and of
darkness to start the a begin
to familarize and

One of these places nature
with its seasons, its dimmings
and springs, mornings and evening,
its deaths and its full and
Nature, with its cycles, times and
roots.

The rapid establishment of the pioneer vegetation, which is species evolved to grow and spread fast to efficiently colonise bare ground creates an air of excitement. The fast progression of vegetation and relatively quick succession of stages make the place feel bursting with vegetation.

III nature's wilderness in ruins

This chapter presents the nature in the post-industrial site. Wilderness and nature have since humans began to build settlements been seen as the opposite of civilisation, a correlation which gives the vegetation of the post-industrial ruins an important symbolic role. The vegetation also gives the site a lot of its character.

3.1 the other nature

Since the humans began to build settlements, and thereby started to define themselves from nature, nature increasingly became seen as an affront to civilisation and a subject to human interventions. This separation between nature and the human habitat made the exploitation of nature possible as humans no longer saw a connection between what happened to their own and to the natural world. They started to tame the wild nature, which became socialised; increasingly ordered according to the systems and needs of the modern world (Giddens, 1991).

Modernity's prospective vision where only one certain future exists, makes the absence of control and the uncertainty of the wilderness a challenge to possess and conquer and thereby exclude all other possible futures. Representing man's bold ambition to order and organise unknown worlds, the explorer and the colonist sees the void as to be longing for colonisation (Cupers and Miessen, 2002).

Nature, with its seasons, days and nights, is still "there", as it has always been, a necessary external environment for human activities. But by colonising the natural world, man is also taking over the future of nature. Increasingly a subject for human interventions, nature is becoming less and less wild, and increasingly "tamed" as its future is increasingly caught up in the future of man's civilised world (Giddens, 1991).

The separation between nature and the built human environment becomes a circle, where nature outside the city is represented by the domesticated countryside and not by primary wilderness (Giddens, 1991). Most people are secluded from the increasingly scarce primary wilderness, as the buffering area of socially coordinated, domesticated nature of countryside grows (Ward-Thompson, 2002). The abyss between civilisation and wilderness continues to grow, making nature even more remote.

The suppression of nature and wilderness is not only regarding vegetation and the primary wilderness, but human nature as well. (Lefebvre, 1991, Giddens 1991). The modern control can little handle the natural human being, with its natural drifts, fluids and body odours. Smell reveals the artificiality of modernity, showing that we have never been fully modern. Bauman states that "Scents had no room in the shiny temple of perfect order modernity set out to erect" (cited Urry, 2000:99). But the project of creating a pure, rational order of things is constantly undermined by the sweet smell of decomposition, decay, fermentation and waste management (Urry, 2000).
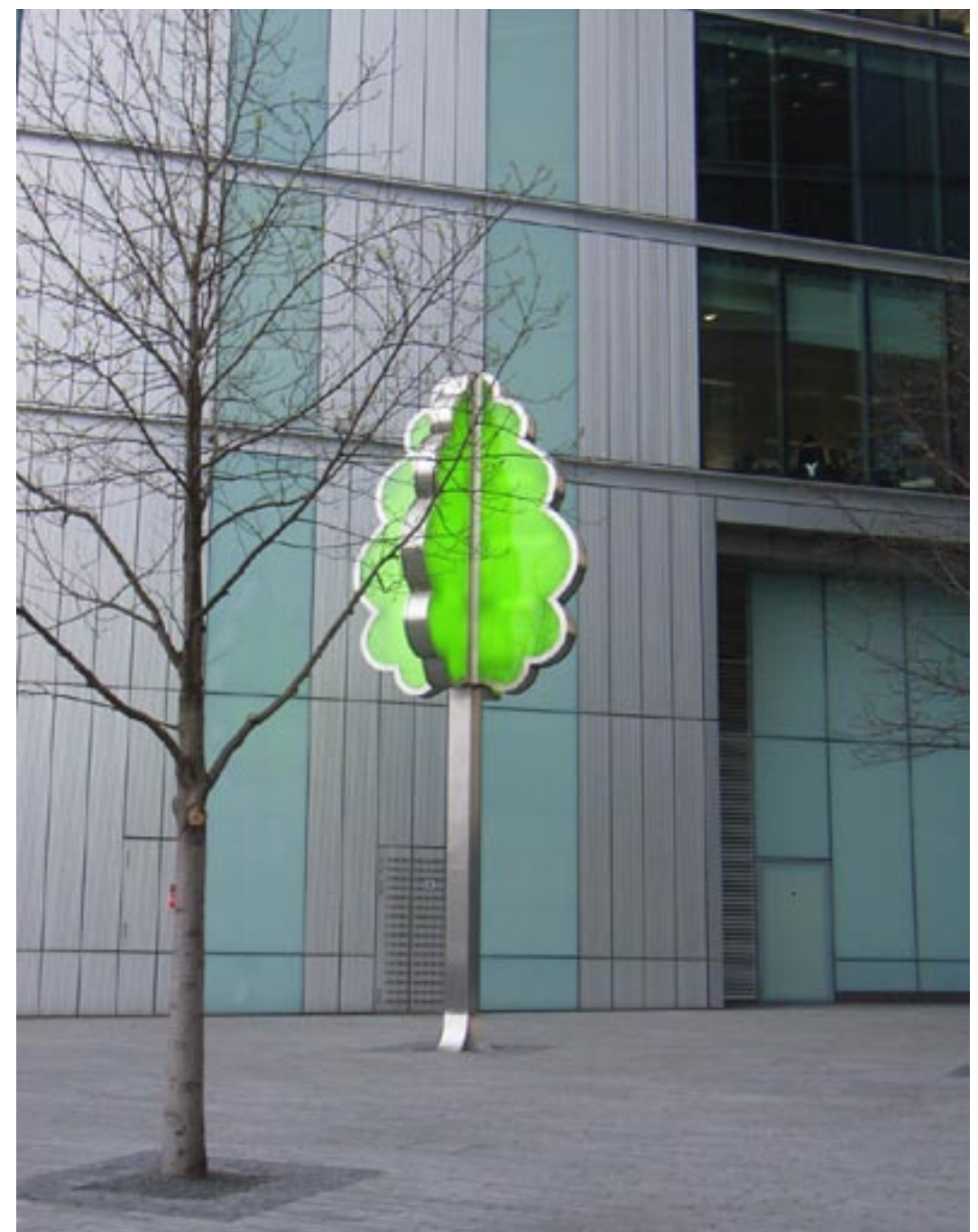
A new power relationship.
Disused railway viaduct in
Leeds, UK

3.2 the new order

Heterotopia is sites of all things displaced, rejected or ambivalent. In this sense the ruin is a heterotopia, being both indoors and outdoors, or neither. Trees and plants growing in what once was the inside of a building, blur the distinctions to a level where it is no longer interesting to maintain definitions such as indoors or outdoors, forest or city. The overgrown ruin is a space between nature and manmade, clearly distinguished from its surroundings. Its "otherness" is independent of its location be it nature or city.

In the derelict site or industrial ruin, the meticulous order that prevailed when the industry was in use, is now replaced by another, less rigid one not concerned with human definitions, such as indoors or outdoors, wall, ground or floor. The vegetation colonising the ruin, challenges our order and our idea of vegetation as we usually see it, outside the city in the forest or countryside, or in the city as garden or park vegetation. Our usual vegetation is tamed; pruned and kept in certain places, be it parks or nature reserves.

3.3 natural succession

With time, all materials become natural. They are covered, broken down, turned into organic matter or dust, a part of an organic network. The ruin landscape is the playful struggle of life and death, between construction and growth, artificial and organic. It is all there; in the playfulness, the sensuality, the darkness and the light.

Against the background of the highly ordered and classified modern city, within which nature is provided certain, well defined spaces, the nature of weeds, garden escapes and other green free-runners become a welcome blur of the distinctions, loosening the definition of the space.

In the ruin or the derelict space, where the maintenance has ceased completely, higher vegetation follows the pioneer weed, succession rate depending on the hardness of the surfaces. The rapid establishment of the pioneer vegetation, which are species evolved to grow and spread fast to efficiently colonise bare ground (Wheater 1999), creates an air of excitement. The pioneer species are followed and gradually out-manoeuvred by higher vegetation in succeeding stages, mainly perennial herbs and grasses (Wheater, 1999). The fast progression of vegetation and relatively quick succession of stages where the surface allows it, make the place feel bursting with vegetation. Plants shoot roots everywhere, growing in gutters, on roofs, walls, and, if there is enough light, indoors.

Layers of nature.

3.4 ruins, vegetation and time

The Romantics who, during their Grand Tours, visited – and later even brought home to the parks of their own mansions – the overgrown, crumbling ruins of the antics, were poets, scholars, artists and thinkers. They saw in the ruins not only the remains of great buildings overgrown by ivy and butterfly-bush, but the greatness of nature (Woodward, 2002). No matter how great and powerful; tyrant or hero; no matter how great the building – there would always be the inevitable victory of nature; a nature that was "fertile, democratic and free" (Woodward, 2002:66). In the ruins, the presence of nature represented both the withering time, as well as immortality in the way matter become a part of the process of regeneration through nature (Woodward, 2002).

The English botanist Richard Deakin investigated 1855 the flora of the Coliseum in Rome. He wrote that:

> flowers form a link in the memory, and teach us hopeful and soothing lessons, amid the sadness of bygone ages (…) for though without speech, they tell us of the regenerating power which animates the dust of mouldering greatness (cited Woodward, 2002:23)

There is a great difference between ruins and monuments, which is the presence of nature. As Woodward suggests: "Poets and painters like ruins, and dictators like monuments" (Woodward, 2002:30). Monuments are to manifest eternal power by standing unchanged forever. Ruins however, are ambiguous symbols. They are maintaining a link between now and the past as their crumbling decay is both a symbol of the frailty of earthly matter, and a symbol of eternity (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007). However crumbling, however its ruinous state, the ruin is still standing, resisting time and reminding of passed greatness. But on the same time hosting and giving life to thousands of living things growing and nesting in its cracks.

Constructions which are abandoned
become a part of nature.

3.5 between natural and artificial

The ruin, a space where the nature is out of control is a space of secondary wilderness that comes very close to, even inside, the city as the heart of the civilised society. The urban wilderness is present within an area we like to consider our own and ordered, and where nature is supposed to be tamed, pruned and to stay in its place (Rink, 2005).

However, a lot of the species found in the post-industrial ruins and in the urban derelict sites, are species that have fled the increasingly monocultural countryside. These species – plants, mammals and insects alike – live in exile in the, in comparison, permitting pattern of derelict space, ruins, parks and gardens of the city (Edensor, 2005). Ironical as it is, the conditions here are often similar to natural habitats which to a large extent are extinct due to industrialisation and urbanisation. Thus the post-industrial site becomes a last refuge for species depending on this type of habitat (English Nature, 2005:2).

The hard ground surfaces, consisting of paving in various stages of cracking and breaking up, create a pattern of bare and overgrown substrate which gives a habitat that is structurally diverse. Within a little area, there can be flower-rich grasslands as well as sparsely vegetated areas. Patches of bare ground is favoured by spiders as they are depending on their vision for hunting, and by lizards and insects as the bare ground heats up quickly in the sun (English Nature, 2005:11).

On natural ground this early succession stage is very dynamic, and just lasts for a couple of years. On urban derelict sites however, which often are subjects to sporadic disturbance, or where the ground is contaminated, this stage can last for fifty years or more. That gives species time to find the habitat, which can become very biodiverse (English Nature, 2005:11).

Birches on a railway track on a disused rail yard, Berlin, Germany

The post-industrial ruins also host garden escapes, species that have done the opposite journey; from the safety of gardens and parks into the wild. They usually can not compete with native species in natural settings, but survive in the conditions of the ruins. Built constructions, stone and brick walls, heaps of rubble, concrete and mortar are extreme substrates, often well drained and when facing south, warm. These conditions are favourable for species that live on the edge of their distribution range (English Nature, 2002:13). Some of those species are important plants for nesting and over-wintering for some insects, and others, like the butterfly-bush, the Oxford ragwort and red valerian, are important nectar plants which produce flowers during a long period (English Nature, 2005:21).

The ruin is thus full of native and non-native species, together creating a wilderness coloured by garden-escapes and exotics. This makes it a rich habitat, far from a space which only value lies in the potential exploitation of the site.

The nature on derelict industrial land is defined by vegetation and manmade constructions combined. The ambiguity of this character makes it a space which the traditional definitions and images of nature fail to define, causing confusion and insecurity. Kowarik (2005) claims this as one of the reasons to the poor realisation of the value of urban wilderness. A new definition of the urban "wild" nature would help it become more equal with other forms of nature.

According to the traditional image of nature as a gradient of naturalness-artificiality, the remnants of pristine forest hosted by the primary wilderness are the most natural vegetation, and a designed horticultural plantation like a flowerbed in a park, is the most artificial. The vegetation in the post-industrial ruins grows in an urban location, on a substrate that is not the least natural. The frequent non-native species in the stands also add to this artificiality. According to the traditional scale, the nature of the post-industrial site is completely artificial. But, on the other hand it is vegetation that is growing completely without any human interference in terms of management or design intentions, and therefore is far from the stands which are defined as most artificial.

Kowarik (2005) argues that the traditional gradient of naturalness-artificiality is insufficient. A new approach that realises this type of wild urban nature is essential. Urban-industrial forests are becoming a frequent ingredient of the post-industrial landscape as forestation is used in the development of large areas of declining industry. Kowarik suggests a new, progressive approach based on the perception of the nature rather than the scientific classification. In this Four Natures Approach, the nature of derelict land is included in the "Nature of the fourth kind" (Kowarik, 2005:22) which encompasses the development that naturally occurs without horticultural planning or design.

Catch butterflies and grasshoppers in the meadow, pick flowers, climb slopes and slide down. Play with fire or explore old buildings, go astray or lie in the sunshine. These are all activities in various ways interacting with the wilderness - both the one in the ruin, and your own...

A lot of the species found in the post-industrial ruins have fled the increasingly monocultural countryside. The ruin also hosts species that have escaped from the safety of gardens and parks into the wild. It is thus full of native and non-native species, together creating a wilderness coloured by garden-escapes and exotics.

With the appropriation of the site, it looses its innocence. This gives the post-industrial ruin a strong integrity, causing a stranger to feel like an intruder. But to a person who is familiar with the site it has a completely different meaning.

The post-industrial ruin is a place where chaos and disorder rule. Objects are brought, removed, placed and replaced.

The lack of order creates a site rich in experiences, where all senses are engaged in the act of exploring. Both mystery and physical challenge require a certain amount of disorder and chaos.

The satisfaction in the crispy sound of stone through glass, the splashing of industrial containers of water falling over, the teamwork struggle of pushing the remains of a wall to fall over and then the sound of collapsing concrete… The challenge of climbing a brick wall to try to reach the hatch to the second, promising floor or building a makeshift construction to get up to and through a window to see what is to explore in there…

In this chapter I discuss the role of the post-industrial ruin or derelict land, which are often used as nature is, as they provide several natural elements. The uncontrolled character of both the romantic and the post-industrial ruins makes them a setting for exploration, both physical and intellectual.

4.1 ambivalence of urban wilderness

The post-industrial ruins are often highly appreciated. Also ecologists and other experts have quite recently started to realise the post-industrial ruins, derelict sites and other brownfields as important habitats. The derelict industrial sites are often also appreciated by people living nearby, who use the derelict land for different informal activities (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007). There is, however, ambivalence in the perceptions of derelict industrial land.

Since medieval times, wilderness has been seen as a concept affront to civilisation. The nature which has a room within the civilisation is the domesticated useful nature: the cultivated countryside outside the city, parks and gardens within the city. This view of urban nature has been prevailing for hundreds of years, and is the standard to which the urban wilderness is measured (Rink, 2005). The lack of control, absence of organisation and defined purpose, invites the explorer of the unknown. But it also challenges the conqueror, who wants to control and organise the space to give it a purpose (Cupers and Miessen, 2002).

As vision has been the dominating sense in the western society for the last few hundred years, the countryside and wilderness have largely been understood as scenery and views (Urry, 2000). The visual impact is therefore important, and even more so for wilderness in the city (Rink, 2005).

While the naturalness of the primary wilderness renders it a certain appreciation, and is an accepted excuse of an untidy and sometimes ugly appearance, the expectations on the urban wilderness are different. People value the urban nature mainly as a setting for social activities, and the level of perceived naturalness and ecological values is generally less important than tidiness, size, particular structure, symbolic function or usefulness. A post-industrial ruin or piece of derelict land, introduced as an area of urban nature will run up against ideas of order, cleanliness, maintenance and usefulness of the tamed nature (Rink, 2005).
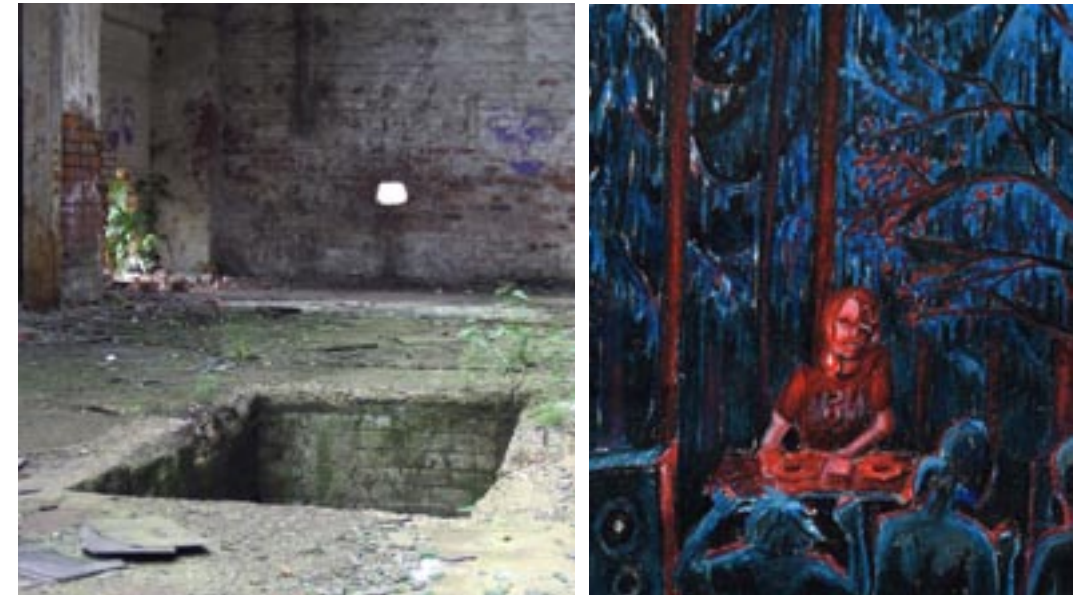
Beauty is subjective.

Urban woodlands are often perceived as lawless and disordered, littered with traces of dens, camps, fires and the remains of carnivalesque activities. Places where activities of this type are allowed are rare in our increasingly ordered society where they are usually forbidden or frown upon (Edensor, 2005).

The derelict space is largely defined by its uses. With the appropriation of the site for uses that are uncontrolled and unfamiliar, the site looses its innocence. This creates a feeling of insecurity in a person who is not a part of or familiar with these uses (Cupers and Miessen, 2002). The often personal nature of the little traces of the various uses defining the site, gives the place a strong integrity. Thus a stranger to the place feels like an intruder.

To a person who is familiar with the site however, the place has a completely different meaning. In a survey of residents' attitude towards semi-natural urban woodland of Birchwood, the natural and semi-natural urban vegetation scored a very high value. This type of landscape was valued higher than traditional parks, only second to the open countryside (Jorgensen et al, 2005). However, there were mixed feelings expressed in the answers. This landscape, which was the most popular, was also the one that people felt the most unsafe in (Jorgensen et al, 2005). A quarter of the people who voted the natural and semi-natural landscape their favourite, also said that they would not feel safe if they were alone in there (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007). This highlights the fact that a striving to entirely eradicate sources of people's fear, also might result in the destruction of their favourite places.

Everybody should have the right to be free and safe. But complications emerge when increased order is used as a means to create this safer and freer society. Removing of shrubbery where someone could hide, the installations of surveillance cameras or limitation of access all increase freedom *from* fear and *from* crime. But it also limits the freedom of doing things, in terms of engage in activities that might seem threatening to social order or that re-

quires freedom from camera surveillance. Freedom from mess and disorder limits the freedom to a variety of spontaneous uses. Freedom from hearing political views also includes the curtailing of freedom of speech. Increased freedom for some, often decreases the freedom of others (Franck and Stevens, 2007).

Ambivalence is a recurring theme regarding the urban wilderness, both in terms of urban woodlands and more or less overgrown derelict industrial space. Parents think of green settings in general as positive for the upbringing of their children, but they also think of these surroundings as fraught with dangers (Jorgensen et al, 2005). Derelict industrial space is associated with dirt and rubbish as well as dangers, linked with fear and risk of injury. But, at the same time, they are seen as settings as of value for children's play (Rink, 2005). Louv (2006) sees this ambivalence as an opportunity, suggesting that it might lead parents to accompany their children in the forest, thus spending more time with them.

The plots of derelict land and post-industrial ruins are one of the few places where children – and adults – can play freely and explore with all senses. The hegemony of vision has gone from a relatively modest state of medieval fascination for coloured glass and robes (Urry, 2000), to a state where the primary experiences, of for example nature, are being replaced by secondary, one-way experiences which through television and other media are limited to vision and sound. In the outdoor environment, especially nature, all senses are engaged (Louv, 2006).

4.2 a nature for development

Research suggests that there is an important link between play and the natural environment, and that there also is an element in the experience of natural environment that follows the individual through life, becoming a part of a person's nature from childhood and onwards. Thus playing in the natural environment as a child is associated with going to nature for therapeutic and recreational value later on in life. People who remember frequent visits to nature as children go to such places as adults, and have a strikingly different view compared to people who did not (Ward-Thompson, 2007).

Most people have a positive relation to nature, and especially children who are not yet adapted to the manmade world, prefer natural settings (White and Hoecklin, 2010). Access to adjacent nature has a stress-reducing impact, protecting the psychological wellbeing (Louv, 2006). It is argued that humans have a natural, inherited connection to the nature and other living species, which is biologically integral to our development as individuals. This connection is called *biophilia*, a term defined as "the urge to affiliate with other forms of life" (Louv, 2006:43).

If deprived of nature experience during early years, a child might develop an aversion of nature, called *biophobia*. Biophobia could range from slight discomfort in natural settings, to active scorn for anything not manmade. Biophobia could also be manifested in a tendency to regard nature as a mere resource (White and Hoecklin, 2010).

Settings for wild play.

In a space no-one cares about nothing can be broken – but anything can be explored, moved or changed

4.3 wild play on derelict land

Younger children use the outdoor environment for den-building, climbing trees and other playful activities. The wild and natural open space offers important opportunities for unregulated and adventurous play (Ward-Thompson, 2007).

Adults often remember playing on pieces of derelict land and in post-industrial ruins as children. Pedagogues and developmental psychologists point out "forbidden spaces" like these as preferred play environments for children. This "no man's land" contains numerous structures that attract and stimulate children to various uses and play activities (Keil, 2005). It also offers space for free movement and loco motor play. The derelict industrial sites provide settings where the children can experience nature and wildlife adventures, enjoying the freedom from control and surveillance but still feel relatively safe. The freedom to movement and absence of control are the two main criteria to the popularity of the derelict space as a play setting (Keil, 2005).

Children are usually not thinking much of the nature of the site, but still are in close contact with it, unintentionally but intensely (Keil, 2005). The site provides spaces of different characters, which contain a wide range of opportunities to test and challenge the physical world. Catching butterflies and grasshoppers in the meadow, climbing slopes and sliding down, racing chariots with found pushcarts, playing with fire on broken branches and exploring the old buildings are common activities mentioned by children playing on a piece of abandoned industrial land in the Ruhr area (Keil, 2005).

The activities mentioned are included in the sixteen play types as defined by Hughes (2006), a major author on play theory, which is the study of children's play. All different varieties of play, for example locomotor play, dramatic play, creative play or mastery play have to be satisfied to ensure a normal development. Playing with fire, earth, wind and water is a way of learning to handle the elements. This type of play is called "mastery play" and concerns the taming of the physical environment, developing a power

over the physical surroundings. It is dealing with physical powers such as energy, weight, height, viscosity, flammability, strength, hardness, temperature… But also with the affective nature of spaces too – the possibility to control it, endure it and for example to turn a rugged seashore into a garden. This is an important type of play, as the child learns to balance between the animal drive to dominate and the surrounding's capacity to resist domination (Hughes, 2006).

The messy and unstructured character of the derelict industrial site invites to self-determined uses and appropriation activities. This includes altering the environment, and building structures, such as dens and fortresses, but also more complicated constructions such as skateboard ramps (Keil, 2005). Dangers potentially arising from existing and built structures should not be removed, as they teach the children to calculate and estimate risks (Keil, 2005) They provide opportunities for a wide range of testing of physical skills and daring.

Challenges.

Opportunities to play,
derelict spaces UK

4.4 carnivalesque activities

Post-industrial sites and other spaces outside regulation offer possibilities for activities of physical expressiveness. These activities, characteristically tending towards the carnivalesque, would be frowned upon in more regulated situations, and can not be tried in the daily, organised environment. However, they are sensual ways of experiencing the physical world (Edensor, 2005). The satisfaction in the crispy sound of stone through glass, the splashing of industrial containers of water falling over, the teamwork struggle of pushing the remains of a wall to fall over and then the sound of a collapsing concrete wall... Climbing a brick wall to try to reach the hatch to the second, promising floor, the challenge of building a make-shift construction to get up to and through a window... These are experiences, sounds and sights we normally do not have the chance to experience, but that all offer an opportunity to learn something about the world as well as our own physical abilities (White and Hoecklin, 2010). Sennett suggests: "The body comes to life when coping with difficulties" (cited Edensor, 2005:95). The ruins are felicitous places, free from self-policing, open for exploration and challenges, as Edensor puts it (2005:95). In this way both qualities and use of the ruin remind of natural environment, where puddles can be splashed, sticks can be used to poke the mud or test the ground with, and stones can be thrown to break the perfect surface of a pond into million shimmering pieces.

Constructions.

Left: Tree-house in an adventure playground in Berlin, Germany

Top right: logs in a garden in Berlin, Germany

Bottom right: Tree house in Malmö Sweden

4.5 adventurous playgrounds

An adventure playground is a playground where the children, together with or assisted by the staff, build the play features themselves out of left-over material from building sites and other sources. The idea came 1931 from the Danish landscape architect C. Th. Sørensen's observations of kids playing in the post-war rubble (Norman, 2003).

Behind the adventure playgrounds lies a theory called the *theory of loose parts*, which is based on the idea that rather than adults choosing and providing the children's play features, the most stimulating play is where children play or build structures from ideas that they come up with themselves. The theory was first presented by an architect, Simon Nicholson, in 1971. He wrote: "In any environment, both the degree of inventiveness and creativity and the possibilities of discovery are directly proportional to the number and kind of variables in it" (Nicholson, 1971:30).

"Loose parts" can be natural or synthetic as long as they are materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways. It is things with no specific set of directions, which can be used alone or combined with other materials (White and Hoecklin, 2010).

The first "official" "junk" playground opened in 1943 along Emdrupvej in the outskirts of Copenhagen, during the German occupation of Denmark during the Second World War. The children's play at the junk playground was an improvisation with bricks, fir-posts, cement pillars and boards, using a variety of tools. Through den-building, digging and mastery play, the children learned responsibility and about the elements. The freedom of play is still prevailing within play theory. The junk-playground was, and is, a place where children can experiment, be encouraged to build and create their own spaces away from the street. It is an environment of endless possibilities and which never can be considered immutable, while the play opportunities offered by playgrounds with premade play features and fixed equipment, are limited (Norman, 2003).

4.6 place for exploration

Maturing children explore, discover and make sense of their expanding world by experience, learned skills and spatial understanding. This is a dynamic relationship between the child and the environment, as they act their limits, constantly pushing the boundaries of the "known" world against the unknown (Moore and Cosco, 2007). The lust for discovering and exploring makes children's idea of beauty more wild than ordered. To the child the natural world is not a scene or even a landscape but a sheer sensory experience (White and Hoecklin, 2010).

Children live through their senses; sensory experiences being the link between the exterior world and their inner, affective world. The natural world is the principal source of sensory experiences, its messy, chaotic richness providing play opportunities which engage all senses. Possibilities to self-activated autonomous interaction with the nature let the children test themselves and activate their potential, learning about themselves and their physical environment (Louv, 2006).

Like children, adults also explore their environment. A phenomenon experienced for the first time, can be confusing and not fully understandable. Exploring is a way of expanding our knowledge, accumulating experience. By doing so we also increase our capacity to understand previous experiences (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989).

The beauty of decay. If you have time to look close anything is worth exploring.

A place that is high in complexity requires us to expand our horizons. It provides inferred or predicted elements in terms of for example partly hidden views, glimpses or hints. Because of the human curiosity, these settings are considered the most stimulating as they promise that there is more to explore (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989). Such a promise of continuation beyond the immediately perceived can be provided by a structure complex enough to get lost in, rich enough for various encounters along the way (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989).

Depths to explore more than vast dimensions, create a place that is interesting. A little place can be as stimulating as a big one. In the Japanese garden, or some back gardens, the miniature intensifies the experience (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989). Nature's patterns provide richness, adding interesting details and flaws to the perfect surfaces of building materials. Unexplored maps of deltas and landscapes of cracks, splinters, eroded caves and bumps, patina and shifting colours…

Nature adds a dynamic layer of texture which changes colours, size, sound and shape. As seasons pass, buds become flowers, leaves turn red and branches go bare. It invites you to look closer, take in the details and get engaged. Unfamiliar textures; pads of moss covering surfaces, the grid like system of cracks in the dried mud, flakes of old paint thin as butterfly wings invite you to touch, to feel.

Places of contemplation.

Left: a place for secret gatherings, Sharrow Vale Cemetery, Sheffield, UK

Centre: abandoned allotment garden, Stockholm, Sweden

Right: Bush vegetation on a disused railway viaduct , Leeds, UK

4.7 ambiguous mystery

In modern public space and park design, safety and mystery are generally presented as mutually exclusive. Physical dangers are often over-estimated, leading all possible risks to be eliminated. This creates an outdoor environment where the feeling of freedom and adventure lying in possibilities of personal initiative and control is likewise taken away (Franck and Stevens 2007). With safety on the top of the agenda, and a media continually providing fear of various kinds, places of mystery are ambiguous.

People often visit the wooded parkland or nature for privacy, which is seldom available in the busy everyday life or in the built environment. The woodland also allows intimate personal space, and time to contemplate. Children appreciate the natural environment because of the freedom it offers, in terms of opportunities to play, manipulate and create their own private worlds (Ward-Thompson, 2002). This is the qualities that make a place be perceived as dangerous, threatening or unsettling, but on the same time the reason to why people visit them.

Ward-Thompson (2002) suggests that rather than being opposites, it is the tension between these polarities that creates the pleasure. Studies in this field show that preference and a sense of danger is not opposites but distinct constructs. Mystery is correlated with both preference and danger, and has a paradoxical role provoking both positive and negative responses (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007).

Most individuals have a positive experience of objects and environments, leading them to explore, expecting to find interesting, stimulating, good things. Mystery and complexity create uncertainty and curiosity, which play an important role in landscape appreciation (Ward-Thompson, 2002).

A person's perception of a forest depends on that person's relationship to this type of place. This relation is an ever-changing, dynamic phenomenon, and also a conscious process in which this person is an active shaper of his or her own life. Different relationships to places are associated with significant experiences rather than simple descriptions of the physical settings themselves (Skår, 2010). Thus the park or nature can be an experience of calm and beauty to one person, but to another a place of anxiety and fear. Women and some ethnic minorities may feel excluded from the wooded and secluded parklands due to feeling vulnerable or uncomfortable in these settings (Ward-Thompson, 2002).

Places like the post-industrial ruins, derelict land and urban woodlands are marked by the carnivalesque activities taking place there. They will be searched by some, shunned by others. As some people expect certainty, homogeneity and order, rather than the looser alternatives, there will be a need for traditional parks and "tidier" outdoor environments as well as places allowing activities ranging from the mundane to the carnivalesque (Ward-Thompson, 2002).

As a place where the order has loosened, the post-industrial ruin invites to new, spontaneous uses. This is a place where the tempo is not driven by production or consumption. It is a place outside the flow.

Thus the ruin is a place offering opportunities to escape the daily life. Beyond the conventional beauty, if you have time, lie the unexplored maps of deltas, landscapes of cracks, splinters, eroded caves and bumps, patina and shifting colours…

The implicit is an opportunity for imagination, to fill in the missing bits. The single purpose spaces have one certain future. But like an object without a defined use opens for a million different ideas, the derelict land is a space of endless possible futures.
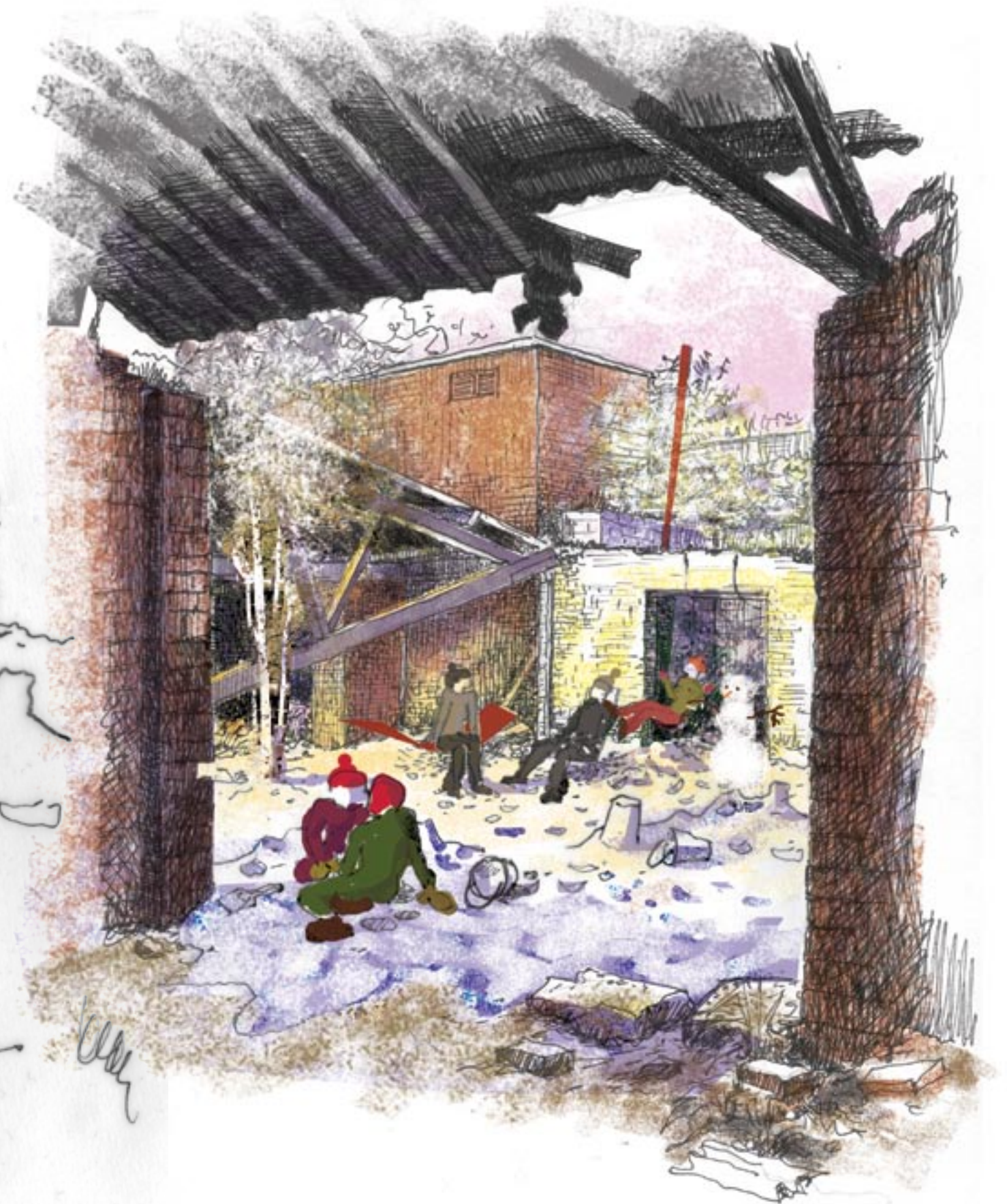
To the 18th century writers the sublime was as important as any other feeling.
What would happen to joy if there was no grief?
Tunnel under a disused railway in Leeds, UK.

4.8 the sublime and the beautiful

The ruins have through time also offered intellectual challenges. The development of the concepts of the sublime, the beauty and the picturesque within aesthetics in the 18th and 19th centuries was an attempt to engage with the vastness and infinity of nature and the wilderness. It was an attempt to come to terms with the otherness of nature, and to come to terms with death as the ultimate human boundary (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007).

But it was also an attempt by the philosophers of the time to understand, and objectively describe, a feeling. To the philosophers who wrote on the concept of the beauty and the sublime, the sublime was no less important than other feelings, such as ordinary fear, or joy. As Rotenberg (2005:228) phrases it: "How might the absence of grief or joy in the lives of the educated change the way questions about the human experience are asked and answered?" A life without beauty was no better than living a life without the sublime.

The picturesque was the first aesthetic ideal that suggested that beauty could be subjective and build upon associations from accumulated memories. Before this, beauty had been an objective characteristic, judged by classical rules and certain mathematical proportions (Woodward, 2002). The picturesque then became a mediator between the opposed ideals of beauty and the sublime, showing the possibilities that existed between these two rationally idealised states. The picturesque became a way to address the sublime. With the new understanding of aesthetics, the ruin could become an aesthetic symbol of time and eternity, but also the vanity of human projects on earth. A dark grotto or a rustic bridge above a raging stream was picturesque illustrations of the sublime, places where you could contemplate man's littleness, or the greatness of the natural forces.

The sublime was defined as "a sort of delightful horror", originating in the unreasoned delight provoked by the exposure to terror, provided one was not personally threatened (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007).

Beauty, on the other hand, was perceived in the form, and was a spontaneous reaction to unchallenging and pleasurable objects. Awareness of the beautiful was subjective, intuitive and sensual, stemming from a connection between understanding and imagination (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007). Beauty was a feeling perceived within culture (Rotenberg, 2005).

A beginning or an end?

The sublime was to be found in a formless object, represented by bound-lessness beyond human understanding. Thus the sublime was an experience of "conflict, disharmony, struggle and violence" that came from the inabil-ity of the mind to comprehend the magnitude of the perception (Jorgensen and Tylecote, 2007:448). Experiences of this magnitude could not come out of anything created by man, and could therefore not be perceived within culture. Thus, to experience the sublime, you had to venture out from the relative safety of culture and civilisation, into the wilderness, into nature (Rotenberg, 2005).

The classical sublime is not the feeling of horror itself, but the feeling of relief afterwards. Perceived when returned to safety from an experience beyond understanding, the sublime is the feeling achieved when trying to make sense of this experience. This near-miss experience highlights the fact that you are existing right here, right now, intensifying the feeling of being alive. The romantic thinkers were concerned about describing the sublime correctly, because without it an important part of being human would disap-pear (Rotenberg, 2005). Today institutions, safety and increasingly remote wilderness make human life largely devoid of settings for encounters with the sublime.

And it is my strong belief that it affects our perception of life.

The derelict space or post-industrial ruin is a place of time. It is the opposite of a non-place. A ruin can not be exchanged, it can not be commodified or standard produced. Every crack, every part of lichens is unique and has taken decades to develop. The factory, its constructions and the nature, are telling the history of this very place.
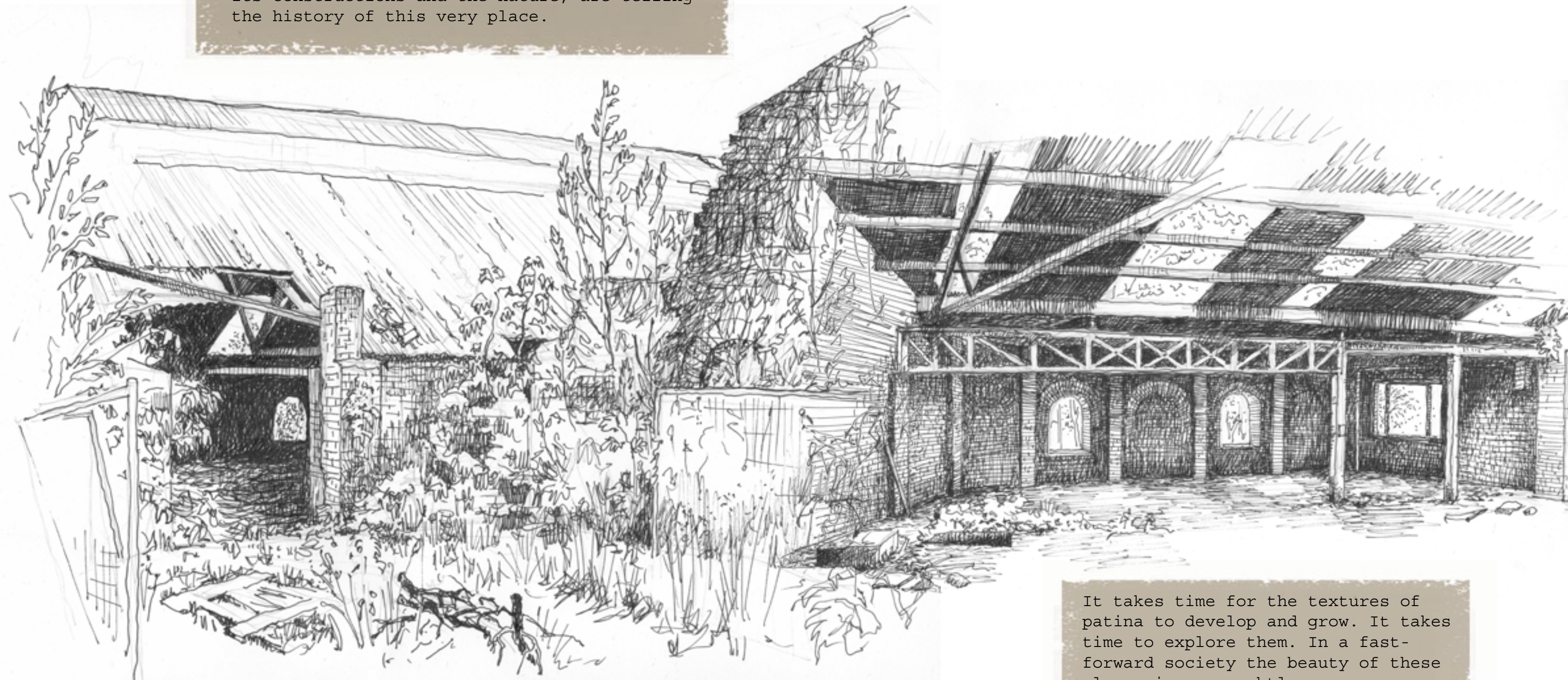
It takes time for the textures of patina to develop and grow. It takes time to explore them. In a fast-forward society the beauty of these places is very subtle.

The remnants of industrial construc-
tions invite imagination with their
subtle stories of man and man's con-
structions.

Also, there is a story of nature, and a
story of a possible future of the two.

Imagine.

V discussion

In this chapter I am first going to present my findings from the examining chapters above. After that follows the reflections, in which I am exploring the findings in a series of conceptual designs; catalysts. The catalysts are a way of directly testing the potential of the post-industrial ruin as an inspiration for landscape architecture. They are exploring the second question of this essay:

How to reinstate the wilderness void of the industrial ruin into the city, without it loosing its wild character and integrity?

5.1 findings

These are the findings; the conclusions drawn from the previous four chapters. The findings are describing the existing conditions of the post-industrial ruin, the qualities – and flaws – of these places of today.

heterotopia of the ruin

The post-industrial ruin is ambiguous. It is itself a product from the very capitalism and a part of the surplus typical for the industrialised world, the "buy today throw away tomorrow"-society. This paradoxical relation between the history of the post-industrial ruin as a capitalist construction, and the place of today entirely free from these forces, makes the post-industrial ruin a heterotopia, a space of an alternative order where the result of the capitalist society and its opposite, are existing in the same place.

The post-industrial ruin is also a heterotopia similar to both the accumulating heterotopia of the museum, and the transitory heterotopia of the festival. It collects layers of traces from the various activities taking place in it. Layers of nature are placed upon each other, layers of seasons and cycles collected in a place, itself, like the romantic ruins, beyond time.

But the ruin is also transitory, dynamic which affects the experience. It is constantly changing as objects are brought, moved and removed. Like the festival, you enter a world outside the usual. The transition from factory to wilderness is not as dramatic as when a festival changes the field which it occupies. It is gradual, continuous and still happening. When entering, you can expect the place to be different from the site you entered yesterday. When leaving you know that you will not return to the same place again. And one day, like the festival, it will be gone.

the loose space

In the derelict site or post-industrial ruin, the meticulous order that prevailed when the industry was in use, is now replaced by another, less rigid one not concerned with human definitions, such as indoors or outdoors, wall, ground or floor. The vegetation colonising the ruin, challenges our order and our idea of vegetation as we usually see it, outside the city in the forest or countryside, or in the city as garden or park vegetation.

Trees and plants growing inside what once was a building are blurring the distinctions to a level where it is no longer interesting to maintain definitions such as indoors or outdoors, forest or city. The overgrown ruin is a space between nature and manmade, clearly distinguished from its surroundings, city as forest.

The ruin is a place where nature still – or again – is untamed, where the normal order of things are upside down. The bizarre, sometimes unsettling, sometimes humorous, juxtaposition of things here is carnivalesque in itself, encouraging behaviour outside the conventional, wilderness behaviour, wild behaviour.

The post-industrial ruin is a place where chaos and disorder rule. It is a space full of possibilities of interpretation and alteration. Objects are brought, removed, placed and replaced and become something else. Visual order is not important, which give the other senses free range, to touch, to move, to the testing of physical limits. As outside the ordinary social conventions, it is also a place for the trying of new roles.

As a liminal and weakly classified space, the post-industrial ruin encourages behaviour outside the conventional. Disused buildings and abandoned land is used for festivals, flea markets and parties. They are used for activities connecting with the otherness – inside ourselves as well as nature's – for example sex, gardening and picking flowers. Derelict quarries and old factories are settings for raves, a celebration of dancing and music, as well as of the possibility of engaging in activities beyond the constraints of the law.

Thus, in the post-industrial ruin, the wilderness is represented not only by the otherness of nature, but by the otherness of society. In the ruin the untamed nature and untamed society come together, creating a place that is challenging, dangerous and dark, as well as playful, seducing and warm.

a place of a million futures

In the otherwise controlled and organised society, the ruins are spaces of chaos, providing possibilities of surprises and challenges. Features and elements are left, which once had clear purposes in the activities and order prevailing when the factory was in use. The factory context made the intended use of a certain object obvious. When the activities stopped, the order disappeared and gave way for a new one, in which the purpose of the object is no longer clear. The object becomes ambiguous, and the range of possible uses is only limited by imagination.

Thus, the remnants of industrial constructions invite to imagination. There is a history to be read, a history of man and man's constructions. Also, there is a story of nature, and a story of a possible future of the two. The single purpose spaces have one certain future. But like the object without a defined use opens for a million different ideas, the derelict space is a space of endless possible futures.

The post-industrial ruin is an exception from the rest of the city, deeply coloured by its relation to the primary wilderness as an environment resisting the organisation and control of modern society. This freedom poses an irresistible challenge to humans, both on a structural level and on an individual level in terms of fascination and exploration of a world beyond the usual daily life. From the ruins of 18th and 19th centuries inspiring the romantic poets and thinkers to explore the sublime, to the attraction the post-industrial spaces have on children as settings for new experiences, ruins are places where we explore and push our boundaries towards the unknown, from modest personal limits to eternal questions of the human existence.

5.2 catalysts

The additions which are a part of the reflection are a way of directly testing the potential of the findings and the post-industrial ruins as an inspiration for landscape architecture. They are exploring the second question of this essay:

How to reinstate the wilderness void of the industrial ruin into the city, without it loosing its wild character and integrity?

The main quality of the post-industrial ruin is its wilderness, or otherness, but which is also a reason of avoidance. This makes its development a balance between control and freedom, civilisation and wilderness, culture and nature. Design is a dual medium that can be a means of control, limiting opportunities to alternative uses and changes. But design can also be used to open up, include and make available.

loose uses for loose spaces

The otherness of the post-industrial ruin is originating in the inability of modern society to classify it. By being defined or ordered within a system, labelled, a space is being "tied down" as its amount of purposes become defined and organised, and thereby normalised. Due to its character, the post-industrial ruin is resisting to be defined.

The otherness is fundamental for the strong but ambiguous perception of the post-industrial ruins as places of attraction and fascination, as well as danger.

But the loose, undefined character of the ruin allows it to be appropriated for new, temporary uses that are as dynamic and changeable as the site itself. By introducing elements which invite to this type of spontaneous use, my hope is that the derelict space will be reclaimed by activities which will enhance the character of otherness, rather than limit it.

reinstating the wilderness

My aim is to present a couple of "catalysts" which will encourage the use of the post-industrial ruin. A temporary or changing use, still includes the ruin in the public space of the city. Spontaneous activities would rather enhance the otherness, than destroy it.

My proposed additions are based on the characteristics of otherness explored in this essay. As such, they are intended to meet a need that I found is not met by the modern city and modern design of public space. Encouraging activities and encounters with others, they are also social catalysts. They are not based on a visual beauty, but on a physical sensuality inspired by nature and the wilderness of ruins.

My hope is that they will break the mental barrier and lead people into the ruin to make use of it, including it in the existing network of public space. In a sense my additions or catalysts are intended as a "ready make" of the post-industrial ruin, in terms of adding symbolic features that change how you look upon the place.

A place that is devoid of human interference induces fear. So does a place where the human activity is unfamiliar and strange. Thus a certain amount of familiar human activity is preferable to "widen the audience". One way is by letting the place borrow familiar features from gardens and parks. Another way is to frame it in a way that turns it into something that people appreciate as something more than a mere piece of derelict land.

The overarching aim is to activate the space, draw people in there to take part of the activities and thereby make it a familiar place.

My additions are no major constructions. Most of them can be easily removed. They do not demand much manipulation of the character of the places, as they are installations and not a redesigning of the place.

If not used, they will be added to the layers that constitute the character of the places, and maybe become another mystery for the few, brave or obstinate ones.

What I call the Farmer's Market Catalyst is a combination of two sources of inspiration, really only separated by time: the medieval market place, and the modern festival.

As a seasonally recurring festivity based on commerce, it borrows its character from the medieval carnival. Like the medieval festivities, it has the potential to become a festival heterotopia; a liminal space outside time, existing only for a day or a night and therefore, as an exception, inviting to activities outside the normal.

Midsummer
singing and dancing, celebrating the longest day of the year

Farmer's market

Halloween:
use your pumpkin fiesta!
Carve pumpkins,
eat pumpkin soup

Easter:
bonfire party

Christmas Market
sell or exchange your home made christmas decorations - or why not just make them here?

The ruin; a liminal place and a heterotopia in itself, is a favourable setting for heterotopic events, which is a reason for carnivalesque festivities such as spontaneous festivals, interactive theatre and role plays as well as raves often are located in disused buildings and on derelict land.

To partake in a rave yourself, or be a part of a festival is an excellent way of become familiar with these wild, informal activities. Why not have a 18th century masquerade dinner in your local ruin? Or follow up the Farmer's Market with a food and music festival. The ruin never closes, and there exists no such thing as calling last orders...

Sell your crop, your chickens, flowers or old furniture! Swap books, clothes, jewellery or bikes. Make food from all corners of the world and share. Then just add music!

the garden of loose parts

This installation is inspired by the otherness of the community garden. The community garden includes a derelict site in a personal context. It is also a place where people themselves take initiative to change the existing urban landscape. My aim with this installation is to create a climate which encourages similar activities.

In the built, static environment the community garden represents an environment that grows and changes with the seasons. But it also resists other forces which try to remove it for exploitation of the site.

The garden also have several connections to the otherness. For children, to plant a seed and see it grow is a way to come to terms with abstract concepts such as life and death. The plant flowering, setting fruit which contains new seeds illustrates the stages of the life cycle in a way that the child can understand.

To grow plants is also a way to participate and engage in nature. Gardening is taking care of living things. By doing so, we connect with the organic world in a way that is natural to humans. This helps us understand our belonging in the natural world.

Experimenting with growing plants and making the connection between that and the food on the table and in the supermarket, is a way of learning about nature. In an increasingly urban society with an industrialised agriculture, the origin of the food gets very abstract. Allotments, school and nursery gardens are important sources providing this link.

The gardener knows that to achieve a harvest every year it requires a cycle where the nutrition that goes out has to be replaced. This understanding applied to the earth, would lead to a more sustainable use of nature.

The garden of loose parts is an installa-
tion where everything that can hold soil
can be used. The idea is to create a gar-
den, a landscape, of moveable parts. All
containers can be moved from shade to sun
depending on plants. The bizarre sight of
a flourishing garden which entirely grows
out of random containers; boxes, toilets,
bathtubs, buckets... It is a heterotopic
juxtaposition.

The shopping trolleys are not a coinci-
dent. They have wheels so they are move-
able even if they are heavy. But what I am
particularly attracted by is the symbol-
ism of homegrown vegetables in the strong-
est of supermarket symbols: the shopping
trolley.

5.3 reflection

This reflection part consists of a discussion illustrated by the catalysts, which are to demonstrate possibilities but also problems raised in my exploration of the potentials of the post-industrial ruin as a public space.

safety and freedom

Behind Foucault's discussion of heterotopia lie two extremes; one of order and one of freedom. In Kafka's vision, the absolute control is given complete freedom. In the vision of de Sade, freedom is allowed total control. Depending on whom we ask, de Sade or his victims, a person of the bureaucracy or Josef K in the Trial, we would get different answers of who is free and who is not.

Freedom and safety are two important words in the discussion of the design of parks and public space, and so also in my discussion on post-industrial ruins.

Everybody should have the right to be free and safe. But often freedom *from* for example crime, also leads to curtailed freedom *to do* other things. Freedom and safety is a double edged sword, as freedom from surveillance and control also create limitations. People avoid places where they feel unsafe. Urban woodlands, a landscape on the margin of urban and rural, between manmade and natural, are considered dangerous and therefore avoided. But even people, who value these places, do not always feel safe there. In my eyes, this highlights the fact that a quest to eradicate all spaces that induce any fear, also might lead to the eradication of the places people valuate the most.

The post-industrial ruins are completely free, which make them avoided by a lot of people who feel unsafe and scared, associating them with crime, violence and fear. The untouched urban wilderness as a public space is a paradox. The truly wild, derelict post-industrial space is a site for the few, brave or obstinate ones.

Some design might be considered. If it comes in the form of additions of a play feature to attract people in, an information sign describing the importance of the site as a habitat, or a temporary installation, its presence shows that someone cares and that what the place looks like is the result of a decision.

Bringing people in, making them familiar with the site, its character and activities is a way to encourage uses, adding activities rather than limit or restrain existing ones.

THIS IS A
LOOSE SPACE

The entrance of a place is important. The entrance and the surrounding border are statements; decisions of what should be communicated to the outside, and what expectations the visitor should have. A place of secrets should communicate secrets.

Also, a place of secrets should be entered in a secret way. A border communicating mystery should not give everything away, but allow glimpses, promises of what awaits behind it... It should be entered crouching, crawling, climbing.

The design of this catalyst is an attempt to interpret the secret and mystery of the post-industrial ruin, creating a front outwards that communicates the character of the inside.

The post-industrial ruin is a wilderness. As a public space it will struggle with an appearance that is messy and chaotic. Framing it in a way that communicates this appearance as a conscious choice will, by changing the way the space is looked upon, work similarly to the act of "ready make" - an art form that can turn even a urinal bowl into a piece of art...

These are two versions of a "single layer" fence design prototype.

Climb over...   ...or crawl under

a fence for hot and sunny places...

the first layer....   a second layer....

with roughly a meter's distance, the two layers of fence will create an effectful entrance with a strong character.

a fence for shady and moist places...

your private space

The theory of loose parts, the existence of adventure playgrounds as well as the attraction and fascination for the post-industrial ruins are all speaking of a need of changeable places for free, informal activities.

The modern society provides a lot of opportunities for the individual. But it also constantly expects certain, uniform, behaviours which we, as single individuals, can not affect. Thus society is experienced as a daily constraint of our will, limiting our options and behaviour. Out of this comes a contrast tension, as we can never be fully at home and at peace in society, but neither can we live outside it.

In this context, towards a background of a society where the individual feel too small to make a difference, I think that the urban wilderness, as outside society, provides a loose space which can actually be changed. It might even be of less importance if the setting can be physically changed, if it is a place where the person can carry out his or hers own will, or if it is a place with so many facets and secrets that it can be interpreted into anything the person wants it to be.

If the sublime is found in the wilderness, also the urban wilderness could provide an opportunity to venture out of society, into a world where man is not in control. Like the romantic ruins of the 18th and 19th centuries, the remnants of industrial constructions invite imagination with their subtle stories. There is a history to be read, a history of man and man's constructions but also of nature, and a story of a possible future of the two, of which we can only guess. This uncertainty gives perspective on society, as well as a chance to encounter and bond with the natural world.

The urban wilderness also provides a place for personal physical challenge; to tear down a wall, build a structure, climb a tree or to explore the darkness of an old factory basement. "The body comes to life when coping with difficulties" as Edensor suggests (2005:95). The possibility to challenge yourself with a potentially dangerous task with only your own physical powers to rely on, and complete this task, makes you feel alive. I would say that it is a way of experiencing a modern, relatively modest, version of the sublime. Likewise might mastery play; the playing with the elements, also be a way of encountering the sublime on an even smaller, yet important, scale.

This catalyst is made as an adventure playground, growing as organic as the vegetation, changing, from year to year, season to season. The succession of the habitat stages can also be seen as reflecting the maturing of the children, as the different succession stages are suitable for different age groups. The first stage is more toddler friendly, while the mature forest is for older age groups, who also are able to build more advanced constructions.

All stages can exist within the same site on the same time. They can be used for learning about the different habitats as well as about the elements.

Nature in the early succession stages is favoured by some disturbance, which will for sure be provided by the acivities of the playing children.

The first succession stage with a lot of bare ground is excellent for play requiring open space. Stepping stones, sand, grass but also mud and puddles are assets of this type of "play habitat". The bare ground allows risk free play with fire - but fire can also be a way to keep the ground open in a way that is natural for prairies. Meadows with long grass make the wind visible, rain transforms the soil to slippery slime and the sand to building material. Stones can be arranged into labyrinths, castles, paths...
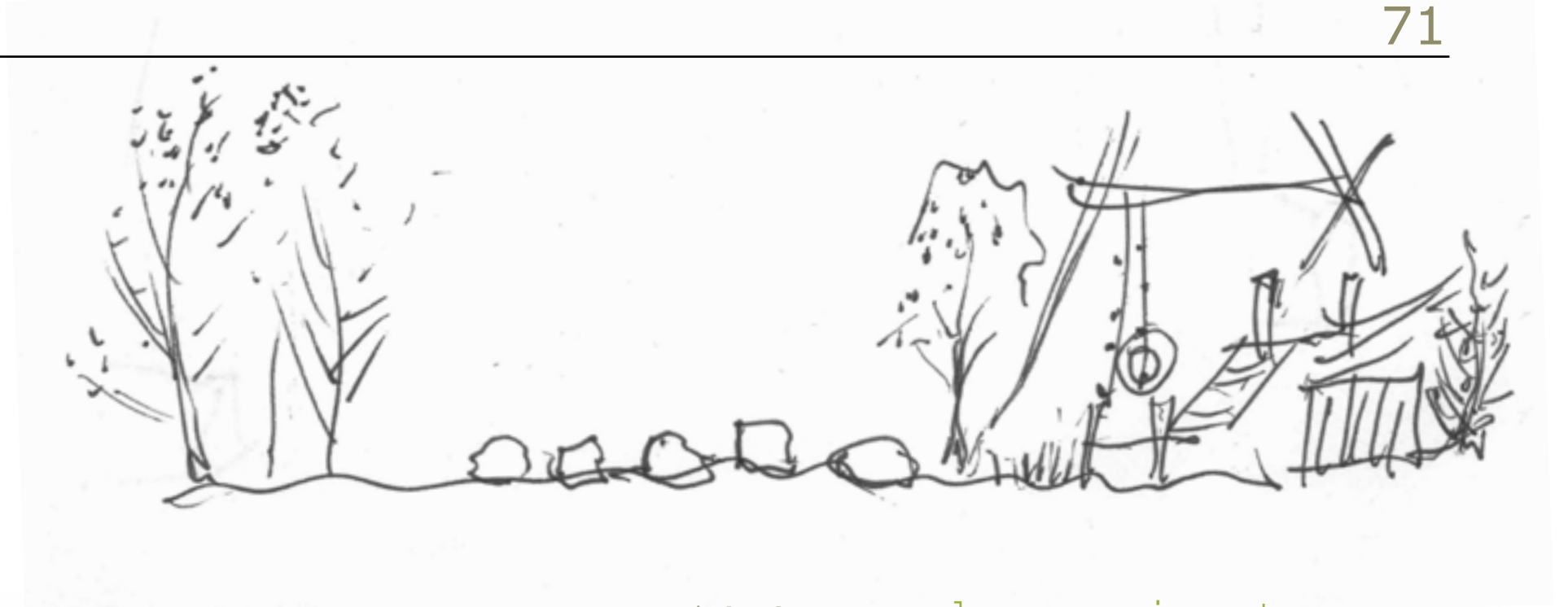
With the second succession stage more vegetation is allowing labyrinths, playing of hide-and-seek, sneaking in the bushes and balance acts on wooden paths in the bush forest. Secret places in the shrubbery, hiding places on all levels, the whispering leaves like bamboo... With species like willow the branches themselves can be turned into huts, houses and fences.

The mature forest stage is the final challenge - constructionwise as well as physically... Imagine dens in the tree tops, rope ladders, swings...

design as a balance

During this project, I have been exploring wilderness, otherness, attempting to define it, describe it. I realise now, with hindsight, that I can define the wilderness or otherness by its antonym. In this essay the antonym has been design. If so, to consider the *wilderness* the key quality also means to consider the *absence of design* the key quality. This has led me to maintain a very critical view where all design is considered a restriction on freedom. The focus on surveillance and control has in my literature occasionally been to an extent where society has become an equivalent to these, which probably added to my scepticism towards design.

To design is to make a choice for people. Design is a process, in which user's opinions, design intentions, the client's need, budget limitations etc all are considered on the way towards a design solution. Through the application of the chosen design, a decision is made on what should be the purpose of a certain place. The other uses are excluded. If the design process was skewed to the wrong conclusion, there is a good chance that there will be no use of the place at all. Thus design can be, and often is, a means of control in the way it puts restrictions on a space, intentionally or unintentionally.

Loose space occurs where people themselves make that decision of what a space should be used for, while a space that is designed often is hard to loos-en. The possible uses of the designed space are often limited to the intended ones, which are not found but given, or imposed. I think that there is a lot to learn from the loose space as well as the wilderness and otherness of the post-industrial ruins. How can design suggest instead of impose, be found instead of pointed out, be a secret instead of obvious?

I think that designing for loose space, or a place of loose parts, could be described as letting the wilderness in. Not always fully, but to an extent. Allowing loose space is to allow that not everything is decided, fixed and certain. This is a balance and a trust. It is a balance between culture and nature, order and wilderness, control and freedom. It is trust in terms of believing in the users' abilities to decide for themselves. Mystery, challenge, danger, freedom – they all require trust in that sense; that the users of the place know their limits, that they know what to do and what not to, but also that they will see the beauty, find the good spots and possibilities.

All places can not be entirely wild. The wild places will always be searched by some, shunned by others. But if public space should provide the whole range from perfection to wilderness, I am sure that in our highly ordered, modern society, there is more room for the wilderness of the post-industrial ruin, than for another perfect place.

The rails make the furniture possible to move into different constellations and combinations, and also to different positions along in the path, which is chosen to allow movement between the two sunniest spot of the site, via rain protection and shade under the roofs.
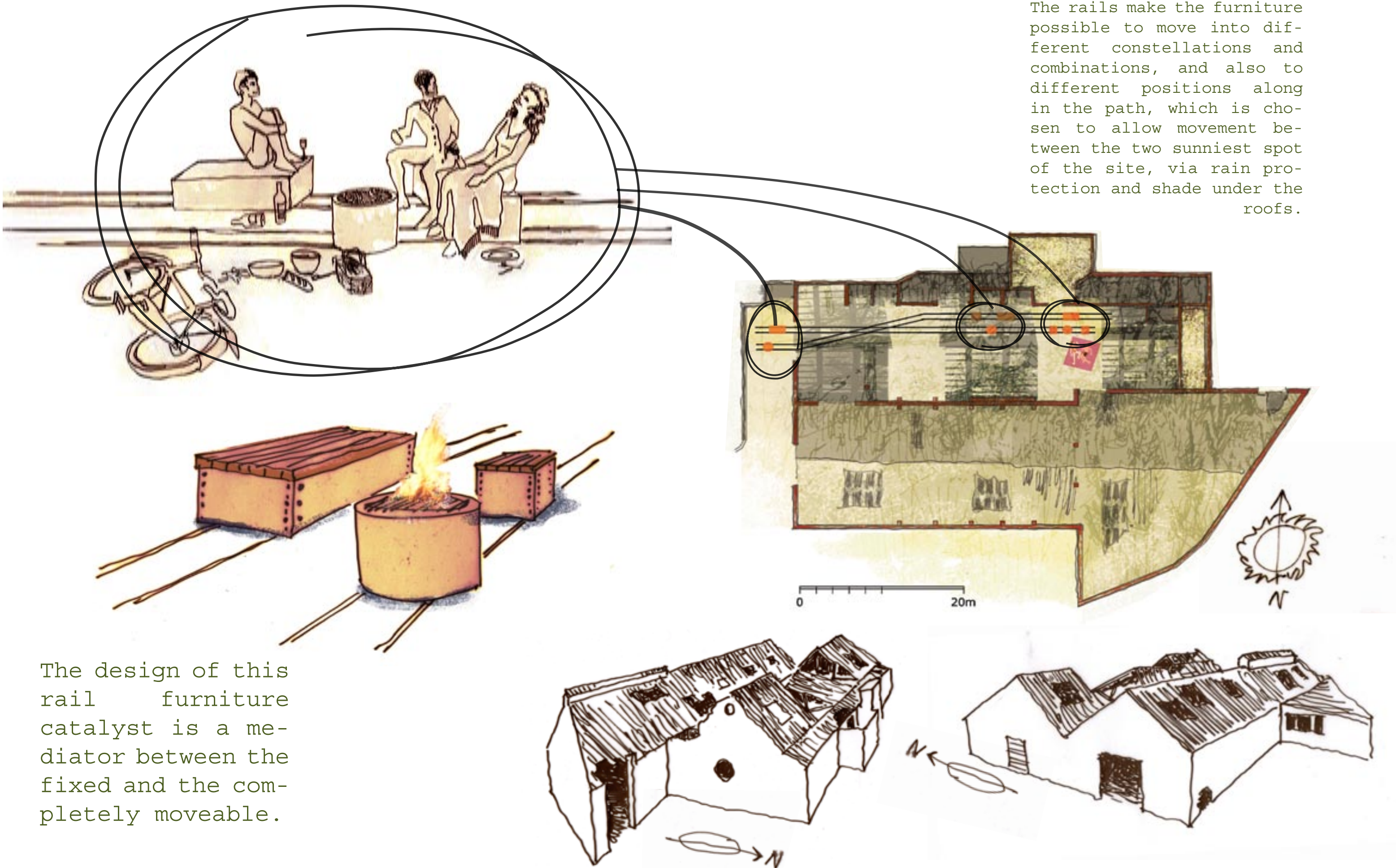
The design of this rail furniture catalyst is a mediator between the fixed and the completely moveable.

Yesterday, when I visited my my main site one last time, winter had revealed a hidden door to a room I had not noticed before.

Sheffield, 27/01/2011

on illustrations...

Sketching is a way of getting to know a site. Different from photography, a sketch is a process. It requires you to stay on the site, do a selection of what to include and what to exclude, not just with the angle but of every single object. This indeed requires you to be open and fully present. The searching of an interesting motive and a suitable angle, as well as the actual act of drawing all set you in a mind frame where you see beauty in any little detail. You fall in love.
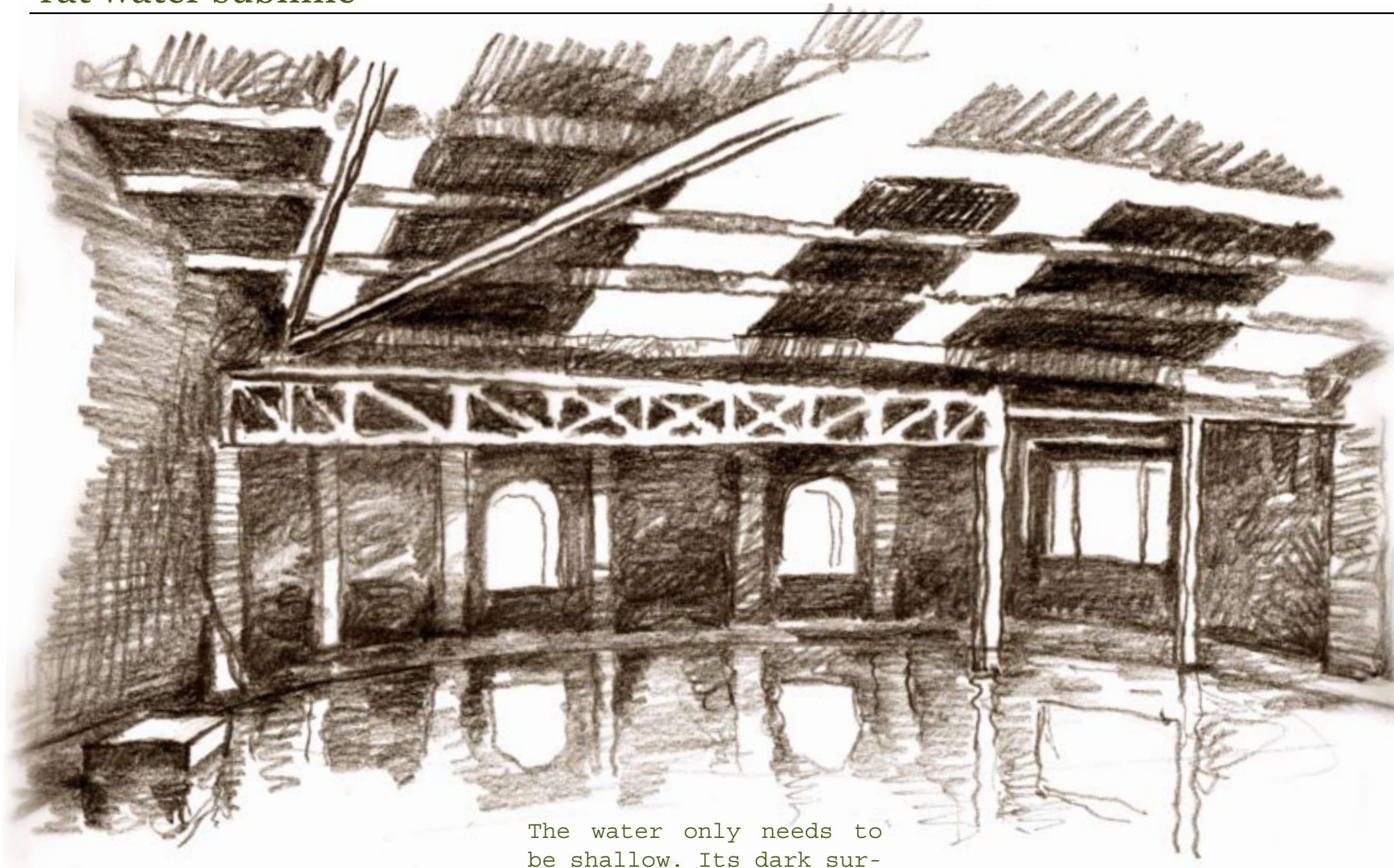
You fall in love, and as a result you might rather describe, than change.

If I would have known, and if I would have had the discipline, I might have divided not only the essay but also the time of the whole project into two separate parts. The first allowing the philosopher, writer and artist to fall in love and describe. When that was done, handed in even, I would have done the second part, which I would have carried out strictly in the role of the architect and the designer as the unsentimental agent of change.

I am going to end this essay by an extract of Lefebvre's description of the representational space, highlighting the fact that an integral part and also the magic of the representational space is its resistance to design.
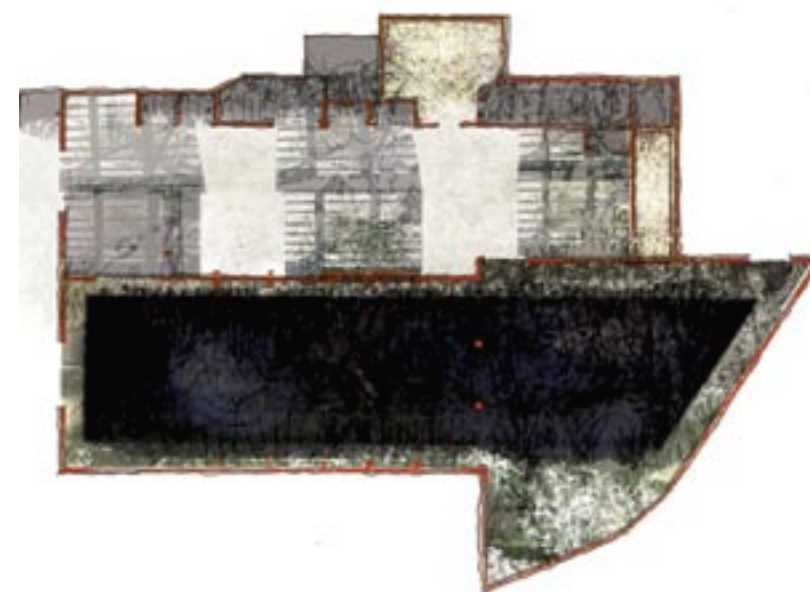
> (This is) the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users', but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do no more than describe. (Lefebvre, 1991:39)

This design was an early prototype that I discarded when I read that dark stagnant water was the opposite of the Sublime (Urry, 2000). But as I believe the visual effect could be quite powerful, I decided to include it anyway. This conceptual design is very true to the character of the site of today, as it is basically just a widening of the existing puddles.

From a practical perspective this design is horrible; a rat water and a health risk on top of the fact that it is going to be generally minging.

But as a catalyst representing anti-beauty, it is good. It is going to collect litter and grime and become even darker and grimier. The darkness of thrown away things.

And then imagine a few stones placed across it, like a path...

This is an interpretation of the Grotto of the 18th century sublime. An early prototype design that I think can be quite powerful, as it enhances the dark, cold wetness and the vast dimensions of this old warehouse. The mirror effect doubles the volume of the space.

The water only needs to be shallow. Its dark surface creates a perfect image of the ceiling with its steel rafters, bolts and darkness but also the sky and leaves visible through the holes. Imagine the sound of drops falling in a hall measuring fifty times fifteen meters... The sound of the true sublime.

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