Mobilities on the Margins

Creative Processes of Place-Making

Edited by
Björn Thorsteinsson
Katrín Anna Lund
Gunnar Thór Jóhannesson
Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir

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Björn Thorsteinsson · Katrín Anna Lund ·
Gunnar Thór Jóhannesson ·
Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir
Editors

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Editors
Björn Thorsteinsson
Faculty of Philosophy, History
and Archaeology
University of Iceland
Reykjavík, Iceland

Gunnar Thór Jóhannesson
Department of Geography and Tourism
University of Iceland
Reykjavík, Iceland

Katrín Anna Lund
Department of Geography and Tourism
University of Iceland
Reykjavík, Iceland

Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir
Department of Art Education
University of Iceland
Reykjavík, Iceland

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Preface and Acknowledgements

This volume is one of the key products of a three year long research project funded by the Icelandic Research Fund (Rannís). In the spring of 2020, when a short window opened after three months of all types of lockdowns and isolation due to COVID-19 the leaders of the project got a phone call from Rannís who informed them that the Icelandic government was putting extra money into research and other venues in order to refresh economic endeavours that had been temporarily set on hold in the midst of the pandemic. In short, much to our surprise and pleasure we could inform our co-applicants in Iceland, Finland, Denmark and Scotland that our bit had now been accepted and preparations immediately started.

But little did we know and three months later, in autumn 2020, when the project was formally initiated much changes from original plans had taken place as new variant of COVID-19 was threatening to prevent some of the basic features of research activities through rules of social distancing and limited mobility within and between countries. Nevertheless, despite some setbacks, we adjusted to the situation and kept going, improvising as the COVID-19 situation kept changing. It is thus possible to argue that this project about mobilities on the margins has been situated at the margins from different points of view right from the beginning. At the same time, as we were dealing with marginal situation in our work the project itself had also been situated on margins by Rannís as it had not received funding at the main allocation. Without us knowing, it sat quietly

on the borders as the next in line to be granted funding if and when an extra money was allotted for more projects to be granted funding. Also, we were told that it had proofed hard for the funding body to evaluate our proposal due to how unconventional it was, or how badly it fitted pre-defined disciplinary categories, hence, somehow marginal. And, on margins we continued with our work—on the margins of social normality due to COVID-19—but also on margins where different disciplines and nationalities met to academically scrutinise the concepts of mobilities, place and margins for the next three years to come.

What working on the project emphasised for us all is that being on margins can be both inspiring and fruitful position. The intellectual ingredients mixing from philosophy, anthropology, ethnology, sociology, tourism studies and the arts combined productively. For the first two years, we met once every month online, read and discussed texts selected by different members on the team to be inspired and learn about each other's central disciplines. We added people and activities to the project, such as field courses for students in the arts and architecture who allowed themselves to be moved by marginal places and gave feedback and input to our work. We travelled together in smaller and bigger groups to marginal places and allowed them to stir our thoughts which resulted in writing workshops in which we experimented with how to articulate our topics of writing for this volume that is now materialising. Although, it marks the outcome of a project coming to an end we want to see it as a beginning point that will allow us to continue conversations about mobility and margins in wider contexts, with other academics as well as with all those interested in, living on, dwelling with and become inspired by margins in one way or another.

We want to thank Rannís for the co-operation and believing in the project, although marginally. Rachael Ballard, at Palgrave deserves much gratitude for the genuine interests she showed when we approached her with the idea of the book. She initially provided much support and guided us ahead both professionally and personally. Working with Palgrave has been a delight. Michaël Virgil Bishop at the University of Iceland needs to be acknowledged for his patience and diligence with working on and coordinating the maps for relevant chapters. We gratefully thank Jo Vergunst who took on the task of language washing all the chapters in this volume.

Finally, but not the least, all the people that participated in our research activities, that guided us to and within the marginal landscapes to and

through which we have travelled, hosted us, showed interests in our work, answered our inquires and helped to solve challenges we faced on occasions get the warmest thanks. Without them our work would have been impossible to carry out.

Reykjavík, Iceland   Gunnar Thór Jóhannesson
June 2023   Katrín Anna Lund
                                                                              Björn Thorsteinsson
                                                                      Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir

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Notes on Contributors

Þórný Barðadóttir is a researcher at the Icelandic Tourism Research Centre and a Ph.D. student in Tourism Studies at the University of Iceland. Þórný's research interests are on rural tourism and the role of tourism in regional development. Her previous research and publications include research on on-shore tourism linked to cruise visits into coastal communities.

Sigrún Birgisdóttir studied architecture in Italy and the UK. Previously, she held the position of Dean of the Design and Architecture Department at the University of Arts in Iceland. Currently, she is studying for a doctorate in Cultural studies at the University of Iceland with the project Transformation at 64° latitude: Tourism, landscape and urbanisation, which investigates how tourism traffic shapes new spaces and contributes to the transformation of landscape.

Elva Björg Einarsdóttir is a doctoral student in tourism studies at the University of Iceland. Her studies concern place making in the Westfjords of Iceland using diverse qualitative methods and more-than-human theoretical approach. In this volume, she emphasis the ethnography of walking, bringing forth an ever changing place, by walking old routes, studying maps and place names archives and analysing them in relation to historical changes.

Emily Höckert is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Lapland, Finland. Her research cultivates relational ways of being, imagining and

enacting in tourism settings. She approaches the questions of multi-species hospitality and ethics of care at the crossroads of hermeneutic phenomenology, postcolonial philosophy and new materialism, asking how more-than-human communities welcome and care for each other. Emily is a member of the research project "Envisioning proximity tourism with new materialism" (funded by the Academy of Finland, 2019–2023; www.ilarctic.com) and the "Intra-living in the Anthropocene" research network.

Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir is an associate professor at the Iceland University of the Arts' department of art education. Her research centres on environmental ethics, phenomenology and aesthetics, and she has published papers and book chapters on landscape, beauty and sensuous knowledge. Her current research within phenomenology and environmental aesthetics focuses on human-environment/body-landscape relations and processes, and their role in human thinking and understanding.

Gunnar Thór Jóhannesson is professor in the Department of Geography and Tourism at the University of Iceland. His recent research has been on destination dynamics, mobilities and place-making with a focus on the entanglement of nature and culture. This has involved studies on entrepreneurship, innovation, tourism controversies and policymaking in the context of the Arctic and European High North. He has published his research in various books and journals. He is the vice lead of UArctic Thematic Network on Northern Tourism and a founding member of AIRTH—Alliance for Innovators and Researchers in Tourism.

Katrín Anna Lund is an anthropologist who has a position as a professor in the Department of Geography and Tourism at the University of Iceland. She has done research in Spain, Scotland and Iceland with a focus on landscape phenomenology, mobile practices, sensation and place making. She has published her work extensively in various books and journals.

Minna Nousiainen is a University Teacher in Tourism Research at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Lapland. Her research interests lie in relational approach to place, landscape and mobilities with an emphasis on proximities in tourism and everyday environments, especially in the North. Most recently, she has been involved with the project Contested

Nature of Allemansrätten focusing on everyone's rights in periphery landscapes (led by Brynhild Granås, UiT Arctic University of Norway, funded by the Research Council of Norway).

Outi Rantala Professor, Responsible Arctic Tourism, at University of Lapland and Adjunct professor, Environmental Humanities, at University of Turku. The focus of her research activities has been on creating critical, reflective and alternative narratives on northern tourism. Currently, she leads a research project Envisioning proximity tourism with new materialism (funded by the Academy of Finland), and the University of Lapland's share of the research project Contested Nature of Allemansrätten (led by Brynhild Granås, UiT Arctic University of Norway, funded by the Research Council of Norway).

Carina Ren is Associate professor at the Department of Culture and Learning at Aalborg University, Denmark and head of AAU Arctic, the Arctic research platform of her university. Inspired by relational thinking, she researches how tourism interferes with other fields of the social, exploring the practices, events and technologies through which tourism is developed, organised and valued. Most often, her research takes place in the North Atlantic, Nordic Arctic and Greenland.

Mette Simonsen Abildgaard is an associate professor in Arctic Technology Studies at the Department of Culture and Learning at Aalborg University who works across STS, Media Studies and History of Technology. Her research focuses on intersections between infrastructures, in particular telecommunication, and everyday life in the Arctic and Nordic countries.

Björn Thorsteinsson is a professor of philosophy at the University of Iceland, specialising in phenomenology, ontology and post-structuralism. He is the author of *La question de la justice chez Jacques Derrida* (2005) as well as of numerous articles and book chapters in English and other languages.

Seija Tuulentie works as a research professor of Arctic sustainable livelihoods in Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke) and holds a title of docent in environmental sociology at the University of Lapland. Her research fields include nature-based tourism, rural development and conflicting land use issues. She has concentrated especially in the Arctic and northern questions in Finland and Scandinavia.

Jo Vergunst is a Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. His research is about people's relationships with their environments with a focus on Scotland. He has a long-term research interest in walking and everyday life, and current research explores landscape decision-making and the futures of tree and woodland landscapes.

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Introduction

Gunnar Thór Jóhannesson, Katrín Anna Lund,
Björn Thorsteinsson, and Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir

This book examines places on the margins and the dynamics through which a marginal position of a place is created. Specifically, it explores how places, mostly in sparsely populated areas, often perceived as immobile and frozen in time, come into being and develop through interference of everyday mobilities and creative practices that cut across the spheres of culture and nature as usually defined. An emphasis is put on the

G. T. Jóhannesson (✉) · K. A. Lund
Department of Geography and Tourism, University of Iceland, Reykjavík,
Iceland
e-mail: gtj@hi.is

K. A. Lund
e-mail: kl@hi.is

B. Thorsteinsson
Faculty of Philosophy, History and Archaeology, University of Iceland,
Reykjavík, Iceland
e-mail: bjorntho@hi.is

G. R. Jóhannesdóttir
Department of Art Education, Iceland University of the Arts, Reykjavík, Iceland
e-mail: gudbjorgr@lhi.is

multiple relations through which places emerge, where people compose their lives as best they can with their surroundings. A special concern is to explore the links between travelling, landscape and material culture and how places and margins are enacted through mobilities and creative practices of humans and other beings. The emphasis on mobility disturbs the perception of a place as a bounded entity and offers a useful and necessary understanding of places as mobile and fluid. Marginal places emerge as distinctive spaces through heterogeneous forms of mobility, their resilience and viability resting on the creative use of resources and on dynamic entanglements of human and non-human entities.

Each in their own way, the book's chapters pay extended attention to what can be described as 'undressed' or 'undesigned' spaces (Veijola 2014, 2016). These are used or disused spaces that we conceive here as spaces of potentiality and creativity—spaces such as wilderness, old and new pathways, villages in decay, modern ruins and functioning as well as not quite functioning infrastructure. We put creativity and everyday life at the forefront in order to work with current conditions and imagine the future potential of undressed rural spaces. Thus, our approach attends to the complexity of the everyday and seeks to weave together the poetics of life (Jackson 2007; Mclean 2009; Lund and Jóhannesson 2016) to open up possibilities that unfold through more-than-human integration, giving nature a voice in debates and deliberation about the future. Thus, we follow how everyday more-than-human mobile activities stir up different layers of the past in the present, creating conditions for future entanglements. In this regard, encounters with wildlife and delicate flora give meaning to landscape that at first seemed to be an empty space. Thus, landscapes of alleged nothingness as well as industrial ruins, derelict farmsteads and infrastructures may become places of creative practices, connecting past times with current and future potentialities. This approach underlines that history is not one-dimensional and linear but rather fluid and fluctuating, a meshwork of multi-dimensional mobilities and happenings. The volume seeks to understand how places that seemingly have been left behind or appear to have limited significance are, for those who inhabit or dwell in them, neither behind, forsaken nor without meaning. Rather, their vitality stems from their mobile, dynamic past and present narratives of the comings and goings of people, ideas, things, resources and natural entities. It thus arises through more-than-human mobility and through balancing acts of creative entanglements that are

continuously ongoing. Nevertheless, how mobility has occurred through time also depends on how places are differently located and affected by regional, national and global political changes and trends.

* * *

In the contemporary Western world, tourism, as a practise of travel, is seen as one of the dominant forms of mobility and, given the capital that moves with it, has been defined as an industry as such. However, tourism seen in a wider context as a mobile practice is nothing new. In the past, explorers, cartographers, merchants and missionaries travelled distances to encounter unknown as well as known terrains, and military activities have through the centuries activated vast movements of people all around the globe. In fact, people have always been on the move in a world that has been shaped, and is being shaped, by mobile practices. The history of exploration, the search for natural resources and geo-political agendas still have repercussions today and affect contours of tourism mobilities in many parts of the world, including the Arctic and northern regions that are studied in this book (Abram and Lund 2016). A case in point is that the international airports and main gateways for international tourism to Greenland and Iceland were both constructed originally as military facilities for US forces during and after World War II. The location of these gateways shape the travel behaviour of visitors and thus affect the position of places in relation to centre and margins in the growing tourism economy. These and other past mobilities leave their traces in the landscape in the form of infrastructure as well as atmospheres and narratives that continue to shape places that in turn transform and assign new roles to these traces.

This demands a shifting understanding of the concept of mobility as it is used in the conventional social sciences. As Solnit (2000) has pointed out, the postmodern body invoked in social science is hypermobile as it is "shuttled around by airplanes and hurtling cars" like a "parcel in transit" (Solnit 2000, 28) rather than being seen as a relational, sensual and earthly being. The latter demands an approach towards mobility as more-than-human that emphasises everyday practices as mobile activities, acknowledging that humans do not live on earth but *with* it (Pálsson and Swanson 2016) and, furthermore, brings in temporal dimensions (Lund and Jóhannesson 2014). By this we mean a sense of history that is not one-dimensional and linear in its scope but fluid and fluctuating

as it makes itself present in its absence (Rose and Wylie 2006; Lund 2013; Lund and Jóhannesson 2016). From this point of view, we argue that marginal places should be recognised as dynamic and mobile contact zones (Pratt 1992; Clifford 1997) that are characterised by how people travel in their dwelling and dwell in their travels (Clifford 1997; Germann Molz 2008). After all, it is the body that allows us to travel, and as bodies we are earthly sensual beings that are entangled and intertwined with their environment through the flesh of the world (Merleau-Ponty 1968).

In discussion on tourism as a tool for development, creativity has recently received attention (Brouder 2012; Jóhannesson and Lund 2017). This interest is grounded in a wider discussion on the role of culture for innovation and economic development, most often emphasising how the creative capacity of individuals is a decisive factor for the prosperity and competitiveness of regions and places (du Gay and Pryke 2002; Florida 2004; Gibson 2010). Tanggard (2013) points out that the usual understanding of creativity emphasises the individual and their ability to innovate, act as entrepreneurs and thereby respond to societal changes. According to this emphasis on the individual, some seem to be more creative than others, for instance, members of what Florida (2004) identified as the creative class. The discourse on creativity has also often been related to urban centres (Gibson 2010; Waitt and Gibson 2009) but recently this view has been criticised through studies of creative practices in rural areas (Cloke 2007).

In the context of place-making, it is vital to relate the concept of creativity to concrete practices in order to engage with and grasp place dynamics in critical ways. Hence, we approach creativity as relational, connected to improvisation and thus much more as a process rather than an end product in the sense of a novel innovation that marks a historical break or a separation between those who are creative and those who are not (Hallam and Ingold 2007; McLean 2009). As such, creativity as a process of improvisation is integral to daily activities and engagements with the world (Tanggard 2013). It refers to the ways in which societal order is continuously emergent through relational practices and how it depends on care in the sense of "enduring work that seeks improvement but does not necessarily succeed" (Heuts and Mol 2013, 141). This approach also underlines that innovation is accomplished through relational work (Callon 2004); it does not happen in a vacuum and is guided by diverse rationalities as much work on lifestyle entrepreneurship and social innovation has demonstrated (Peters et al. 2009; Ateljevic and

Page 2009). When exploring place development and how people improvise future potentials it is crucial to follow these co-existing rationalities and trace how the spheres of nature and culture connect and emerge through creative practices.

In this context, landscape and material culture comes to the fore. Recent literature has acknowledged the agency of landscape as vital and affective (e.g. Ingold 2000; Bender 2002; Benediktsson and Lund 2010; Lund and Wilson 2010; Lund 2013; Tilley and Cameron-Daum 2017). As Pálsson (2013) states, undressed spaces "clearly illustrate the interconnected nature of the landscape's formation processes, between the supposedly natural and cultural" (174). However, conventional views that regard culture as separated from nature often oversee the vitality and possibilities that messy materialities of in-betweenness entail (Edensor 2005, 2008; Pétursdóttir 2020; Olsen and Pétursdóttir 2014; Bille and Sörensen 2016; DeSilvey 2017). We regard landscapes as multi-layered and narrative agents, a meshwork (Ingold 2013) where pathways of past, present and future entangle and provide creative spaces of potentiality and co-creative improvisations (Edensor 2008; Pétursdóttir 2013; Pálsson 2013; Lund and Jóhannesson 2014, 2016). From a phenomenological perspective, landscape must refer to perception and thus the body; speaking of landscape is speaking of how these multi-layered and entangled meshworks are perceived and made sense of by the bodies that intertwine with them through their dwelling. In sum, we embrace the view that creativity emerges from more-than-human mobile entanglements and should not be examined in isolation as merely an individual and innovative practice.

* * *

This book grows out of an international research project funded by the Icelandic Research Fund (grant no. 207144-051). As originally defined, the project largely focused on two areas in Iceland that have traditionally been considered remote or marginal: Melrakkaslétta and the Southern Westfjords. Iceland as such, of course, can be seen as geographically marginal as a semi-arctic land at the northern edge of Europe (Lund et al. 2016) and the two areas of study are also perceived as marginal within Iceland. The composition of the research team, however, quite naturally extended the project's scope beyond Iceland to other areas which, as it turned out, are all located in northern or Arctic regions. Thus, two

chapters deal with Iceland's closest neighbour, geographically speaking, namely Greenland. If Iceland is seen as marginal, then Greenland must surely be defined as even more so; to illustrate this point from an Icelandic point of view, it may be mentioned that for Icelanders, the expenses of air travel to Greenland have traditionally been similar to those incurred by going to Japan. Other chapters focus on northern Finland, another region normally defined as belonging to the Arctic. The traditional name for the region, Lapland, is revealing in terms of its social and political legacy, since it refers to its indigenous people, now referred to as the Sami but previously called 'Lapps', a term now seen as derogatory. Historically marginal, this region is now receiving its fair share of global mass tourism. Yet, one person's experienced margin must always be another's centre, which brings forth the question about what constitutes perceived margins in both a national and global context. Importantly, margins also invite an examination from a temporal perspective in order to grasp how they move and shift and are understood through different mobilities at different times in different contexts. Thus, our situatedness in and entanglement with time, place and environment affects our sense-making; where we sense the margins change according to where, when and how we are situated in the world. This aspect of the whole discourse on margins is also addressed in the book, in guise of the simple fact, discovered by many during the recent global pandemic, that the marginal may be closer than we think; but the right to discover these nearby margins and be mobile around them may not be altogether clear, as discussed in the book through field work in north-east Scotland.

Margins are in play through a multitude of place performances. Visitors, wildlife mobilities, political agendas and discourses, images and narratives as well as the dwelling of seasonal as well as permanent residents play a part in the making of margins. As Bender has argued, landscapes are "time materialising" (2002, S103), and as such, forms of travel and dwelling are constantly emergent rather than fixed. What characterises most of the places focused on in our research is their public perception as peripheral, undressed and marginal. However, we take a different approach, seeing them rather as composed of and by a vast array of human and non-human actors. Places are never empty meeting grounds (MacCannell 1992), never non-spaces (Augé 1995). Rather, they are—should one take a closer look—arenas of enduring improvisation unfolding within multi-layered temporalities through mobile encounters, the more-than-human and the everyday.

The studies presented in this book are based on diverse methods that share an attentiveness to the performative character of research (Law 2004; Jóhannesson et al. 2018), seeing it as co-enacting rather than as describing realities. The amalgam of diverse methodological tools used by different authors helps to grasp and engage with societal conditions in place and to think and act towards new possibilities. Different methods prove useful in order to follow, involve and intervene into the narratives and realities of more-than-human fluidity. As well as engaging with other human beings, our encounters with non-humans, such as birds (Chapters 2 and 3), plants (Chapters 3 and 4), used and disused infrastructures (Chapters 6, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13), past and present materials (Chapters 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8) and other earthly creatures stir conversations that go beyond mere verbal communications. These are conversations that can evoke sensations, stir atmospheres, reveal controversies but first and foremost emphasise vitalities that need to be taken seriously into account when addressing more-than-human mobilities and understanding the becoming of places.

* * *

What follows is a brief summary of each of the book's individual chapters. In Chapter 2, "Sensing the common: On the mobilities and makings of sense", Björn Thorsteinsson attends to the way sense is made between humans and non-humans, such as seabirds nesting on offshore rocks and with concrete, decaying silos at the heart of a remote fishing village. The question Björn raises concerns the modalities of sense and how they occur in lived experiences of mobilities at the margins—of nature and culture? Katrín Anna Lund, in Chapter 3, "Poetics of nothingness: Ordering wilderness", continues at the margins of natureculture and takes the reader on a journey into wilderness as well as towards a sense of the way often-overlooked features and figures in the landscape bring the flow of movement to a momentary, sometimes poetic, standstill. Through attention to phenomena such as lichens, arctic terns and ruins, she demonstrates how one can be in touch with one's surroundings by allowing for the narratives they entail to emerge when moving with them, thereby bringing out the mobile forces that constantly shape a place or a destination. Outi Rantala and Emily Höckert, in their turn, in "Multispecies stories from the margins" (Chapter 4), also cultivate the art of attentiveness to more-than-human ways of being and knowing

by engaging in multispecies storytelling. They ask what could be learnt from mosses that have succeeded in surviving in nearly every ecosystem on earth longer than any other plant groups, ultimately suggesting that through attuning to mosses' life-sustaining agencies; an appreciation can be reached of smallness and slowness as key features in living well on Earth.

Turning the attention more explicitly towards tourism, Gunnar Thór Jóhannesson, in "Sailing the seas of tourism – controversial encounters with past, present and future mobilities on the margins" (Chapter 5), traces how places are created through mobilities and tourism performances. Tourism is framed as an ordering that enacts realities rather than being a neatly defined industry or a sector—a dynamics of power that positions margins in relation to centres. A pivotal point of Jóhannesson's analysis is the case of a grounded ship-turned-tourist attraction in Iceland's southern Westfjords; an example of how places emerge through a thicket of interwoven mobilities and encounters in time and space. Whilst Jóhannesson's chapter illustrates how the disused and grounded ship is becoming a tourist attraction, Carina Ren's Chapter 6 concerns a formal decision-making process of figuring out a suitable role or a function for a disused infrastructure. Her chapter, "On re-dressing remote places. Imaginaries at the margins", focuses on how place-related imaginaries are conjured at a naval base in Southern Greenland. Through the concept of re-dressing, Ren demonstrates how Grønnedal becomes the subject of contestation among local, national and foreign actors, primarily in relation to the question of reinvigorating the area as a tourist destination, thus feeding into ongoing, larger discussions of the possible future(s) of Greenland in general.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 are all characterised by revisits of the authors to places they related to in the past and how their returns enforce different ways of relating and sensing the surroundings. Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir, in "On being moved: The mobility of inner landscapes" (Chapter 7), turns the gaze inwards, inquiring into the possibilities of a tourism that focuses on the inner landscape of the guest and the host, and, by implication, on how both are moved from within by the relations created in their encounter. Through her own journey of being moved by a personal landscape in the Icelandic north-east, Jóhannesdóttir examines how landscapes are not just visual outer phenomena that we look at from a distance but rather whole entanglements of materials, beings, senses and processes that are constantly moving with and

being moved by each other. The Icelandic north-east also forms the background of Chapter 8, "Melrakkaslétta the meeting-ground: Performing qualitative research at the tourism margin", where Þórný Barðadóttir follows the journey of her own doctoral research project, the focal point of which is the area of Melrakkaslétta, mostly bypassed by the recent global (and local) tourism boom. In spite of this, as Barðadóttir demonstrates, Melrakkaslétta is by no means an immobile place; rather it is a thriving venue for human and more-than-human mobilities and interactions, involving joy and well-being as well as various challenges. In Chapter 9, "Revealing place mobility by walking and map analysing", Elva Björg Einarsdóttir turns the attention towards Iceland's southern Westfjords, exploring through the methods of walking and map analysis how places are temporal and multi-layered, being obvious and hidden at the same time. Ultimately, she shows that by analysing maps and crossing them with the embodied experience of walking old routes; new knowledge can be created, providing better understanding of the past as well as of the becoming of a place.

Staying with routes but now on the paved road, Sigrún Birgisdóttir, in "The route into nature: The landscape of mobility" (Chapter 10), departs from the fact that, in Iceland, driving is the principal mode of transport and, thus, roads become central to visitors' experience in the growing tourism sector. Through examining main tourist thoroughfares, old and new, Birgisdóttir argues that the road has an often-overlooked role in creating an understanding of the environment. This highlights the fundamental role of roads in constructing relations with nature through the transformation of landscape and by enabling mobilities.

Mette Simonsen Abildgaard, in "The satellite at the end of the world. Infrastructural encounters in North Greenland" (Chapter 11), also places an emphasis on infrastructures in an analysis of the processes of place-making and marginality. Through the notion of 'infrastructural encounters', derived from her research in North Greenland, Simonsen Abildgaard sheds light on the complex ways in which marginality is produced and sustained, as well as the role that telecommunication infrastructures play in shaping the experiences of those positioned as living 'on the margins'. In "Rush hour in a national park – mobile encounters in a peripheral tourism landscape" (Chapter 12), Minna Nousiainen, Outi Rantala and Seija Tuulentie, in their turn, focus on shifting place mobilities through the concept of freedom to roam (*allemansrätten*, everyone's rights), exploring the ways in which this concept adopts moral aspects

related to landscape practices and questions of ownership. Through field-work in south-east Lapland, Finland, the authors illustrate how the landscape is turned into a destination and product, as well as the way that seemingly marginalised local mobility practices and local ownership in the landscape are affected by the abruptly increased recreational mobility. In a similar vein, Jo Vergunst, in the final chapter of the book, "Inhabiting the landscape through access rights and the Covid pandemic" (Chapter 13), examines the kinds of inhabitation of the landscape that are made possible by outdoor access rights in Scotland, making comparisons to the Nordic practice of *allemansrätten*. Vergunst demonstrates how the COVID-19 pandemic provided a particularly acute example of how political and legal structures can shape the everyday experience of movement, and in some ways also brought to light the ways in which governance is reified and made real through ordinary life. In the pandemic, margins came much closer to home and the forms of mobility used to access them changed. Vergunst explores the regulation and surveillance of local mobilities in the pandemic, as well as people's everyday responses.

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Sensing the Common: On the Mobilities and Makings of Sense

Björn Thorsteinsson

INTRODUCTION

In the early days of the year 2023, as reports abound of snowless skiing slopes in the Alps, relentless storms and flooding in California, and the coldest December in Reykjavík since 1916, no one in their right mind can reasonably deny the fact that something is askew, globally, with regard to the general state of equilibrium, or of homeostasis, and we really should associate this with the *health* of the Earth. The atmosphere, or, more appropriately, the biosphere—that unfathomably thin layer of air where the conditions of life are met, on, under and above the surface of our planet (Latour 2021)—is changing, and, from the perspective of humankind, the unquestionable perpetrators of this whole scene, not for the better. Glaciers are melting, species are going extinct, the oceans are acidifying and plastics stubbornly turn up wherever we look, wherever they *shouldn't be*, whether on the macroscopic or the microscopic scale. Things, apparently, have got out of hand—quite literally, as it happens, if

B. Thorsteinsson (✉)
Faculty of Philosophy, History and Archaeology, University of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland
e-mail: bjorntho@hi.is

one may say so. The hand—which, irrevocably, belongs to the primate, and, in this case, to the 'highest' of those, the human being—has lost control, but it has also, concurrently and complicitly, lost touch. Lost control of what, lost touch with what? Not only of itself and with itself, of course, but also of and with what stands over and against it, what offers it resistance, the resistance needed for any kind of touch to arise, or, more generally, for any type of sensation—for any type of *sense* to occur (Thorsteinsson 2023). What resists the hand has, to a significant degree, assumed control, leaving the hand isolated, on its own, essentially out of touch, or, insofar as it is still in touch; it keeps repeating its purportedly controlling gestures, only making things worse.

Now, assuming that it should surely be seen as the task of theory, broadly conceived, to face up to and tackle *critical* issues such as these—for what else could the task of theory be?—what will be attempted here is an approach towards the problems at hand, based on on-site research as well as deploying a handful of conceptual paraphernalia. Needless to say, this approach will be partial, probably in both senses of that term: limited and biased. The aim, in any case, is to produce some insights into the way in which we, human beings in our mobilities and travels, are situated in and faced by the ongoing shaping-up of the titanic forces that we have unleashed as well as succumbed to—the forces to which we have always been, and remain, subjected.

More specifically, we will first summon some conceptual resources by checking in with thinkers stemming mainly from the traditions of phenomenology, anthropology and feminist science studies. This will consist in a two-part examination of the discursive constellations gathered around the notion of sense, implying also its correlates such as the notions of sense-making, of common sense and of the common and of meaning and direction. Then, in order to produce some more concrete insights into these philosophical and conceptual intricacies, we will move on to field descriptions of visits to two locations in the extreme North-East of Iceland, places that without doubt are seen, by many a southern onlooker, as being on the margins in some (rather strong) sense—most likely in the sense of 'on the margins of the inhabitable world'. A final section will then offer some concluding reflections related to the implications of sense—of the making of sense and of common sense—with regard to mobilities towards, on and at the margins.

Of Sense and Meaning

Early on in his landmark *Phenomenology of Perception*, the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty proclaims that "we are *condemned to sense*" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, lxxxiv). To be sure, the personal pronoun here should primarily be seen as referring to human beings, potential readers of Merleau-Ponty's book or of such a sentence—but leaving that issue aside for the moment, as well as the question of the larger context in which this proclamation is made, what is it that the phenomenologist wants us to understand by this claim? What, for Merleau-Ponty, is sense and how are we condemned to it?

When addressing this question, let us first note that the word translated here as sense is what seems, at first sight, to be its immediate French counterpart: *sens* (Merleau-Ponty 1945, 20). However, as soon as we start to dig deeper, we are bound to realise that the correspondence here, between sense and *sens*, is far from straightforward. As it turns out, English readers of Merleau-Ponty have at their disposal particularly clear textual evidence for the intricacies at stake, for, as it happens, Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* has been translated twice into English, and in the first translation, now largely considered obsolete, the phrase in question was translated as "we are *condemned to meaning*" (Merleau-Ponty 1962, xxii). What is the difference here—what is at stake in the transition from meaning to sense, what is it that the latter term adds with respect to the former term and what, if anything, goes amiss in the transition?

To be sure, and to state the obvious, these translational issues attest to the fact that the French word *sens* has, strictly speaking and despite appearances, no single, clear-cut corresponding term in English. With regard to the issue at stake here, namely the intended meaning of Merleau-Ponty's phrase, this fact could, however, conceivably be sidestepped by means of arguing convincingly that Merleau-Ponty really had one specific and particular meaning of the term *sens* in mind when writing the phrase, and not only that, but also that the specific meaning that he had in mind corresponds to a particular English term, either sense or meaning or even a third option (which would then necessitate yet another English rendering of Merleau-Ponty's phrase, if not the whole of *Phenomenology of Perception*). But such a view would surely appear all too reductive and, to put it bluntly, hopelessly simple-minded and tainted by monolingualism; let it suffice to counter it with the straightforward

remark that, for some reason or other, in this respect the two translators of *Phenomenology of Perception* into English disagree, and neither of them is entirely wrong. Being condemned to *sens* really does imply connotations of meaning as well as sense. And, to follow up on the point just raised, the word *sens* has at least one more aspect to it that also comes into consideration here: namely, the aspect of *direction* (cf. e.g. translator's remarks in Merleau-Ponty 2012, xlviii, 491n9). Thus, keeping these intricacies in mind, let us read Merleau-Ponty's phrase in the following way: in our being in the world, we are condemned to sense, and sense is to be understood here as also involving meaning and direction. In other words, when reading the phrase "we are condemned to sense", we should refrain from hearing, in the (English) word sense, only its straightforward connotations, rather, we should maintain the other implications contained in the French original term, namely meaning and direction. Thus, to finally move to the issue at hand, the unpacking of Merleau-Ponty's formulation: our being condemned to *sens* means that our mode of being in the world is sentient, and as sentient, sensitive beings, we attribute meaning to whatever appears to us. This attribution of meaning is always already a response on our part; we respond to what appears meaningful to us, and this responding, in its turn, implies that *we also make sense*, we participate in the making of sense. And this participation, on our part, inescapably involves a direction towards which we are headed, so to speak; in our sense-making, we orient ourselves, the sense we make is also a sense of direction.

The reference to *condemnation* in Merleau-Ponty's phrase—an evocative term, to be sure and here we should bear in mind that Merleau-Ponty, when writing his striking phrase, probably saw himself as giving due to Sartre's no less memorable proclamation that we are condemned to *being free* (Sartre 1965, 41)—implies, no doubt, that the condition being described is not of our choosing, and, further, that it is somehow doubtful whether we possess any means of detaching ourselves from this condition: sense, meaning, direction and even freedom. As long as we live, as sentient, embodied beings, we are bound to participate in sense-making, the giving of sense to the common reality which we share—the world itself:

> There is an autochthonous sense of the world that is constituted in the exchange between the world and our embodied existence and that forms the ground of every deliberate *Sinngebung* [sense-giving act]. (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 466)

Starting from where we are, from what we perceive, on our passage through time and space, through our participation in the aptly named "autochthonous sense of the world", we go on, also, to constantly contribute to the ongoing sense-making of this world. We cannot fail to do so, everywhere we go, in every instance where the sense already inherent in the world surges forward to seize us, impress us or, as also happens, pass by us largely unnoticed. When we travel to what we call the margins—running up against something that in some way stops us in our tracks, presenting itself to us while also withdrawing from us in some sense and telling us that we are about to reach the limit of our preconceptions—our role as participants in the world's making of sense, which is also a world-making of sense, may spring forth or shine through, making itself felt, prompting us somehow to come to our senses in the sense of discovering ourselves in the act of participation. What is at stake here, what here happens to us, at the margins, in this way, is a quintessentially phenomenological operation whose technical name(s) would be the reduction and/or the *epoché*—defined, at one point, by Merleau-Ponty quoting Eugen Fink, as "a 'wonder' before the world" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, lxxvii).

'What is the sense of all this?' we may wonder. Indeed, we may, and such a question, precisely such an interrogative attitude, unsure of itself in its aversion to finding itself, all of a sudden, in the midst of, and even involved in, sheer *nonsense*, testifies to an important truth. In our search for meaning, through our participatory sense-making (a notion, by the way, that has emerged in the literature about the phenomenology of autism, De Jaegher 2019, 2013), we sometimes run aground, or go astray, ending up where nothing much makes sense anymore—and, what is worse, we sometimes, too often, end up participating in processes that, manifestly, have world-threatening consequences. Where to go, what should we do, what direction should we take? The adventure of sense, meaning and direction is ongoing and presses itself upon us. "Thus, we must not wonder if we truly perceive a world; rather, we must say: the world is what we perceive" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, lxxx).

Matter(ing), Meaning and Dancing

A lot, thus, hinges on wonder—on wondering and perceiving, and on how we wonder about what we perceive: the world. Thus, wonder is by no means a prerogative of theory, be it phenomenological or otherwise.

British anthropologist Tim Ingold, drawing on Merleau-Ponty, invites us to appreciate the scope and depth of what is at stake here, rewriting the concept of wonder as astonishment which he then opposes to surprise: "Surprise […] exists only for those who have forgotten how to be astonished at the birth of the world", he remarks and adds: "By contrast, those who are truly open to the world, though perpetually astonished, are never surprised" (Ingold 2006, 19). This openness to the world with its perpetual astonishment and concurrent absence of surprise has to do with a certain "animic way of being" (Ingold 2006, 18) which, for Ingold, should not be seen as "a way of believing *about* the world but [as] a condition of being *in* it", or, more specifically,

> as a condition of being alive to the world, characterised by a heightened sensitivity and responsiveness, in perception and action, to an environment that is always in flux, never the same from one moment to the next. Animacy, then, is not a property of persons imaginatively projected onto the things with which they perceive themselves to be surrounded. Rather […] it is the dynamic, transformative potential of the entire field of relations within which beings of all kinds, more or less person-like or thing-like, continually and reciprocally bring one another into existence. The animacy of the lifeworld, in short, is not the result of an infusion of spirit into substance, or of agency into materiality, but is rather ontologically prior to their differentiation. (Ingold 2006, 10)

The world, thus, is alive: materials are not dead and do not stand opposed, rigidly, to a perceiving, sensible—and discursive—spiritual being, rather, materials and discourse intertwine. American feminist science and technology studies scholar Karen Barad, trained in theoretical physics, famously argues along these lines, introducing, for the notion of the liveliness of matter (or of living nature), the conception of "the lively dance of mattering" (Barad 2007, 37). Or, as she writes:

> Meaning is not a property of individual words or groups of words but an ongoing performance of the world in its differential dance of intelligibility and unintelligibility. In its causal intra-activity, part of the world becomes determinately bounded and propertied in its emergent intelligibility to another part of the world, while lively matterings, possibilities, and impossibilities are reconfigured. (Barad 2007, 149)

Let us spell out that by intra-activity, Barad understands the ongoing dynamism of the world that happens not between discrete pre-defined units—as in *inter*-activity—but rather, it is an event that takes place and, through its taking place, gives rise to the relata of the relation implied in the event (Barad 2007, 33). Matter is very much alive: matter is mattering, and mattering implies meaning or, in other words, discursivity:

> […] *matter is a dynamic intra-active becoming that is implicated and enfolded in its iterative becoming. Matter(ing) is a dynamic articulation/ configuration of the world.* In other words, materiality is discursive […] just as discursive practices are always already material […]. (Barad 2007, 151–152)

Or, to sum up, "matter and meaning are mutually articulated" (Barad 2007, 152). This, in turn, has to do with an openness (or an astonishment, or wonder) which is also a responsiveness—to meaning, to what matters. As such, this responsiveness is something that we are a part of. Being already not only *in* the world, but also *of* the world (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1968, 134–135), we are, from the start, to a certain degree, *in the know*, for, being of the same flesh as the world itself (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 137), we are a part of its ongoing articulation; or, as Barad succinctly puts it, "knowing is a matter of differential responsiveness […] to what matters" (Barad 2007, 149). Again, keeping in mind that knowing and wondering, as well as perceiving, are intricately related, we come back to the crucial importance of *how* we wonder and perceive. Our experiencing is not innocent—it calls for care. Why is that? For one thing, because when we perceive, we matter, through our responding—and, to finally quote Merleau-Ponty's phrase in context, our responding is, by the very fact of its partaking of the making-(the)-sense-of-the-world, nothing less than historically implied: "Because we are in the world, we are *condemned to sense*, and there is nothing we can do or say that does not acquire a name in history" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, lxxxiii–lxxxiv). Being in the world, we cannot abstain from sense—the makings, the meanings and the directions of sense—and, quite simply, this entails that what we do leaves traces: "*marks on bodies*" (Barad 2007, 178), thus, it matters. In this sense, then, the making of sense in which we are implicated is inevitably a matter of community—it has to do with what we have in common, with *common sense*. The beings involved in the making of sense that is mattering thereby interact, or more appropriately *intra*-act, in the sense

of leaving traces or marks on one another. They intertwine, and from then on—as Barad shows with reference to quantum physics—they are entangled. Their encounter has left a mark on them. The manner of their mutual leaving-of-traces constitutes the sense of the event. The sense is the way that marks are made, the transpiring of mark-making. Thus, the dance of mattering reveals itself as the ongoing development of sense, the emerging of sense. As such—one might even say 'by definition'—this emerging is communal in the sense of being not exclusive to any type of closed-off, monad-like, private consciousness. Sense is communal; it takes place in community—and thus, irrevocably, in some sense, common sense.

Making Sense at the Margins: Two Cases

Encountering the Súla

24 September 2021: a lovely late-summer afternoon in North-East Iceland. The weather is hospitable, with a light wind traversing the grasslands, a vague rem(a)inder of the storm that passed some hours ago and left its mark, for those in the know, in the magnificent waves coming in from the north and running largely, where we set out on our walk, *along* the coast. The destination, for us human travellers, is a hill and its steep encounter with the ocean, complete with its—in my eyes—most precious and coveted offering, birds. Among those, I've learned, is that majestic white and seclusive queen of the seaside (and the seas) called *súla* in Icelandic (such a beautiful and precise word—pronounced *soo-lah*—that I can hardly bring myself to even mention its English-language equivalent, the (northern) gannet; the Latin term is *Morus bassanus*). Being something of a mildly enthusiastic birdwatcher since childhood, I only have vague and uncertain memories of ever having seen the *súla* with my own eyes, notwithstanding its lifeless representative at the Icelandic Natural Museum which I loved to visit as a child. This, to be sure, can mainly be attributed to the fact that the *súla* likes to keep to itself in the sense of forming extremely concentrated colonies, preferably on seaside cliffs or offshore clifflike islands. Accordingly, the places where you actually can observe the bird in Iceland are few and far between—and quite

remote.[1] I had not had the good fortune, or the determination, to travel to any of these rare locations for decades on end—until that day, when my membership in the research group brought me to the site where my old (but not altogether conscious) wish would be fulfilled.

We walked northwards, along the ocean, with the coveted destination in the distance. The enormity of the waves hitting the rocky shore provided us with a constant source of amazement and awe. Seeing an unusual object lying on the shore, among the rocks, my colleague and I found ourselves compelled to take a closer look; running down as the waves pulled back, we managed to hoist the object between us and rush up again before the next wave hit: it turned out to be what we thought it was, namely a whale's baleen (jawbone with the associated filaments). The smell stuck to my gloves for months to come. Happy, we carried on, and the bird-cliff drew closer. The beauty of the berries, blue and black, and of the heather, green turning ruby red, attracted the eye. Sky, sea, earth—and life (also in its remains), everything coming together, *being* together. Gradually we scaled the slope, reaching the top and, finally, there it was, before us: the two cliffs off the shore—and, indeed, as hoped and promised, there they were, schools of them, *súlur* (in the plural) (Fig. 2.1).

So, when the moment arrived, what was it that struck me, what was it like, for me, to witness the realisation of my dream? Well, as it happened, what stood out, above all else, was how absolutely *they didn't care*. They didn't mind me, or my human fellow travellers, one bit. We didn't interrupt their comings and goings, their everyday routine, in the least. *It was as if we were not there*. In this sense, certainly, their manner of being provided an explicit, albeit not tangible, confirmation of what, in some respect, we had all set out to find—and/or to search for, to research: they were not only at the margins, they were *beyond* the margin in some insistent sense. Their mobilities seemed to constitute a world beyond us, a non-anthropocentric reality to which they belonged, with all the ease, but also struggle, inherent in such a belonging. I shuddered when reminded of the fact that soon, in just a few weeks, they would be leaving their lair, the rock on which they had fostered their offspring, to spend the coldest months of the year at sea, in the middle of the ocean. How—on earth—is

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[1] According to the Icelandic Institute of Natural History (n.d.), there are only nine colonies of *súla* in Iceland.

Fig. 2.1   Encountering the súla (Photo by Sigrún Alba Sigurðardóttir)

such an existence possible? Pondering this question, I also found myself running up against the margins of my own imagination.

This is not to say that the encounter with the *súla* fulfilled all my expectations. For one thing, they were strangely silent, contrary to what I had expected; indeed, my colleague, who had been at the site a couple of months earlier, in mid-summer, had described to me the wall of noise that they had produced on that occasion. This surely had its explanations—perhaps the bird was, as autumn and winter loomed (the two often intermingle mercilessly in Iceland), saving its energy for the coming cold months at sea. But this hypothesis rested uneasily with another let-down that I also had to face: they were not hunting in the way they are so famous for, falling head-first and resolutely from the air to pierce the fish with their sharp beaks. Indeed, I saw little sign of any nutritional activity going on. Well, one cannot have everything at once. I'll be back, dear *súla*.

In any case, and beyond doubt, the *súla* left a mark on me that day. She—for the bird's name is feminine in Icelandic—mattered to me, and that day she really mattered, albeit differently than I had expected. By writing about that particular case of mattering here, hopefully I'm being accountable to her, responsive in a way that matters (to her, to others). But did I leave any mark on her? My words seem to indicate that such was not the case. Still, but not too happily, there is evidence to the contrary. More than a year later, in December 2022, when she had left her earthly lairs and moved to the high seas, scientists undertook one of their regular expeditions to one of the *súla*'s major colonies—actually the biggest one, reportedly the biggest in the world—namely the island of Eldey, a few kilometres off Iceland's southwestern tip. What the scientists found, this time around, made its way to headlines in Iceland's mainstream media (Morgunblaðið 2022). First, there was an unusually high number of dead birds in the colony. This, apparently, could partly be explained by the avian flu, which had been particularly rampant in 2022. Second, the scientists found excessive plastic pollution in the colony, giving rise to inevitable suspicions of the material also having made its way into the intestines of the birds. Now, from the distance to which I was reduced in my encounter with the *súla* in the North-East, I did not notice any plastics polluting the scene, but still my perception that the birds there had been in some way untouched—by the human being and its endeavours—now appeared as unfathomably naive. For, as the Eldey expedition found, the *súla*, for all its splendour and aloofness, for all its remoteness and apparent residency and mobility beyond the margins, has not been left untouched by the way *we* humans, makers of plastic, matter.

Making Sense of Silos

3 September 2020, another setting, another day: pelting rain this time, typically Icelandic, but we do not mind it too much, for today we are inside, at the town hall of Raufarhöfn, one of Iceland's smallest villages (population 180 as of 1 January 2022) (Statistics Iceland, n.d.). We are meeting with a small group of people representing municipal authorities broadly conceived. Outside the window, across the street, an overwhelming presence makes itself felt and naturally turns into one of the main topics of our conversation: gigantic concrete silos, white paint peeling off the walls, sit there and, quite naturally, address us, as if they

themselves are asking: what about us? What do you want to do, what *can* you do with us?

The silos, of course, are there for a reason. Situated on the extreme north-eastern corner of Iceland, not far from the Arctic Circle and practically as far from the populous capital region of the island as you can get, Raufarhöfn has never been a major conglomeration, not even by Icelandic standards. Still, its history is not devoid of a certain moment of glory: *síldarárin*, the herring years, when a significant number of that precious fish saw it fit to honour the coastal regions of Iceland, especially the northern and eastern ones, with their presence, giving rise to an enormous boom, starting around 1950 and ending abruptly in 1969, when, partly due to overfishing, the herring literally disappeared (Síldarminjasafnið, n.d.). Thus, like many other small villages in North and East Iceland, Raufarhöfn became, for a time, a major hub for the fishing and processing of herring. In fact, already in 1900 the town had a fish processing plant, built by Norwegians, but it was in the 1960s that the town saw its heyday, with 11 stations for salting herring and over 500 inhabitants—as well as many more who came there as intermittent workers (Norðurþing, n.d.). But to return to our protagonists here, the concrete silos, they date back to before the boom years; built in 1938–1940, their role and *raison d'être* was to contain fish-oil. During the 'herring years', more silos were built, albeit less imposing ones: made of metal and used for the herring processing, they were torn down, one by one, in the decades following the bust. What remained, however, and what still remains, are the original two big silos, the concrete ones—sitting there, as already noted, in the heart of town, right opposite the building housing the post office and bank branch as well as serving as town hall; occupying space, doing little else—being of no use (Fig. 2.2).

This being-of-no-use, however, and as we found at our meeting in the town hall, in no way comes down to being inactive or, to make things even more complex, to holding no potential. Entering one of the silos with my colleague, acrobatically crawling through a hole in the wall, we discover the enormity of the space. What immediately springs to mind, of course, is acoustics—and there are already several cases in Iceland of decrepit containers like this one having been turned into elaborate recording studios and concert venues. But numerous other possibilities also come to mind. In the age of global mass tourism, anything seems possible, even—or *especially*—in the remotest of locations in Iceland: why not a guesthouse, or no, make that a luxury resort with in-built jacuzzi

Fig. 2.2 The silos in 1952, with rising smoke from the fish factories (Photo by Hreinn Helgason)

and stargazing facilities. I mean, the northern lights! And the midnight sun! After all, Raufarhöfn has in recent years profiled itself as a major hub for observing the 'heavenly bodies' and their mobilities, building on the fact that nowhere in mainland Iceland you find a conglomeration as close to the Arctic Circle (the island of Grímsey, off the north coast, literally lies on the Arctic Circle and harbours a small village) (Barðadóttir et al. 2023).

Thus, the silos sit there, in the heart of town, testifying at once to what Tim Edensor refers to, when discussing St Ann's Church in Manchester, as "the endless transformation of urban matter through non-human agency" (Edensor 2011, 238), and, more generally, to what Jane Bennett calls "a *vital materiality*" (Bennett 2010, vii). To deploy an argument of the order of mathematical indirect proof: if the silos were fully and purely inert, senseless in the sense of passive, then they would not matter. But they do, they most certainly and concretely do, and in that way they make sense, or rather they demand to be made sense of. And that making of sense can range from leaving them as they are (which, admittedly, would

Fig. 2.3 The silos in 2020. The metal tank on the right has now been removed (Photo by Gunnar Thór Jóhannesson)

entail disregarding security concerns) to tearing them down, erasing them (which, however, will never entirely succeed—there are traces, there will be traces of them, on the ground and on the record). The inescapable fact is that *they matter*, in and through their very materiality, in their enormity and their crumbling, in their matter and their form, in their entanglement with nature and history, in their being and their becoming. Making sense of them, for the local authorities especially but also for any wondering onlooker, requires, precisely, an immersion into these multiple senses, into the manifold, intricate meaning of their mattering (Fig. 2.3).

Senses, Mobilities and Margins

Now, to start summing up, gathering our senses: in the light of the previous discussion, what do the two cases tell us in relation to mobilities and margins, to sense and sense-making, within and without the common? How can conceptual constellations such as those offered by Merleau-Ponty, Ingold and Barad—and others—help us make sense of the cases? As it turns out, addressing these questions will entail adapting

a somewhat broader perspective, bringing in new resources, theoretical and experiential.

To begin with, let us note, on a very general level, that mobilities towards, on, and over the margins necessarily involve the question of desire, or, more specifically, of *the limits of desire*. When speaking between ourselves—between us, humans—of the margins, it is only natural to see them largely from an anthropocentric perspective. Thus, Icelanders often speak, jokingly or not, of their country being situated 'at the edge of the inhabitable world', the implication being that it is altogether undecided whether the land is on the right side or the wrong side of that edge. The inhabitable, of course, is here seen from an exclusively human perspective, as our encounter with the *súla* makes explicit. But let us add in passing, again referring to common parlance, that while the margins can certainly be (at) the edge, they can also be at the centre, as when we speak of *the middle of nowhere*.

In any case, the implication here is that what is beyond the margin, on the other side of the edge of the inhabitable world, can also be seen as being beyond the desirable. Thus, when Icelanders joke or grumble about the this-or-that-sidedness of their country with regard of the edge of the inhabitable world, the looming question concerns the desirability, and ultimately the very possibility, of living there. However, as adequately portrayed by Slavoj Žižek in numerous works, following in the footsteps of figures of no lesser stature than Jacques Lacan or, indeed, St Paul, what lies beyond the limits of desire, the reputedly undesirable or not-to-be-desired, is precisely what *really* sets desire off. It—this perilous, forbidden *it* beyond the limits—becomes, in Lacanian parlance, the object-cause of desire, the *objet petit a*. The catch, of course, is that this particular object is not only forbidden or foreclosed but impossible—it can never be attained. Accordingly, the ever-recurrent story consists in the desiring being travelling to reach the margin and, if possible, pierce it—only to find, and, again, this is an absolutely irrevocable condition, that the coveted object has stolen away, it is no longer there—or rather, it is not there and (probably) never was. The 'it' of desire, the 'thing' that you were looking for, never was—or, which comes down to the same thing, the thing that you found turned out not to be *it*.

From this perspective, we may perhaps venture the following tentative conceptual circumscription: at the margins, at the limits of sense, or of what we are supposed to sense, we glimpse, indirectly and mediately, the coveted object. This object cannot fail to attract us, precisely,

in a *sensual* way—it lends itself to sense in its very prohibition or withdrawal from sense. Thus, it teases us. Accordingly, we can perhaps, at this point, conceive of a certain way of discerning between sense and meaning: meaning resides on this side of the margin, having already been made sense of, being the relic of an already performed process of making sense, whereas sense is what seeks to occur at the margin, on the border of the sensible and the insensible or even of sense and nonsense.

From this perspective, then, we can lend a certain additional meaning to a term that seemingly entertains a difficult relation with a significant part of contemporary analysis of human mobilities: the concept of the tourist (Graburn 2017; McCabe 2005; Singh 2016). Since the turn of the century, it would seem, and concurrently with the advent of truly global mass tourism, the label of the tourist has been subjected to thoroughgoing critical review, leading, in the end, to a certain rehabilitation of the term within the literature (Cohen and Cohen 2019). This rehabilitation, in turn, has been considered necessary because of a certain denigration of the tourist as manifest in its opposition to figures such as the excursionist (Singh 2016, 19), the explorer (Graburn 2017, 83) or the drifter (McCabe 2005, 88). To give a rough indication of what is at stake in these oppositions, in relation to our discussion above about the 'dialectics of desire', we can state that the tourist is someone who compromises on their desire already before setting off, willingly renouncing the risky ideal of obtaining the coveted object by choosing a destination and/or a voyage which does not venture too far towards the margins. The opposing figure, whichever label we choose for it, is someone who presses on, unabated, with the ideal of transgressing the margin to find and obtain the coveted object. But in this light, the second figure, the 'opponent' of the tourist, will, in keeping with the very essence of desire, necessarily be thwarted.

Now, of course, in the current global situation, whether we consider ourselves to have arrived at an epoch properly named Anthropocene, Capitalocene or Chthulucene (Haraway 2015), one thing seems clear: the societal structure called capitalism specialises in the engineering of desire, of consumption, and of the production of objects to covet. As such, it has proved to be inherently—and hopelessly—addicted to the reduction of whatever it finds, in nature or in culture, to the commodity form. In its wake, everywhere it goes, it also leaves remains—former centres of capital, big or small, urban or rural, world-reaching or locally embedded. Decaying remnants of bygone days are left to address those who remain. What is gone will not go away, just as much as plastics

keep popping up when we thought, in our thoughtlessness, that they were gone forever ('out of sight, out of mind', to deploy yet another all-too familiar phrase). As such, in their meaningful material presence, they summon us, they matter. Everything matters in some way: that is the other side of capitalist globalisation with its ubiquitous military-industrial-technological implications. Nothing does not matter. But not everything matters in the same way, and the task is to respond in such a way that the response matters in the right way. Such is the task of thinking, and of knowing: responding differentially to what matters, as Barad pointed out to us. And this responding inevitably has to take into account that, given that everything matters comes down to everything belonging to the common(s), the sense we need to make of our situation, of what we currently perceive, of the world—*our* world—will inevitably have to be, in some sense, a sense that makes sense in the common, a justly understood common sense.

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Poetics of Nothingness: Ordering Wilderness

Katrín Anna Lund

Introduction

An empty space is a disorderly space, a space that is vital and acts upon the perceiving person as maybe uncomfortable, full of something that cannot be easily comprehended in terms of what it should be or what it should do. It seems to be full of nothing, hence, full of something that may be difficult to comprehend, a chaotic wilderness lacking the definition of being something and therefore, often, left at the margins.

Melrakkaslétta, in the north-east of Iceland, is a place of empty space. In people's minds, it is far away, peripheral, even, in the minds of some, a troublesome place. It is not the wilderness that is marketed and sold as a destination or what Behrisch (2021) has called colonised wilderness. Rather, it is wilderness because it is chaotic and something that the contemporary capitalist eye of the tourism production system (Britton 1991) has not yet grasped and ordered into a scene, or what Vannini and Vannini (2022) have named wildness to emphasise the unruly characteristic. Hence, it is a vital place, which, when entered, brings forth a sense for more-than-human, unruly atmospheres. In this chapter, my focus is to

K. A. Lund (✉)
Department of Geography and Tourism, University
of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland
e-mail: kl@hi.is

investigate how this unruliness shapes the potential of the place, how its nothingness, emptiness and chaotic wilderness can assist those who visit or pass through to get in touch with the moving materials that shape it. By doing that I intend to investigate how journeying through chaotic wilderness can invite the traveller to participate directly in the shaping of wilderness and to sensually experience the lyrical stillness that embraces and creates atmospheres of vitality, richness and potential.

This chapter follows the movement of myself as the researcher, mostly on foot, into the nothingness of Melrakkaslétta. Photographic images are used to capture the lyrical composition of the narratives and moving materials that bring Melrakkaslétta into being as a place of vital and chaotic wilderness. The steps of the researcher reveal the topological dynamics of the place which bring about more-than-human encounters. These stir up the chaotic aspect of nothingness in such a way that the researcher needs to take on the role of an explorer. I want to stress that this is not the distant and authoritative explorer akin to those of the Victorian era (Craciun 2011) or the independent traveller that Cohen (1996) defined and named as someone who travelled off the beaten track. It is an explorer that wants to feel textures and detect details in order to get a sense for surroundings. But wilderness as chaotic and vital is not necessarily to be easily comprehended. Its multidimensional natures are constantly shifting in space and time, such that its shapes and characteristics continuously take on new forms and attributes.

In this chapter, I shall examine several selected and personal encounters with features and figures in Melrakkaslétta. What these encounters have in common, although different in nature, is that they brought the flow of my movement with nothingness, external and internal, to a momentary standstill which forced me to rethink the order of things in an explorative manner. I thus select a few different moments of stillness that stirred up chaos and called for contemplation. Nothingness became too full of excessively mobile somethings. The features selected are:

- Beach
- Arctic terns
- Moss and lichens
- Modern ruin—an abandoned farm

By doing this, I want to argue for new ways to rethink the potentiality of a place as a destination in tourism. Melrakkaslétta is far from representing "Icelandic landscapes" as pure and unspoiled, decorated with geological features such as glaciers and geysers. However, in recent years tourism promoters in Iceland have increasingly been emphasising Iceland as an Arctic location, although, simultaneously, socially and economically a part of the Western world (Lund et al. 2017, 2018). Iceland as an Arctic destination is often represented by emphasising the Northern lights and the midnight sun, both of which feature in extreme in Melrakkaslétta. In addition, Melrakkaslétta is covered with tundra and birdlife that certainly are Arctic in their nature besides being surrounded by the North Atlantic Ocean that stretches into the Arctic Ocean on the horizon. Thus, it can be claimed that its landscapes are in many ways Arctic. Still, little attempt has been made by tourism promoters in Iceland to endorse the area as such and I want to argue that it is precisely its marginal position, as a troublesome wilderness of nothingness that prevents such action (Barðadóttir et al. 2023). As a result, Melrakkaslétta, in relation to contemporary tourism, exists as a precious untouched wilderness, free from being colonised and framed as a scene or destination.

This provides an opportunity for exploration that allows for alternative ways of journeying. Whilst the typical ordered destination allows the visitor to perform the place in question as a stage (Edensor 2000, 2001) or a scene (Larsen 2005) to be visually absorbed and experienced, the explorative aspect of the sensing body has been left out in the tourism studies literature (Edensor 2018). What is missing is the bodily touch and the earthly encounters, or how the tourist as an explorer moves with the surroundings and is simultaneously moved by them (Lund and Jóhannesson 2016). This brings forth the more-than-human flow of nature as wilderness that may also be in flux depending on the nature of the encounters (Lund and Willson 2010).

Thus, by approaching the nothingness or chaotic wilderness of Melrakkaslétta as an exploring researcher my aim is to examine how one can be in touch with the surroundings. This means allowing for the narratives its landscapes entail to emerge when moving with them and sensing their various flows and fluxes. A beach brings forth how heterogeneous materials such as driftwood, seaweed, rocks and sea animals were and are moved about by natural forces for good or bad which reflects on the chaotic and constant rejuvenation that a place undergoes. The arctic tern, or *sterna paradisaea*, in Icelandic *Kría*, brings forth a sense

of constant renewal through seasonal changes and the presence of life through its extreme mobile abilities to nest and rest. Moss and lichens bring one into direct touch with vibrant earth that grows and nurtures, whilst modern ruins of a derelict farm give an insight into more-than-human co-habitation of flows and fluxes. All these features represent mobile forces that constantly shape the place. The question asked is how to allow tourists to take part in, and be a part of, these diverse, wild, and poetically moving flows and fluxes of somethings in nothingness.

Packed Lunch in Nothingness

There are eight of us in the group including me. We are undertaking four days of organised walking around the area of Raufarhöfn, a village of just under 200 inhabitants at the north-east corner of Melrakkaslétta. We have paused for a short lunch after the morning walk before heading on again towards the northernmost tip of Iceland, Rif. Each of us has found a reasonably comfortable 'seat' to rest on, preferably moss-covered tussocks, turning our back to the gently blowing breeze. This means that the group is not sitting in a social hub but is irregularly scattered around by the demand of the surroundings. The seating arrangement affects the atmosphere, and we are sitting in silence. Some might be reflecting on the walk we did in the morning or enjoying the peace and quiet. Although pausing, we are still in the process of moving with the landscape. As illustrated by Merleau-Ponty, motion never comes to a halt as the movement of the "lived body" is not only about "transference in space" but rather it is a "project towards movement" or a "potential movement" (2002, 272). The lived body continues to move although the physical movement is brought to a rest, nevertheless, altered rhythms allow for reflective adjustment to the surroundings (Lund 2005). In the words of Seremetakis (1996, 14), "it is a moment of poetry. It can be a moment of vision".

I am staring ahead of me as I drink my coffee and wondering about what Melrakkaslétta really is, maybe as a researcher doing a project focusing on the area as destination, maybe as a descendant of one of the families that lived in Raufarhöfn in the past or maybe as someone who has memories from summer stays as a child on my uncle's farm in the vicinity. I am placing myself with the landscape. The land is flat and from a distance it appears as a featureless, endless stretch of light

green and yellow moss until it meets the North Atlantic Ocean somewhere on the horizon. Suddenly, I find myself saying, out loud, "there is absolutely nothing here". My walking companions respond by looking at me silently, but I am aware that I have with my impulsiveness disturbed their thoughts. After a short hesitation, the person beside me responds and asks: "And is that bad?"

My thoughts are interrupted; I have not considered if nothingness is good or bad or if that kind of dualism even applies. In other words, I am not exactly sure what I was implying by referring to nothingness. Regarding my position as a tourism researcher, I was possibly indicating that the landscapes of Melrakkaslétta do not feature anything considered to be visually stimulating with a touch of the sublime as it appears in marketing material displaying Icelandic nature. Travelling in Melrakkaslétta does not offer encounters with features like picturesque mountainous stretches, waterfalls, glaciers or colourful thermal areas (Vannini and Vannini 2022). However, with her response my companion indicated that it is exactly nothingness—wilderness—that attracts.

As Oslund has pointed out, Iceland's geographical location, at the northern edge of Europe, has provided its promotion as "Europe's last wilderness" (Oslund 2005, 96) although the fact is that according to definitions the concept does not apply except to some areas over 500 metres in altitude in the central highlands (Ólafsdóttir and Runnström 2011). The official definition of wilderness is nature in its purest form, as untouched by humans (Lund 2013) which "reinforces the idea that nature exists in places that are separate from culture" (Rutherford 2011, 103). However, as Vannini and Vannini (2022) reveal, the wilderness concept is strongly portrayed in marketing materials promoting Iceland, and tourists are not preoccupied with legal definitions. Wilderness areas are to be found where you expect to and want to find such surroundings. As a result, Vannini and Vannini make a distinction between wilderness and wildness referring to the 'wild' as "an ephemeral and vitalist force, […] not just found in wilderness areas" (2022, 67; see also Lorimer 2015). This is akin to Behrisch's attempt to turn to the wild as "an unruly concept, resisting containment, naming and enclosure" (2021, 491). It appears that the wilderness concept has lost touch with its intended content or its wildness as the prefix *wild* hints towards a disorderly space, a troublesome space, hence, an empty space full of something; more-than-human, even poetic. Thus, I set out to explore the wild in the wilderness of Melrakkaslétta by sensing its vitalities, or its somethings in nothingness.

Beach

Baffled by my thoughts about nothingness I set out on a journey as my 'lived body' returns to the area where we were walking earlier in the morning. The route had taken us along the Hraunhafnartangi peninsula, the second northernmost tip of Iceland. There are two landmarks on the way, both of which are manmade, highly visible and stable features in the landscape that serve as landmarks for those who travel across the peninsula. These are a concrete lighthouse built in 1951 and a cairn, believed to be the burial mound of Þorgeir Hávarðsson, a Viking age warrior. We walked by the sea over a heavily bouldered coastal pathway full of driftwood, seaweed and other materials that the ocean delivers. Along the route a rope or the remains of a fishing net, tattered in places, had been stretched out as to mark the pathway (Fig. 3.1).

This caught our eye and required contemplation. The uneven boulders that have through time been piled up by the forces of the ocean restrained our speed of movement and demanded a bodily attentiveness. The steps forward sometimes needed to be taken with care, which provided time for exploring the ground on which we walked. A certain choreography through which bodies and earthly materials interacted created rhythms of an explorative mode in which wonders and mysteries of materials we came across were envisaged. A weathered scapula of an unknown whale species brought forth narratives about how stranded whales nurtured whole settlements in the past when life support could be scarce. Why whales strand on beaches is unresolved. Natural conditions such as weather can be the cause, but that is far from always the case. Illness or injuries might also be the reason, or conditions underwater that whales might not be able to deal with. Unanswered questions and mysteries made me aware of how small we are at the earthly level, or when situated in what Ingold (2008) refers to as "the open world" that is continuously under formation through the comings and goings that shape it. In fact, it is this openness we inhabit in our daily lives but it becomes obscured through the human-centred needs to order and compartmentalise, to divide between culture and nature instead of allowing it is the *wild* to swirl and affect. Beaches are indeed places of untouched wilderness where one cannot ignore the comings and goings that shape the flows and fluxes of worldmaking. Sand, piled-up boulders, seaweed, dead birds, whalebones, shells, ropes, fishing nets and driftwood provide a sense of chaos that for some can be troublesome. It is not 'pure' nature but wild and unruly (Fig. 3.2).

Fig. 3.1 Snapshot of the pathway (Photo by Katrín Anna Lund)

In her writing about driftwood, Pétursdóttir (2020) critically discusses how we tend to look at what drifts as things out of place and label it as waste and pollutants. As an archaeologist she embraces those same things as heritage, maybe unruly, but nevertheless as items that are full of narratives. She suggests that instead of looking at each piece like a mere object out of place; we should treat them as wayfarers that have in the course of their travels accumulated narratives that go way beyond our human existence. These give us an opportunity to drift with them and think along their paths as we encounter them. The weathered scapula, mentioned above, brought forth stories about more-than-human entanglements that twined together timeless speculations about life and death in the open world. I say timeless because although their stories may loosely hint at

Fig. 3.2 Driftwood (Photo by Katrín Anna Lund)

certain temporalities, they do not have defined points in history. Rather, they are stories in which past, present and future fuse, confuse and awe. Pieces of driftwood may contain narratives from having been a bud in Siberia before somehow slipping away from the sawmill and taking long journeys of being tossed around by wind and currents in the Atlantic Ocean to the shore of Melrakkaslétta to become amalgamated with the tundra vegetation on the shores of Iceland's northern coast. And the journey continues not as a line, rather it meanders and swirls around in and through different spatio-temporal dimensions (Fig. 3.3).

It is when encountering these heterogeneous bundles of earthly narratives that I become densely aware of the mobile powers that continuously shape places. Sometimes they are slow, sometimes fast but no matter the

Fig. 3.3 Driftwood in tundra (Photo by Katrín Anna Lund)

speed, forcefulness or gentleness, they are seamlessly ongoing as they entangle. My own journey goes along amongst, and with, these movements and I am momentarily a fragmental part of these swirls of enormous entanglements. At the same time, when looking around it seems like every |object, stones and boulders, every piece of driftwood, whale bones, ropes and nets have firmly grounded themselves and are not moving anywhere, and a sense of poetic stillness hems us in.

Arctic Terns

The explorative rhythms continued as we turned off the path and set off in the direction of the lighthouse over the tundra. Although the earth felt softer, we walked on an uneven peatland and had to be careful as we were crossing nesting grounds not to step on young arctic terns (Sterna paradisaea). They were hidden in between the tussocks, difficult to see as the ground is covered with low growing moss, lichens, heather and grass. Above us intensive shrieks from the adult terns told us that the wild was opening up into new dimensions as different types of rhythmic mobilities added to the entanglements. As Whitehouse points out, birds' "sound-making is also place-making" (2015, 58) and the terns not only let us know that we were out of place but also that they considered us as a threat to their territory (Fig. 3.4).

Occasionally, some decide to make an attack and plunge down in an attempt to peck a walker's skull who, in our case, is prepared with a walking stick for defence. The tern aims at the highest point and thus

Fig. 3.4   Arctic terns at Hraunhafnartangi (Photo by Þórný Barðadóttir)

goes for the stick rather than the skull. They are protecting their young-sters and simultaneously the livelihood of other birds that nest in the vicinity (Fig. 3.5).

Fig. 3.5 An arctic tern contemplating a peck (Photo by Katrín Anna Lund)

Thus, as Whitehouse points out, the terns' place-making "is an act of territorialising space, of making relations with other birds and continually reweaving the context of their lives" (2015, 58). The terns' forceful territorialisation protects other species, such as the eider ducks who benefit from nesting close to the terns. This simultaneously assists human residents, many of whom harvest the ducks' nests for their down. This is an example of what Lorimer (2015, 41) names an ecological charisma; a point of view that takes "an ethological perspective on human-nonhuman-environment interaction" and recognises more-than-human everyday cohabitation. The arctic tern is also known for nesting in the vicinity of human habitation as that provides protection against predators such as foxes that are the most brutal invaders of their nesting grounds. Foxes tend to keep away from humans as they have been persecuted by humans protecting their husbandry, including the eider duck.

As we walked over the tundra the terns made us intensively aware that we were crossing their terrain. We were not welcome and had to adjust to that, holding up our sticks and showing respect and sympathy towards their attacks. "Charisma is contested" as Lorimer (2015, 40) points out and people have different opinions about the arctic tern. Some people love them whilst others find them aggressive and their shrieks discomforting. They can scare people whilst, simultaneously, calling forth a sense of respect as humans can associate with them; they are protecting their offspring just as we can imagine we as humans might do. Lorimer (2015) refers to these types of associations as corporeal or aesthetic charisma, when humans directly relate to or even share characteristics with non-humans (see also Milton 2002).

Corporeal charisma brings forth affective memories of former encounters with terns and I find myself on a beach in north-east Scotland about 20 years ago. I was out on an early evening walk with a friend in springtime. Suddenly, we came across a huge flock of arctic terns that were sitting on the beach. As we came closer we saw that they actually covered a big area and there was no way that we could continue except by walking through where they were sitting and so we did. We moved very slowly, trying not to disturb them. The feeling was absurd. They did not move and just sat there in silence. It was like they did not even sense us, at least they did not care. I guessed they were resting on their long journey from South Africa on their way to Iceland, much like myself having a pack-lunch. Thus, although pausing they were on the move, momentarily changing the rhythms of journeying and adjusting to new landscapes.

The arctic tern is a great migrator. It travels between hemispheres twice a year, arriving to its northern breeding grounds in the Arctic springtime, heading off from there as autumn starts to draw in. For me arctic terns are active, loud, fit and ferocious. They do not just move with seasonality, they make seasonality (Whitehouse 2017); indeed, their movements, to, from and in places, make places. When I experienced a flock of terns sitting quietly on the ground like I did in Scotland, gave a strange feeling as for me they were somehow not in an appropriate place and not at all behaving as they should. But I could only make guesses about the terns' perception of the situation. The fact is, as Lorimer points out, that contested charisma belongs to "more-than-human phenomena" (2015, 40). Arctic terns, just like other creatures, perceive their environment and those they encounter in their own ways and evaluate the situation on their own terms and respond as they feel like, ferociously or quietly.

Moss and Lichen

When we arrived at the lighthouse most of us had got used to the terns and I had the feeling that some of them at least had got used to us, as it felt like the numbers of attacks had decreased but maybe that was just my imagination. After a visit into the lighthouse, we headed towards the burial mound, the other landmark at Hraunhafnartangi (Fig. 3.6).

We had adjusted to the loud shrieks and occasional attacks, being as they were an inevitable part of the place that at this time of the year is dominated by the terns. Nevertheless, we were aware that the terns were screaming and imagined that they were begging us to be careful as the juveniles were scattered around and could be hard to see, hidden by the low tundra growth that now got our attention. The arctic tundra vegetation is mostly combined of grasses, low shrubs, mosses and lichens. First, we started admiring the buds of the plant that inhabitants of Iceland chose in a nationwide competition in 2004 to be the national flower of Iceland, a flower intended to become a symbol of unity: *holtasóley* (mountain avens; *Dryas octopetala*). As Hartigan (2019, 1) points out we, as humans, sometimes "have a difficult time noticing plants at all, and a species-as-décor sensibility leads most of us to see them only as background wallflowers", decorative or symbolic (Fig. 3.7).

Deeper examination of what they can tell us reveals, however, that plants are challenging. Unlike the narratives that the driftwood on the beach or the shrieking arctic tern tell that allow one to travel with them

Fig. 3.6 Walking to the burial mound (Photo by Þórný Barðadóttir)

into different and distant worlds plant stories are mostly hidden underground. Growth is elusive but simultaneously attracts (Hathaway 2018; Satsuka 2018). Looking at the ground, the tundra vegetation allows for a sensual and imaginative exploration into a world of entangled multispecies habitation. Indeed, vegetation is not only a combination of multiple plants; lichen, for example, is not a plant but an algae and fungus in coexistence. One of those lichen, *Cetraria islandica*, has been called Iceland moss in English, but in Icelandic it is called *fjallagras*, mountain grass. It is interesting to contemplate why lichen has been named as grass whilst being at the same time perceived as moss. Fjallagras has for centuries been valued in Iceland for its nurturing characteristics and was, and still is, collected as a dietary supplement. This brings forth questions of how, and by whom, species are defined and valued and for what purposes.

Fjallagras was a prominent species on the ground over which we were walking and in places it was lying like a thin cover over multispecies earthly habitation shaping a vegetational entanglement of irregular meshwork (Ingold 2007). On closer exploration, it turned out to be a chaotic amalgam of various sorts of mosses, crowberry shrubs, wild thyme, dwarf willow and grass (Fig. 3.8).

Fig. 3.7   Holtasóley (Photo by Katrín Anna Lund)

A slightly different angle, and using a close-up lens, gives a completely different perspective and reveals at least three types of lichen and one type of moss. My amateur eye wanted to capture what caught my attention as a mysterious and colourful 'flower' and I was curious to know its name so after the trip I sent the image to an ecologist colleague (Fig. 3.9). She responded by saying "Sorry, no flower in this photo" but verified the elusiveness of the earth by listing up the variety of species that the image contains. "Up to the left, a type of moss called *gamburmosi* or *grámosi* in Icelandic (*Racomitrium lanuginosum*), up to the right a lichen called *móakrækla* in Icelandic (*Sphaerophorus globosus*), at the centre *skarlatbikar* in Icelandic (*Cladonia borealis*) and at the bottom one can glimpse the lichen *hreindýrakróka* (*Cladonia arbuscula*)".

Fig. 3.8 Iceland moss (Photo by Katrín Anna Lund)

Thus 'my flower' is not even a plant, it is a lichen and, as pointed out above, lichen is a coexistence of algae and fungus which makes one think about how "organisms come into being in relationship to each other" (Hathaway 2018, 41). As Satsuka (2018) points out, growth is a sensual relational gathering "always in a fluid and unstable condition" (p. 82) and as Tsing (2015) demonstrates vegetation is a multispecies composition in which humans are involved "[…] each organism changes everyone's world. Bacteria made our oxygen atmosphere, and plants help maintain it. Plants live on land because fungi made soil by digesting rocks" (p. 22). Therefore, when the colours of *skarlatbikar* or *Cladonia borealis* attracted my attention, it was not really a 'flower' as an object that caught my eye but rather I was drawn to complex entanglements of lively co-habitation.

Fig. 3.9   Moss and lichen (Photo by Katrín Anna Lund)

Modern Ruin—An Abandoned Farm

Now, we head back to the moment when we are having our packed lunch. I have been wandering around in chaotic nothingness, a wilderness full of something, encountering entangled relations that have sent me on journeys into different spatio/temporal dimensions. It is time to alter the rhythms and head on and now to the northernmost point in Iceland, Rif. The guide gives the direction (Fig. 3.10).

We walk in a row, mostly in silence. The exploration continues. The entanglements have altered as the mobility of materials, drift and growth, combine and enmesh differently depending on how earthly substances such as water, air and land meet and shape up. Different colours appear

Fig. 3.10   Walking towards Rif (Photo by Þórný Barðadóttir)

such as the orange drift of seaweed on a beach that feels softer in terms of its slightly gentler textures compared to the boulders we were walking on earlier (Fig. 3.11). The growth is grassier, and we are away from nesting grounds so we only spot an occasional tern flying out to sea for nourishment. The route feels less intense, there are no loud birds, and this allows me to pay attention to the salty smell of the sea in combination with the smell of decomposing seaweed and slowly rotting driftwood. The lack of actual landmarks now makes me really feel that I am walking at the edge of the open world, in nothingness that is, nevertheless, full of ever-moving somethings. I am still in wilderness but now textures have altered due to changed material compositions and thus provide slightly different feelings than on the walk we did earlier.

Suddenly, the openness is disturbed by the appearance of an abandoned farm that seems to come into view out of nowhere (Fig. 3.12). This structure, in a place that otherwise feels unstructured, creates "an aura of something out of place" (Lund and Jóhannesson 2014, 451) and provides an element of wildness, a feature of alterity entering into the more-than-human entanglements we have already been moving with. Maybe it is the fact that someone at some point in time made an attempt to order and stabilise these empty grounds that in itself provides the element of wild.

Fig. 3.11 Orange drift of seaweed on the beach (Photo by Katrín Anna Lund)

Like Behrisch (2021, 493), "I feel addressed by the wild, arrested to stop and look, to take photographs". As Edensor (2005) and Pálsson (2013) have pointed out modern ruins evoke a sublime experience in a contemporary context, they are elusive at the same time as they attract. They are an addition to the ongoing narratives and as such accentuated.

We head towards the structure that, by sticking out visually, has become a landmark where the journey to the northernmost place in Iceland comes to a halt before heading back. However, the ruin is not simply a turning point, rather it exaggerates the need for exploration.

The guide tells us that the farm used to be wealthy, with a large farmland extending far inland, but it was abandoned in 1947 when the residents decided to give in due to the often unpredictable and fierce

Fig. 3.12 The modern ruin of the farm, Rif (Photo by Katrín Anna Lund)

earthly forces combining wind and water. As we come closer to the ruin the more-than-human entanglements as materials that can be associated with human habitation start appearing in various forms, enmeshing with the other more-than-human materials. The ruin shapes its own territory. Its concrete materiality provides a "sense of stability and order" (Lund and Jóhannesson 2014, 451) that is at odds with the unruly wilderness that we have been travelling with. Simultaneously, I can strongly sense its vulnerability as it is subject to the erratic, sometimes volatile, forces of the ever-moving surroundings. Ruins are elusive because, as emphasised by DeSilvey and Edensor (2013, 466), they "refer to both object [a ruin] and process [to ruin]". They have been left not only to decay but to take on the role as narrators of a dramatic turning point, even broken

dreams, stories that are brought forth through the ruin. It is through that process that the place comes together, through a multiplicity of narratives told by lichen-covered concrete walls, pieces of wood and corrugated iron that the wind has scattered around, driftwood that will not be utilised for human needs (Figs. 3.13 and 3.14).

The place provides a sense of stillness that is full of life, hence poetic, when one attempts to comprehend it. It has been left behind but the memories linger and the ghosts of the past lurk around as present absences (Meier et al. 2013) through the more-than-human materialities that have continued to shape the habitation. Furthermore, the arctic terns that had been relatively absent as we walked to the places now remind us that we are now back in their territory when we move about for our exploration.

Fig. 3.13 Pieces of wood and corrugated iron on the shore by Rif (Photo by Katrín Anna Lund)

Fig. 3.14   Lichen-covered concrete wall at Rif (Photo by Katrín Anna Lund)

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to rethink the potential of a place as a tourism destination by contemplating ways in which tourists might take part in its shaping and becoming. To do so I headed into landscapes of nothingness for an exploration only to find myself emerge with chaotic, wild wilderness, full of something. Journeying through chaotic wilderness can invite the traveller to participate directly in the shaping of wilderness and to sensually experience the poetic stillness that embraces and creates atmospheres of vitality, richness and potential. Thus, the focus was to investigate how unruliness shapes the potential of place, or how the nothingness, emptiness and chaotic wilderness can assist those who visit to get in touch with the moving materials that shape it. To do so I took on the role of an explorer to feel textures and detect details, getting a sense for the surroundings as they are encountered on mutual terms. Encounters allowed me to travel into different spatio/temporal dimensions, a beach, arctic terns, moss and lichens and an abandoned farm, all of which bring the whole surroundings together in a more-than-human manner and bring forth their intense mobile natures into which the explorer emerges.

In contrast to my approach to Melrakkaslétta as a place of nothingness, tourism destinations are usually introduced as places of definite somethings, as stages and/or scenes on which tourism performs. Tourism destinations, as Sverrisdóttir (2011; see also Lárusdóttir 2015) points out, are highly organised spaces that affect the tourism performance. This is a contradiction, she states, as everyday life is usually carried out in highly organised spaces, and therefore, it should be recognised that one of the reasons for travelling is to get away from such order. Sverrisdóttir suggests that we rethink the tourist as someone who travels by intuition "rather than organized around recognizable visual attractions" (2011, 83). Hence, I want to state that introducing the explorative aspect of tourism, or the tourist that wants to delve into the surroundings and allow themselves to extend the journey into different topological dimensions, to be moved by as well as move with the destination, will allow us to re-value the potentialities and poetics of places as destinations.

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Multispecies Stories from the Margins

Outi Rantala and Emily Höckert

Our chapter engages in speculative storytelling with local mosses in the Pyhä-Luosto National Park in northern Finland. The main character of the park is a 35-km-long fell chain, which is a remnant of mountains that were formed two billion years ago. The timberline in the fells is situated at an altitude of 320 to 400 metres above sea level. The fell tops are rocky, consisting of quartzite, composed of the sand that lay at the bottom of an ancient sea, which was left there when the ice age eroded the mountains away (Metsähallitus 2022). Yet, today the lower slopes of the fells are covered by dense evergreen forests with lush vegetation and the soft, dense and green carpet of moss (see Fig. 4.1). Further downhill the landscape turns into *aapa mires*; that is, to vast broad wetlands with open areas in its centre. These mires play a vital role in the ecosystem being the only breeding grounds in Europe for several rare species of bird and providing a refuge for many threatened plant species (Keränen et al. 2001). The large, open mire areas are created and governed by mosses, holding up all other forms of life at the mire—from a bear to a cranberry, as described by the Finnish novelist Anni Kytömäki (2022).

O. Rantala (✉) · E. Höckert
University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland
e-mail: outi.rantala@ulapland.fi

Fig. 4.1 Pyhä-Luosto National Park (Photo by Antti Pakkanen)

Places like these in northern Finland are inevitably entangled with the contemporary tourism system that offers a different kind of 'refuge' for an ever-growing number of human visitors. Today, we are steered by the infrastructure, policies and entwined lifestyles to practice tourism in certain ways—in 'ways' that are relatively recent but form an inherent part of the Anthropocene (Gren and Huijbens 2014). For example, tourism development in the Arctic has focused on large-scale investments in airports, since catering for international tourism has been perceived as the tool for economic growth and vitality of the peripheral areas (Halpern 2008; Ren and Jóhannesson 2023). Indeed, in Northern Finland tourism development manifests today as international, resort-style economic activity steered primarily by non-local economic actors (Kulusjärvi 2019, 1). We are concerned with how the current form of organising tourism in the North leaves limited possibilities to practice tourism in ways that would recognise local tourism relations and local economic agency as sources of social change (Kulusjärvi 2019, 71).

At the same time, the contemporary economic systems based on a narrow capitalist idea of the market have existed only for a few hundreds

of years, whereas we have engaged with economies—in a wider perspective—for as long as human communities have existed (e.g. Joutsenvirta et al. 2016). During recent years, tourism scholars have been voicing their critique towards the narrow focus on capitalist tourism systems and measurements of success in terms of economic growth. Tourism scholars inspired by the ideas of transformation (Pritchard et al. 2011; Ateljevic 2020), degrowth (Hall et al. 2021), social and ecological justice (Higgins-Desbiolles et al. 2022), diverse economies (Cave and Dredge 2018; Kulusjärvi 2019; Mosedale 2011; Nevala 2021), locality in tourism (Higgins-Desbiolles and Bigby 2022) and proximity (Jeuring and Díaz Soria 2017; Rantala, Kinnunen and Höckert in press) have started to question whether the development and growth of international tourism during the last 50 years or so is the only way to practice tourism. Most of all, these debates have raised the question about wellbeing in multispecies communities in the midst of ecological crisis.

In this regard, we are convinced about the importance of searching for alternative ways of thinking and doing tourism by cultivating the art of attentiveness with multispecies actors living at the margins of our everyday attention (van Dooren et al. 2016). More specifically, this chapter is driven by our curiosity in entanglements between humans and mosses as a metaphor for slow ways of living in the world (Kimmerer 2003; Gilbert 2014). There are more than 20,000 species of mosses on this planet, living without roots and absorbing water and nutrients mainly through their leaves. They feel at home in small micro-communities on the boundary layer between air and land: on the surfaces of rocks and logs or on branches of trees (Kimmerer 2003; Rikkinen 2008). Some of them, perhaps the most adventurous ones, live a more mobile life on the backs of a beetle or turtle. While mosses are generally perceived as something tiny, insignificant and slow, one of the many secrets of mosses seems to lie in their ability to take full advantage of being small and flourishing in the shade (Kimmerer 2003). Hence, what could we learn from mosses that have succeeded in surviving in nearly every ecosystem on earth longer than any other plant groups?

By focusing on the life-sustaining agencies, temporalities and relations of mosses, the chapter explores questions of marginality from their viewpoint. On one hand, our aim is to focus more closely on the lives of mosses in those margins, and on the other, to reflect how storytelling with mosses might mobilise curiosity and responsibility towards supposedly ordinary and immobile beings. We approach multispecies storytelling

here both as an epistemological approach and a methodological tool that brings together existing knowledge, recognises non-human agency, offers new perspectives and cultivates sensitive approaches to otherness (Despret 2016; Höckert 2020). By moving our attention from large-scale investments to tiny-scale actors and questions of minimal ethics (Valtonen and Kinnunen 2017; Zylinska 2014), our aim is to stretch our moral imaginations beyond the human-centred ideas of wellbeing and growth.

The chapter begins by introducing the conceptual framework of multispecies storytelling and continues with a visit in the landscape of Pyhä-Luosto, where we kneel or land on our stomach to engage with the hidden secrets of moss. The last part of the chapter weaves together the storylines to discuss the potentialities of multispecies stories from the margins of our everyday perceptions and the possibilities of including multiple voices into the place-making and tourism development processes. Our aim is not to categorise or draw a well-defined picture of mosses, but rather to open various relations, continuous changes, diverse timescales and embodied experiences that may unfold when getting in touch with the non-human others. Thus, we apply relational understanding (e.g. West et al. 2021) in our story.

On Multispecies Storytelling

Reimagining ethics for the Anthropocene requires addressing the question of scale; that is, how much we could and should zoom in and zoom out when cultivating ethical imagination with multiple others (Jóhannesson 2019). While some claim that caring for the Earth requires 'thinking big' (Gren and Huijbens 2014; Morton 2018), others suggest that the stories of life and death need to be re-thought and re-told equally in micro-scales (Rantala et al. 2020; Valtonen et al. 2020, Zylinska 2014, 11). A great example of the latter is Joanna Zylinska's guidebook to *Minimal Ethics for the Anthropocene* (2014), which helps us to search for a good life at the margins in times when the very notion of life is under threat.

The onto-epistemological approach of our writing builds on posthumanist and feminist new-materialist discussions that call for alternative forms of storytelling in the midst of ecological crisis (Zylinska 2014; Despret 2016; Haraway 2016). Different from traditional and classical fables with moral lessons and dualistic characters of good and evil, the purpose of this kind of 'scientific fabulation' is to slow down, complicate

and hesitate so that multiple voices can be heard (Despret 2016; Latour 2016). This way of approaching storytelling disrupts the classic plotline of 'beginning – problem that occurs – solving the problem – the end' (Hiltunen 2002) and calls for leaving the doors open to the unexpected (Höckert 2020).

But what kind of expertise does it take to be conversant with mosses? How is it possible to 'engage in elaborate forms of perception, inter- preting and responding to their immediate environments and the other life forms they encounter' (Hartigan 2018, 1)? It is clear that plants and people are not the same, but also that their lively differences are important for the coming together of connections across the complexity of the world (Boke 2019). For our great joy, Emily realises that Robin Wall Kimmerer (2003) has led the way to this type of storytelling with mosses in a book titled *A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses*. Wall Kimmerer's stories bring together the voices of the mosses, her training as a scientist and her traditional knowledge of her Indigenous Potawatomi heritage. In her view, all these different ways of knowing are simultaneously needed as stories are about relationships. While the scientific ways of knowing rely—to a great extent—on empirical information that we gather with our bodies and interpret in our minds (Vola, Rautio and Rantala in Press), her Indigenous Potawatomi worldview also encompasses emotions and a spirit that can invite matter to walk and even dance. As Wall Kimmerer (2003, 11) beautifully describes:

> Slowing down and coming close, we see patterns emerge and expand out of the tangled tapestry threads. The threads are simultaneously distinct from the whole, and part of the whole. […] Knowing the mosses enriches our knowing of the world.

Today's ecological crisis, in Wall Kimmerer's (2013) words, indicates a broken relationship to land that calls for re-story-action; that is, for enhancing our capability to hear and share the stories of the land. Wall Kimmerer follows the urge to tell mosses' stories, "since their voices are little heard and we have much to learn from them" (Kimmerer 2003, vii). Her story draws our attention to the margins of our ordinary perception; that is to the complex and beautiful lives of beings that we tend to take for granted and merely pass by. She introduces mosses as 'a vehicle for inti- macy with the landscape, like a secret knowledge of the forest' (Kimmerer 2003, vi). This is all encouraging us to ask: what can we learn from mosses about the land we live with?

Speculative Stories with Moss in Pyhä-Luosto National Park

Our storytelling with moss begins in winter, 'when the green earth lies resting beneath a blanket of snow' (Kimmerer 2013, 3). We travel to the field work cabin of the University of Lapland that is situated on the border of the Pyhä-Luosto National Park to commence our storytelling by engaging bodily with moss. When discussing possibilities for plant ethnographies, Boke (2019) refers to herbalists' efforts to communicate with plants: The herbalists' attunement towards a particular plant is based on taste, smell, vision—'organoleptics'—and the sense of touch—haptics, that help herbalists construct personal, sensate, bodily attunements to the plant (Boke 2019, 23). We are ready to take this challenge!

Tracing Moss

We leave the cabin and walk through the blue darkness seeking a path where the snow is compact enough to carry our steps. First our feet sink in the soft snow, but then we reach the path ploughed by the maintenance personnel of the national park. This familiar path has changed completely since our last visit. Four months ago, the sky was white, and the ground was filled with many shades of green and spots of blue and red from all the berries. Now the colours have switched place; the deep dark colours have travelled to the sky and the ground and trees have become covered with pillows and mattresses of soft snow.

While December forms the high season of tourism in northern Finland, many of the non-human hosts are slowing down and resting for the forthcoming spring. They snuggle under the snow and hide there from the human visitors' gaze. The layers of snow work both as protector for the plant communities, and as a host for human guests who arrive with skis, fatbikes and on foot.

We see a perfect spot of untouched snow and land on it on our backs. We sink into its cloudlike softness and feel a hug from mosses underneath us.

Field diary, December 20, 2022

It is clear that the snow brings a specific challenge and secrecy to our task of engaging with mosses. While it prevents us from smelling, seeing and touching moss, the snow welcomes us to leave traces to the

landscape—traces that we otherwise avoid leaving. Snow enables us to develop new kinds of sensitivities with moss, since we simultaneously feel more sustainable—sustained by snow to come close to the moss without being afraid to trample it. Simultaneously, we need to practice the 'art of attentiveness' in a more nuanced or creative way. In our attempt to attune towards moss in winter, we seek help from two colleagues of ours, photographer Antti Pakkanen and applied visual artist Antti Stöckell. What happens when we draw our attention to now invisible mosses? The moss is all over the landscape, yet it is covered.

With Pakkanen's photography from the park (see Fig. 4.2), the traces of ski tourism and mobility in the park draw our attention. The history of modern tourism started in northern Finland in the 1930s with the road connection to the Arctic Sea and with women pioneers hiking and skiing on the fells of Lapland. In line with this, Pyhä was among the first places in Lapland to receive tourists and to be engaged in tourism development. The first proposal for a national park in the Luosto-Pyhätunturi area was made in 1910, and the plan was carried out in the Pyhätunturi area in 1938 (Metsähallitus 2007). The old forests have lived long enough to witness the changes brought by tourism development. From the ancient fells and mosses' perspectives, the tourists' traces are a very recent phenomenon.

Stöckell has also been pondering over leaving traces and being in touch with snow. According to him, one gets in touch with the essence of snow when doing winter arts. For instance, he looks for motifs from snow that has been piled on top of fallen tree trunks or on top of rocks. Here, one can saw holes in the snow (see Fig. 4.3). This technique illustrates

Fig. 4.2 Simple traces and much used traces at Pyhä-Luosto National Park (Photos by Antti Pakkanen)

well the different layers of snow that have accumulated during the winter and how plants hibernate under snow (Stöckell 2021a). For Stöckell (2021b), getting in touch with the essence of snow enables a connection to climate change, since the millennia-long adaptation of plants and animals to winter is put under severe test when the winter climate changes rapidly. He describes how—as extreme weather events increase— variations in winter conditions also bring variations to snow quality in midwinter. For example, after the January rainfall, he once found the surface of a frozen crust to be workable with a saw. On the other hand, an increase in the amount and density of snow in the north may also mean that melting could be delayed until May, expanding the working opportunities for an artist working with snow. This, he continues, is a contradictory experience: "I seize the opportunity with joy while I worry about the causes and consequences of the change" (Stöckell 2021b, 75).

With the help from Stöckell, we are able to draw our attention to the aesthetic aspect of winter: What does winter look, feel and sound like? In the visuals of winter, the quantity and quality of light are crucial (Stöckell 2021b, 79). This takes us back to where we are now, winding through

Fig. 4.3   Artwork made with snow by Antti Stöckell

the dark landscape of Pyhä-Luosto National Park, in a dark afternoon late in December 2022. We lie down in the untouched landscape of fresh snow, where only the park maintenance personnel have left their traces. Traces that are hardly visible due to the limited amount of light reflecting from the snow. We feel safe to be in touch with the moss since our touch is mediated by the snow. At the same time, the embodied connecting with the mosses seems difficult through the snow and instead we let our imaginations reach the perhaps hibernating life underneath us. We try to bring to our minds the words of Wall Kimmerer about the possibilities of storytelling during the winter season. That is, how the landscape covered in snow and ice welcomes both speculation and the gathering of new knowledge for the forthcoming spring.

We begin to stroll towards the cabin with excitement over all the stories and studies of moss that are there waiting for us.

Touching Moss

During our walk back to the university cabin, we talk about the different kinds of guidelines and signs that are being used to enhance ethical ways of visiting non-human communities. For instance, many national parks are firmly asking the hikers not to create cairns by piling stones as moving rocks can unintendedly destroy the homes of animals, plants such as mosses and even land as such (Rantala et al. 2020). Iceland has struggled with people driving off road and causing big damage to mosses. Hence, Visit Iceland's marketing video 'The hardest karaoke song in the world' chirps in the scenic landscapes, along with amusing cultural stereotypes, that one should … *not traðka (trample) on the moss, it grows back so slow! Like seventy years!*

The guidelines and signs seem to enhance responsible behaviour by keeping a distance and not getting in touch. Nevertheless, we wonder whether more caring relations could take place in more intimate and proximate ways as well. Like with the loved ones that we learn from without wanting to control them or know them thoroughly, but rather with live in symbiosis. In other words, how could we cultivate more caring forms of attentiveness (van Dooren et al. 2016) by engaging with—instead of merely staying away from—mosses? What kind of engagement might moss appreciate from human animals?

In the cabin, we sit down in the soft leather armchairs with warm cups of tea in our hands. Outi remembers a quote from Tove Jansson's—author of the Moomin—*Summer Book* (1972), set on a rugged island in the Gulf of Finland, that you should not step on the same mosses twice, since they will not endure:

> Only farmers and summer guests walk on the moss. What they don't know – and it cannot be repeated too often – is that moss is terribly frail. Step on it once and it rises the next time it rains. The second time, it doesn't rise back up. And the third time you step on moss, it dies. Eider ducks are the same way – the third time you frighten them up from their nests, they never come back. Sometime in July the moss would adorn itself with a kind of long, light grass. Tiny clusters of flowers would open at exactly the same height above the ground and sway together in the wind, like inland meadows, and the whole island would be covered with a veil dipped in heat, hardly visible and gone in a week. Nothing could give a stronger impression of untouched wilderness. (Jansson 1972/2022, 28–29)

But avoiding stepping on moss is impossible here in Pyhä—and in Finland, unless you strictly stay on the path, or out of the woods. According to plant biologist Johannes Enroth (2022), who studied mosses for 40 years, the forests of Finland are characterised by a more or less uniform moss cover on the ground surface. The green moss mat prevents soil erosion by holding rainwater that seeps slowly through the moss and makes sure that the soil temperature does not change too quickly either. He writes:

> Biological nitrogen fixation from the air is essential in the ecology of forests and bogs. Mosses do not fix nitrogen, but nitrogen-fixing microbes live inside and among them. So, mosses maintain diverse communities of micro-organisms that flourish in a humid environment, which are ecologically irreplaceable. Many pathogens also thrive in dampness, which mosses keep under control with the antiseptic substances they secrete. (Enroth 2022)

Enroth comforts us by telling that it is actually impossible to kill moss by trampling. He says that the consequences of trampling are the opposite: a new shoot can grow from every detached shoot, even a leaf. Mosses reproduce by the formation of spores that are carried far afield with wind

(Kimmerer 2003), which make them, interestingly, masters of asexual reproduction.

We wonder who should we believe, Jansson or Enroth? During our Google searches, we have come across images of and instructions for moss graffiti. We learn that the mosses can adapt to new homes as long as those are moist and sheltered rocks with only partial sunlight. Mosses are also described as humble co-habitants with no need for fertilisers or extra water. Nevertheless, the human hosts require quite a harsh transformation process from the mosses to be considered as art. In order to become a moss graffiti, the mosses are crumbled into a blender and mixed with beer and sugar to create a smooth, creamy consistency and then painted onto a wall. This supports Enroth's (2022) theory that mosses can indeed survive almost anything, even blenders.

But when looking at the tourism landscape of northern Finland from the last 50 years, the impacts of growing trampling are visible especially at the tourist resorts in the form of an increased amount of infrastructure and route networks, and in the most popular national parks, where the paths are getting wider. At the same time, there are studies that show that short-term trampling does not leave a lasting impact on moss, since they grow soon back (Törn et al. 2006), and if the infrastructure is situated wisely along the hiking routes, tourists do not damage the plants too much with their trampling (Kangas et al. 2007).

But what does it mean that moss will soon grow back, if the trampling is short-term? Should we soon stop trampling—should we stop making the paths wider? If we look at this from the forest's point of view, we most likely are exceeding the limits of short-term trampling. From the perspective of two billion years old fells, the situation looks different.

Slowing Down with Moss

We start re-reading Wall Kimmerer's book on *Gathering Moss* and her descriptions of mosses as successful species by any biological measure (2003, 15). Wall Kimmerer's book draws attention to the advantages of growing slow and being small; indeed, it is the obvious attribute of moss being small that has had tremendous consequences for the ways mosses have strived to inhabit the world (Kimmerer 2003, 14).

Reading more about the homes of mosses, at least in our case, makes one long to pay a visit. We start to make plans for the summer when the snow melts down to visit the boundary layer of the Earth's surface where

mosses lie intimately between rocks and air. It is in this layer that the small mosses enjoy their unique microenvironment with moist, warmness and calmness (Kimmerer 2003, 15–18). Talking about proximity tourism, visiting this favourable microclimate requires us to switch our position from vertical to horizontal. Laying down on a moss carpet offers a realisation of how mosses themselves create a resistance to the airflow, inviting the wind to a slow dance. While this boundary layer functions as a secure refuge for mosses, it is also a place where the two of us find much-needed calmness and revitalisation (see Marder 2016).

In Japanese culture moss has held importance for many centuries. *Shirin Yoku*, the Japanese practice of forest bathing, involves being in the forest and taking in all the sights, smells, textures and sounds quite similar to the task that we have taken to ourselves. But most of all, Japanese temples and moss gardens—*Kokederas*—are seen as places for reflection that hold feelings of refinement, humility and simplicity. The mossy surfaces are used as places to ground and reflect and are interestingly said to bring forward feelings of nostalgia and homeliness. Our emerging sensibilities and ever-growing affinities with mosses make us long after this kind of place.

Thinking of knowledge in a relational way also disrupts the possibility of storying merely with fragments of a plant as isolated beings. Instead, the lives of these mosses are inevitably entangled with rocks and boulders, forming multispecies relations and communities with ancient, slow dialogues of their own (Kimmerer 2003, 5). From this perspective too, the act of climbing on the rocks and ripping off mosses from their homes seems quite violent. It also becomes questionable why permission to make new bouldering climbing routes should be asked merely from the landowners, instead of the non-human beings whose homes are in danger (Finnish Climbing Association 2023).

Interestingly, the national parks, nature museums and nature centres tend to offer a quite different approach to mosses than the Japanese moss gardens. For instance, the webpage of the Kentucky National Park (2023) focuses quite firmly on scientific knowledge, teaching us about the difference between mosses, lichens and liverworts. It turns out that whereas mosses are little flowerless plants; lichens are actually not plants at all but form a symbiotic relationship between two different organisms, a fungus and an alga. The Canadian Museum of Nature (2023) confirms this by describing that moss is a simple plant and lichen is a fungi-algae

sandwich. It is clear that we should most likely know the proper scientific names and categories of these plants if we wish to engage with them more properly. At the same time, Wall Kimmerer brings us some comfort suggesting that the names we give to our human and non-human companions reveal something important about our relationships and the knowledge we have of each other. The scientific 'Linnean' categories like *Polytrichopsida*, *Bryopsida* and *Sphagnopsida* may be suitable when aiming for objective observations of the 'other', while we tend to use sweet and cosy names of our closest friends and loved ones. However, we do not really have commonly used nicknames for mosses in the Finnish language, which might also prove the point about the limited interest towards them. One dialect-specific name for moss (*lempisammal*, soft moss) relates to the use of moss as an insulation between the logs in walls and describes the largeness and softness of the moss growth (Reinikka 1992, 96).

As new questions keep piling up, we decide to put our jackets and boots back on and take a walk to the visitor centre of the Pyhä-Luosto National Park and find out more about the mosses voice in there.

Remembering with Moss

We stomp the snow off our boots in front of the visitor centre *Naava*—lichen in Finnish—which welcomes us to experience nature in indoor settings. Lichens and mosses linger in the names of different products sold in the small shop. The current exhibition in Naava visitor centre in Pyhä-Luosto National Park welcomes the guests to learn about mosses and lichens through the introduction to the history of the Pyhä-Luosto fell area and its geology, nature and cultural history. Moreover, mosses are present in many different forms as aesthetic background material for other non-human beings, like a stuffed bear and an owl. The exhibition trains one's senses to become attentive to the richness and liveliness of the non-human nature around the centre during different seasons and times of day. One can even smell the moss and breathe in its scent. When we slow down with this scent, something magical happens (Nordström 2019). In Wall Kimmerer's (2013, 5) words, we begin to remember things we did not know we had forgotten.

We wonder whether the scents could be woven together with different kinds of written or visual stories of mosses' worlds. Could it be done in a way that would awaken the visitors' curiosity towards their 'secret knowledges of the forest' and teach our unpractised senses to receive these

secrets (Kimmerer 2003, vi)? It feels like curiosity cannot be awakened merely through scientific knowledge, but there is a need to tie knots with traditional knowledge and folklore that welcomes recognising and reflecting on the agencies of mosses from different perspectives. What kinds of voices could these stories give to the local moss communities to enhance the guests' appreciation of and affinities with these beings? (Fig. 4.4).

Wall Kimmerer (2003, 9) shares the wisdom of Cheyenne elders that 'the best way to find something is not to go looking for it' but merely 'to watch out of the corner of your eye, open to possibility, and what you seek will be revealed'. For us it sounds very similar to Emmanuel Levinas' (1969) and Jacques Derrida's (1999) discussions of hospitality as being prepared to be unprepared and leaving the door open to the unexpected. That is, if we are training our attention to and welcoming only certain

Fig. 4.4 Mosses whispering stories of their previous encounters with dinosaurs (Photo by Emily Höckert)

kinds of 'guests', we might turn our backs on the others who are too strange and marginalised to our conscious minds and ordinary perception. Hence, the stories with the mosses can also be told as whispers that enable us to suddenly sense something that expands our experience of relations with those multispecies others; to care for those previously mundane or unseen (Halonen et al. 2022).

What Multispecies Stories Do

By engaging with multispecies storytelling with mosses, we—along with other authors of this book—have wished to problematise the human-centred idea of marginality as such. Our pondering has led to questions such as: what might mobility and growth mean from mosses' point of view? And how can engagement with mosses help us to cultivate the art of attentiveness (van Dooren et al. 2016) to ways of being and knowing that have ended up in the margins of our everyday attention?

We suggest engagement in multispecies storytelling as a genre that can help us to recognise and bring in the voices of non-human actors to tourism planning and development processes. Instead of offering easy solutions or paralysing action, multispecies storytelling can help us to persevere with wicked problems in relation with more-than-human others. They encourage us to slow down, attune with alternative rhythms and temporalities, listen to more-than-human concerns and further mobilise inspiration, activism and hope. As Elizabeth Gilbert (2014) proposes in her story *The Signature of All Things*, engagement with mosses offers an alternative relation with time; that is, a relation that is different from both geological and human times. By attuning with mosses' rhythms and ways of living, we are offered a chance to learn about slowness and smallness as some of the key features for surviving and living well on Earth.

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Sailing the Seas of Tourism: Past, Present and Future Mobilities on the Margins

Gunnar Thór Jóhannesson

Encounters with a Ship

First Encounter

In August 2020, part of the team of researchers contributing to this book were on a fieldtrip in Westfjords, Iceland. On our way to Látrabjarg, the largest birdcliff in Iceland and one of the main attractions of the region, we drove through Skápadalur, a small valley at the end of the fjord of Patreksfjörður. There, at the side of the road that crosses the valley, rests a wrecked fishing vessel called Garðar. It has obviously been sailed onto the shore and placed there on purpose but seemingly left unattended. However, it attracts visitors. Tourists driving the road slow down and many stop by. It is a curious and photogenic spot. We also stopped and stepped out of our car to take a better look (Fig. 5.1).

The presence of the ship at this site was odd, to say the least, it seemed out of place in the otherwise natural surroundings. Rust has damaged

G. T. Jóhannesson (✉)
Department of Geography and Tourism, University of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland
e-mail: gtj@hi.is

Fig. 5.1 Members of the MoM team with other tourists at the site of Garðar in August 2020 (Photo by Gunnar Thór Jóhannesson)

the ship's steel coat and it is not safe to board it to explore it on the inside. Many however do so and Elva, who has been working on her PhD project in the areas (see Chapter 9), tells us that municipal authorities are concerned about the risk the wreck poses as well as the costs of its basic maintenance. A signpost at the site explains that this ship was the first steel boat in the Icelandic fishing fleet, and as such it marked a historic step in the modernisation of the fisheries, an industry that has long been central for the Icelandic economy. For me, at the time, it comes across as a sort of a monument of past times and a symbol of societal changes that have seen tourism becoming the largest provider of foreign currency instead of fisheries. It also makes me wonder about the people who worked on board this ship, what they did and how many today must have some kind of connection to it. I think I can see into one of the cabins but I'm not sure. If it could talk, it would definitely have many stories to tell and even as it lies there silently it still stirs our imagination (Fig. 5.2).

Second Encounter

When coming to Garðar again, one and half year later, the place affects me somewhat in different ways than the first time I encountered it. On this latter occasion, we were eight together, researchers in the MoM project driving through the region and acquainting us with it again. Some of us had not been there before. When stepping out of the car at the modest parking lot at the Garðar site, which is basically the sandbank on which it rests, we started to talk about the ship, the reasons for it being there, stuck on the shoreline and the various implications it had. As we walked around it, gazing at it and photographing it from different angles, we found ourselves collectively trying to grasp the value and meaning of
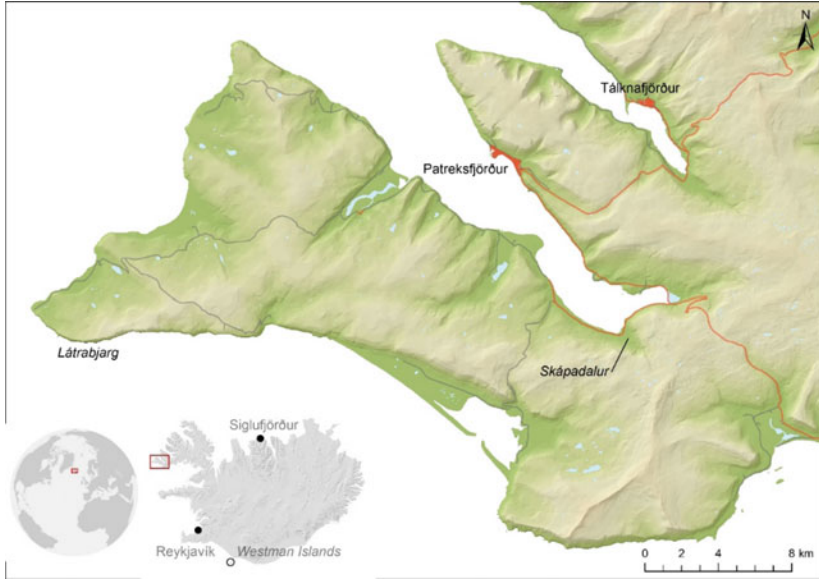
Fig. 5.2 Map of the location of Garðar and the roads leading to it. Together with Patreksfjörður, it was operated from Siglufjörður, Reykjavík and Westman Islands after being bought to Iceland. Data: National Lands Survey of Iceland (Map by Michaël Virgil Bishop)

Garðar. It immediately grabs one's attention, a derelict wreck standing out, a giant metal carcass stuck in the otherwise vibrant natural landscape. At the time we were there, in mid-May, the shore was full of migratory birds, some coming to stay for the summer, others, like the red knot (*Calidris canutus)*, only stopping by on their route further north. There were fewer tourists than last time we were there, as the high season had not started, but still a couple of rental cars stopped by and people stepped out to have a closer look. As for Garðar, we couldn't pinpoint any one meaning of it as it rested there. "What is it?", we asked ourselves. An artwork, a monument, a tourist attraction, a shelter for birds nesting, a health hazard, a piece of junk or all of that and more? (Fig. 5.3).

In this chapter, these two accounts of encounters with Garðar serve as a starting point for thinking about how places emerge through different kinds of mobilities and encounters in time and space. The chapter is based

Fig. 5.3 Garðar at its place, May 2022 (Photo by Gunnar Thór Jóhannesson)

on relational ontology that describes places as accomplished through multiple relations and practices by human and more-than-human actors. Much like ships, places move around heterogeneous networks (Hetherington 1997). But they are also stable, appearing like knots of intersecting lines of mobilities or events of "throwntogetherness" (Massey 2005). Mobilities "can be thought of as an entanglement of movement, representation, and practice" (Cresswell 2010, 17). It is thus possible to refer to spheres of activity such as tourism, transportation or fisheries as mobilities that affect and choreograph places (Franklin 2012; Lund and Jóhannesson 2016). In the case of tourism, the implication of this approach is that instead of thinking about tourism as a practice that happens within a pre-defined space or existing locations, tourism encounters produce and perform spaces and places (Bærenholdt et al. 2004). The latter thereby do not pre-exist their performance (Gregson and Rose 2000). In Franklin's words, tourism appears as a "network that is dynamic: it constantly maps, translates, joins, connects, aestheticizes, exchanges, enrols, hosts,

and courts" (2012, 46). Tourism then takes shape and shapes the world through relational encounters and entanglements with a wide array of heterogeneous objects such as roads, airports, menus, buildings, landscapes and ships (Jóhannesson et al. 2015). Hence, tourism mobilities have ontological repercussions; they are performative and enact realities. They affect places, both in a topographical sense, affecting flora and fauna of destinations, and in a topological sense, for instance, in altering the relation between perceived margins and centres, changing the notion of distance and shaping the image of places, peoples and natures as being remote and isolated and untouched or not (Huijbens and Jóhannesson 2019; Ren and Jóhannesson 2023).

As a matter of fact, the creative capacities of tourism are often framed in strategic or normative ways. Tourism, then, is conceived as a creator of jobs and as such promoted as a tool for developing, reviving or reordering struggling regional economies. Tourism in the southern part of the Westfjords has historically been modest, not least due to its remote location in relation to the capital region and the South of Iceland which most international travellers choose to visit during their stay in the country (Þórhallsdóttir and Ólafsson 2017). It takes approximately five hours to drive from Reykjavík, the capital, to the site of Garðar. Weak transport infrastructure both within and outside of the region of Westfjords have further limited tourism. This is one of the last regions in the country where a substantial part of the main roads are not paved and the mountainous topography is challenging during winters due to snow. Nevertheless, tourism has been promoted both by national and municipal authorities for years as a tool for economic diversification in the Westfjords (Vestfjarðastofa 2022). A recent effort consists in designing and marketing a tourist trail, the so-called Westfjord Way (Vestfjarðaleið in Icelandic), that is intended to draw travellers to the region, slow them down and have them stay longer. In this project the ship wreck of Garðar has been designated a role as an object of interest. The apparent role of Garðar in developing sustainable tourism in the region exemplifies the commonly haphazard planning of tourism in sparsely populated and remote areas. It also underscores how tourism mobilities entwine with multiple other mobilities and affect the becoming of a place, often in unintended ways.

In the following, I will trace some of the mobilities through which Garðar has become entangled with tourism in the southern part of the Westfjords region. The story of Garðar exemplifies how places emerge

through different kinds of mobilities and encounters in time and space and how tourism mobilities contribute to place making through connections with a wide array of objects and performances.

An Object of Interest in the Making

As stated on the signpost beside Garðar, this is the oldest steel boat in Iceland, built in Oslo in 1912. The seemingly straightforward description defines it as a potential object of interest and one worth of conservation. But what is an object and how does it contribute to the making of a place? Anthropologist Tim Ingold, drawing on Heidegger's distinction between object and thing, observes that the former "stands before us as a *fait accompli,* presenting its congealed, outer surfaces to our inspection", whereas "[t]he thing, by contrast, is a 'going on', or better, *a place where several goings on* become entwined" (Ingold 2010, 4, italics added). While the object is sealed off for participation, the thing is inviting and open for engagement, or in his words:

> Thus conceived, the thing has the character not of an externally bounded entity, set over and against the world, but of a knot whose constituent threads, far from being contained within it, trail beyond, only to become caught with other threads in other knots. Or in a word, things *leak,* forever discharging through the surfaces that form temporarily around them. (ibid., 4)

An object, then, unlike a thing, is an externally bounded entity. In the case of Garðar, seeing it as an object in this sense would mean that it is nothing more or less than a specimen of a particular type of fishing vessel from a certain historical era as explained on the signpost by its side. Its value and meaning is contained within that definition, vested in its slowly rusting steel coat. If we move, however, away from the brief description on the signpost and start to trace the history of this particular ship, the boundaries between thing and object start to blur.

Garðar was built as a state-of-the-art whaling vessel, specifically designed for sailing Antarctic waters, with a reinforced hull to cope with sea ice. Whaling had been banned in Norway in 1904 but in 1912 Norwegian companies had developed Antarctic whaling into a lucrative business (Isachsen 1929; Tønnessen 1970). In 1936, the ship was sold to the Áir

whaling company in the Faroe Islands. There it was used more for transport than whale hunting until nine years later, in 1945, when it was sold to an Icelandic company in Northern Iceland. At that point, it was renovated and partly rebuilt. The original steam engine was replaced with a modern diesel engine, the pilothouse was replaced and the crew cabins renovated, and the ship was equipped with the latest technology, such as radio- and echo-sounding equipment (Morgunblaðið 2003). For the next seven years, the vessel was used for herring fishing and line trawling. In the 1950s and early 1960s the ship was operated from Reykjavík, the Westman islands in the South of Iceland and Siglufjörður in the North, by different companies in each period. During this time it was maintained and repaired on a regular basis. In 1963, it was given its present name, Garðar, when bought by a company located in the capital of Reykjavík. At that time, the ship was renovated thoroughly once again. A new and more powerful engine was installed with a new radar and a net winch, which was used to hoist the herring troll on board, a technology that revolutionised herring fisheries. However, herring fishing in Iceland collapsed in the late 1960s, partly due to overfishing, with devastating consequences for the national economy. This led to Garðar being used for catching cod by line trawling and even for lobster fishing for some time but in 1974 Garðar was sold to Jón Magnússon's company, located in the village of Patreksfjörður in the southern part of the Westfords region. Jón was to be its last owner. He kept the name, had the pilot house rebuilt and upgraded the technical equipment. In the ensuing years, Garðar was among the most successful fishing boats in the region until it was declared unsafe in 1981 and deregistered (Morgunblaðið 2003).

As this brief history of the "life" of Garðar illustrates, it did not stay intact through the years. Several rounds of renovations and considerable rebuilding, re-equipping and upgrading in tandem with changed purpose and technological advancements even raise the question if Garðar was the same ship at the end of its active service at sea as the one that was launched in Oslo in 1912. In Ingold's optics, Garðar appears much more as a thing that leaks than an object that stays intact. However, it is also evident that it does hold itself together as an object; as a ship. Law, in his discussion of methods of long distance control (1986), describes vessels as networked objects that hold their shape, while moving through space as long as all its parts fulfil their roles. In Law's study, the ship was an example of a stable object, which provided the means to sail long distances more or less successfully, i.e. as long as the ship held together in one piece and

did not leak. On the basis of Actor-Network Theory (ANT), the ship was framed as an immutable mobile and as such it operated and enacted two versions of spatial relations, network space where it held together and regional space through which it moved (Law 2002).

This perspective provides a less dualistic version of the difference between objects and things, a version that sees this difference accomplished through (performative) relational ordering. Thus, sometimes the ship is performed as a network object and this is indeed the reason for its successful operation as a ship that sails the seas and thus enacts regional space. And this latter point is important as it allows us to perceive the ship as a relational actor rather than as a passive piece of wood or steel that is somehow propelled between destinations much like billiard balls that move by the force of the cue that hits them (Emirbayer 1997). The agency of the ship is "an effect of its relations with other entities" (Law 2002, 93). As an actor, it is "entangled, in terms of both its performance and its nature, in a variety of worlds" (de Laet and Mol 2000, 227). The vessels sailing the Portuguese route to India that Law described depended on networks of technology, astronomy and politics and their operation performed a particular version of the world. This means that the enactment of objects "has spatial implications […] and to enact objects is also to enact *spatial conditions of im/possibility*" (Law 2002, 92), which is to say that "*spaces are made with objects*" (ibid., 96). Furthermore, an object always enacts multiple relations. To build a ship and successfully sail it entails enacting it as a network object in the sense that its material integrity is contained within a network space, while it is able to sustain its mobility under conditions of Euclidian space.

For a long time Garðar performed as such an object, contributing to the growth-driven and resource-based economies of the Antarctic and the Arctic. In the latter region, the herring and cod fisheries were the backbone of the economy, a lever for modernisation and the basis for increasing urbanisation along the coastline. The towns and villages in the present-day peripheral region of the Westfjords are an example of this world of large scale modernised fisheries of the twentieth century. Garðar did hold together as a fishing vessel but that also demanded a lot of work and investment. The wear and tear of operating in harsh waters constantly posed risks to its stability as an object. The maintenance itself involved rounds of rebuilding but those were also driven by strategic decisions regarding what type of operation provided the best yield. The transition from whaling into herring and from there into line trawling

reflected changes in the natural conditions of the stocks in question as well as the formation and implementation of regulatory frameworks such as the whaling ban in Norway and the ban on herring fishing in Iceland.

These forces may be described as various networks in which Garðar has been entangled as well as dependent on in its relational performance and as we have seen they also imposed material and technological changes to Garðar. Hence, sometimes Garðar was enacted as a thing, "a place of several goings on" in Ingold's words (2010, 4) or a mutable mobile in ANT vocabulary (Latour 2005). Through the years, Garðar was repeatedly taken apart and reassembled to a varying extent. But still there was a continuity to it, it still worked as a ship, until it was sailed to the ground in Skápadalur. As such, it also enacts a spatial condition that is fluid in the sense that one of the reasons it holds together is that its shape does indeed change (de Laet and Mol 2000; Law and Mol 2001; Mol and Law 1994). The reason for its continuity as a ship and its continuous movement as such is that it is able to change. Based on this, it is possible to state that objects like ships depend on a relational ordering of regions, networks and fluids and perform these spatial conditions. This is to say that the operation of Garðar as a ship is meaningful under different spatial conditions; meaningful in the sense of holding together and affecting the becoming of the places it relates to during its operation.

Garðar's movement and operation as a fishing boat was put to a halt when it was deemed not seaworthy and sailed to the ground in Skápadalur by its owner, Jón Magnússon. It should be noted that the shoreline of Skápadalur in fact was owned by Jón himself, being a part of his property in the valley. A little bit up on the mountainside overlooking the shoreline Jón also had built himself a summerhouse. Jón has now passed away but the land is still owned by his family. As Garðar rests on the shoreline it no more moves in the same way as before. It is immobile in regional space but as we will see that does not mean it stays put under other spatial conditions. Its continuity as a ship that sails has been broken. It has left most of the networks it depended on as a fishing vessel and seems to have been abandoned as an object that someone cares for or cares about. However, rather than marking an end to its voyage, the planting of it on the shore can be seen as a new beginning. It has entered another world, another current of mobilities, where it starts to play a different role in shaping the area of southern Westfjords, including the town of Patreksfjörður and its surroundings, now as a place of tourism. And of course it is still a ship in some sense at least, and an object worth seeing.

Mol and Law (2001) use the metaphor of fire to describe how an object can hold its integrity while being torn apart or ripped out of the relations that hitherto have sustained it. This is one more way of thinking about spatiality of relational encounters, of how mobilities of various sorts perform and shape space as they entangle with objects. It manifests continuity through rupture. According to Jón Magnússon, Garðar immediately started to attract visitors, partly as a monument of a historical era and a piece of cultural heritage (Morgunblaðið 1991). In some sense, its fate is symbolic of general changes with the growing significance of tourism and the decreasing role of demersal fishing in the region, as pointed out to me by Valgerður María Þorsteinsdóttir who works as a representative for tourism and culture for the municipality. Instead of whales, herring and cod, now it catches tourists in its nets that are made of the aura of past times, the history of fishing, its material presence and of the dynamic display of the forces of nature that are underway in decomposing an object of modern industry. Þórkatla Soffía Ólafsdóttir, a representative of the regional Destination Management Organisation (DMO), says many of the local people have fond memories of visiting the site of Garðar. In the old days, she says, they could go on board and explore the interior, the pilot house, still with all sorts of equipment and the crew cabins; "it was a world of adventure". Once again, Garðar appears as an object that lends itself easily to fruitful connections as it encounters different actors that happen to visit it. Let us now explore the entanglement of Garðar into networks of tourism mobilities and its spatial repercussions in more detail.

An Attraction on the Way

As stated above, tourism development has been on the agenda in the region for some time. The southern part of the Westfjords region deals with many of the common challenges marginal areas face when it comes to tourism development. These include seasonality, long distances and at times difficult access, a limited local labour pool and limited options for marketing and promotion (Müller 2011). Between 2010 and 2019, tourism grew rapidly in Iceland and became a central pillar of the national economy. The rapid increase happened within a loose regulatory framework for management and planning and resulted in overcrowding at some of the most popular sites (Sæþórsdóttir et al. 2020a). To describe the

whole country as suffering from overtourism, however, is a simplification (Jóhannesson and Lund 2019; Sæþórsdóttir et al. 2020b). There are vast regional differences in tourism with the capital area and the south coast being central destinations and the East fjords and the Westfjords still being marginal in the context of tourism growth (Huijbens and Jóhannesson 2020; Thórhallsdóttir et al. 2021). The challenges that the fast increase in tourism and the concomitant overcrowding entailed, such as environmental degradation and rising housing prices together with the experience from the COVID-19 pandemic, have made expectations of tourism's value for regional growth and wellbeing more sober than before. In West Barðaströnd, municipal authorities and the regional DMO have sought to take a pro-active stance towards tourism development, abstaining from mass tourism and putting forth an agenda for sustainable tourism in the region (Vestfjarðastofa 2022). One of the key projects in realising that vision is the creation of a tourist trail, the *Westfjord way*, that passes by the site of Garðar and defines it as a site of interest for visitors. The Westfjord way is intended to draw tourists in to the area as well as carving a direction for the region towards tourism that is more in line with what the region has to offer and can accommodate, in terms of attractions, infrastructure and services.

While the preparation of the Westfjord way has been finished it has not been implemented yet. The basic idea is to re-frame the main road through the region as a tourist trail, creating a circle with designated stops on the way, including attractions like Garðar, Látrabjarg and Dynjandi waterfall as well as pointing out service companies catering to the needs of visitors. As mentioned above, Franklin describes tourism as an ordering as "a way of making the world different, a way of ordering the objects of the world in a new way – and not just human objects" (Franklin 2004, 279). Tourism as an ordering thus affects the shape, movement and direction of places. The Westfjord way is intended to create a stronger link between the region and the tourism mobilities currently taking place in Iceland. It charges the main road with a new meaning. Instead of (only) being a line of transportation, connecting points in Euclidian space, it now offers attractive experiences to tourists. Moreover, it orders the relation between key sites and objects of interests to tourism and thus expands and shapes the area as a tourist space in a topological sense. Garðar is one of those objects that anchor the emergent tourism mobilities that the Westfjord way seeks to channel. Let's get back to the shoreline in Skápadalur.

To run a ship aground can happen due to accident, by serious mistake or on purpose. In the case of Garðar, it was done on purpose. The act almost seems like a performance or a statement of some sort. One version of the story behind this act is that Jón Magnússon did not want Garðar to be dismantled because he cared about the ship and its historic significance as the first steelboat in the fishing fleet of Iceland. He thus decided to prepare a resting site for it on his land. A shallow canal was dug into the sand and on high tide the ship was sailed aground and sand and gravel then was pushed to each of its sides to support it. Another version, well known among local people according to one of my interviewees, is that Jón simply did not want to pay for the dismantling of Garðar and saw a chance to save the money by sailing the ship aground. So if it was a matter of care, it was care for money otherwise spent on dismantling the ship. Some voices point to the fact that the cost of having Garðar dismantled did not disappear, it was only postponed into the future as "something has to be done so the wreck won't pose a hazard to visitors" as stated by Þórkatla Soffía Ólafsdóttir, a representative of the DMO.

Visiting Garðar today, it is quite evident that the ship is in need of care. However, it is also clear that it has not been left entirely unattended. In that sense, it can be said that the vessel is "caught up somewhere between disposal and history" (Pétursdóttir 2012, 33). Initially, Jón painted the ship every year to protect it from rust and even lit it up during Christmas time as well as providing access to it, according to an interview taken with him in 1991 (Morgunblaðið 1991). At the time of the interview, Jón claimed that tens of thousands of people had visited the site and many must have boarded the vessel via the staircase he had installed. In later years, the condition of the ship has however deteriorated significantly as necessary maintenance has not been conducted. In a recent news article in the regional paper *Bæjarins Besta*, it is stated that Garðar was last painted in 2001 (Bæjarins Besta 2020). The staircase that once provided access to it is long gone and nature is slowly taking over, dissolving the once impressive steel coat. Now, the stern is beset by numerous fractures and holes, some of which are used by tourists climbing on board while the hull, especially strengthened for whaling in sea ice, remains sealed.

From the outset, it must have been clear to Jón that the maintenance he provided would never be enough to protect the ship from deteriorating and neither was it intended to get it on sea again. Care is, as de la Bellacasa states, "everything that we do to maintain, continue and repair 'our world' so that we can live in it as well as possible" (2011, 93). Efforts of

caring in this sense are open-ended and ongoing (Heuts and Mol 2013) and aim at shaping the world through repeated acts of tinkering. Rather than ordering according to a plan, efforts of caring thus contribute to the improvisation of possible realities. To run Garðar aground was an act of fracturing the relations on which it depended for its operation as a ship but it also provided new opportunities for relating to the world. For Jón, it also provided means to secure some kind of continuity in his relation to the ship. It is tempting to describe the initial acts of maintenance by Jón as efforts to turn Garðar into an object of heritage. To count as such, the heritage needs to be managed and contained as well as offering a safe and purified space without the undisciplined mess of natural degradation and decomposition (Pétursdóttir 2012). The present state of Garðar attests to the failure of this attempt. Garðar appears to some as "irrelevant, dirty and disorderly […]. Thus it is matter out of place" (Edensor 2005, 315). While some of the tourists that stop by Garðar are likely to be of that opinion, the evident role it is to play in the Westfjord way underlines that as a site of ruination it still is meaningful matter for tourism. Its value then rests in its presence, in its silent but dynamic materiality. Here, "ruination […] is not seen as the incarnation of loss but as generative process that is part of its 'messy biography'" (Pétursdóttir 2012, 42).

Valgerður María Þorsteinsdóttir, the municipal tourism representative, explains to me that the municipality has initiated planning of the site in collaboration with the landowners. It is deemed important to install proper car parking and waste facilities, including restrooms. According to her, there is no disagreement about the value of Garðar but the challenge is to finance the planning, the building and running of facilities. When asked about the significance of Garðar for tourism she says it is unquestioned and stresses the fact that the wreck is a popular motif of tourist photography. In her words:

> The thing with sites of interest, it has changed so much with social media. It [Garðar] is so figurative, a very figurative icon. You need to be such a good photographer to get some good photos of Látrabjarg birdcliff or Rauðasandur. Garðar, at least, always looks the same and it is easy to take a good photo of it […] and this is what matters so much today. And I think Garðar is important in that way, it is great material for marketing.

While the municipality is planning to take responsibility for Garðar as a site of attraction it has no plans for its restoration or preservation. To let

it be in a state of ruination should not be taken as an act of indifference or a lack of caring but rather as an acceptance of the life of things as they reveal themselves and entangle with human and more-than-human mobilities. Valgerður continues: "I wonder if this would not be a proper metaphor for the history of the fisheries – the memory moves further away as it slowly disappears". Valgerður does not make a clear distinction between Garðar as an object of heritage and a ruin; it is becoming in a vibrant relationship with an array of actors and networks. And it is maybe not of any importance either for tourists visiting the site. But she points out that even as Garðar would gradually decompose and disappear into the surrounding nature a certain level of (tourism) ordering in the form of information and material facilities is important: something like a network that would sustain the life of Garðar even further in time; something that would explain that the waste and debris or whatever would be left of Garðar is not out of place but very much part of the place, and part of making the region a place of fisheries and tourism.

Moving on

As an attraction on the Westfjord way Garðar continues its travels: only instead of traversing the seas it moves along the lines of tourism mobilities. Tourists perform it in different ways. It is a subject of the tourist gaze as manifested in countless photographs available on social media and the internet, people climb on board, it is being touched and at the same time it touches those visiting, sometimes involuntarily as some will get cuts and bruises. It stirs up the imagination and affects visitors. Tourism mobilities are reordering the region. The southern part of the Westfjords region is partly becoming a tourist region and tourism *takes place* by mingling with and entwining with objects that also have relational agency. Garðar can be seen to draw in tourism mobilities. It is, in fact, a matter of survival for it as an actor. It was cut from its life-sustaining networks when sailed aground and efforts of preservations failed. Tourism offers a lifeline; it now has another way to move around and contribute to the movement of the area as a place of tourism into the future. It is hard to say whether Jón Magnússon thought about Garðar as a possible object of interest for tourists when he decided to run Garðar aground but clearly he soon saw that possibility emerging.

The story of Garðar highlights how mobilities enact space in diverse ways through multiple encounters with human and more-than-human

objects. It also underlines that tourism takes place often through unplanned, unintended and improvised configurations of mobility; movement, representation, practice *and* materiality. The value and meaning of tourism is also accomplished in these encounters and the on-going efforts to order them. The Westfjord way tourist trail is an effort to order tourism mobilities based on values of responsibility and care towards the community and nature in the region: care in the sense of maintaining and continuing the world as well as possible. A place is like a ship and in order to sustain itself it both needs to hold together and change. In order to sail the seas of tourism successfully, the story of Garðar reminds us, it is necessary to tend to and value objects in their multiplicity.

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On Re-Dressing Remote Places: Imaginaries at the Margins

Carina Ren

An Unexpected Meeting

In March 2017, I received an unexpected email in my inbox. It was an invitation to a meeting about destination development. As a tourism researcher, this was not unusual, but the location where this development was to take place was more so: the newly abandoned Danish naval base of Grønnedal situated in the Southern parts of Greenland. The most surprising thing about it all was the sender: the Danish Ministry of Defence. In the invitation, it stated:

> The Ministry of Defence is in the process of planning the re-establishment of Grønnedal, and it is expected that the Armed Forces will only use a certain part of the facilities in the area. There will thus be the possibility that the area and its facilities will also be used by others. One option could be to include Grønnedal as a support point for tourism/destination development in Greenland. (my translation)

C. Ren (✉)
Department of Culture and Learning, Aalborg University, Copenhagen, Denmark
e-mail: ren@ikl.aau.dk

Needless to say, my curiosity was awakened, and I decided to accept the invitation.

The meeting that followed soon after at the Ministry of Defence in Copenhagen was attended by a very broad range of representatives from Danish and Greenlandic institutions and companies: Aalborg harbour (from where all shipping to and from Greenland was connected at the time), Aalborg University, Air Greenland, the national tourism organisation of Visit Greenland, the Greenlandic Ministry of Business, Labour market, Commerce and Energy, the Municipality of Sermersooq, where Grønnedal is located, the Danish Ministries of Trade and Defence, the Arctic Command (which had recently moved to Nuuk from Grønnedal) and the property manager of the Defence Ministry. All in all, an unusual gathering for a discussion of tourism development.

Opening the meeting, representatives from the Ministry of Defence introduced the Danish plans for reopening Grønnedal after a brief period where the base had been shut down. Now, the Danish Government had imposed a reopening and a requirement to keep the naval base manned (or to "keep the thermostat on 5 degrees", as it was described). This had created an opportunity (or need) to think about new, alternative uses of the physical structures and infrastructure, which included houses, a small harbour, fuel storage and a heliport. This was where tourism had come up as a novel idea with some potential, considering the lack of such facilities in the area. For this reason, developing Grønnedal as a tourist resort could seem obvious—and sorely needed—in a local setting.

In the discussions that followed, different views on the possibilities and potentials of Grønnedal and its surroundings were voiced. The Danish ministries were eager to 'do something', stressing how the recent activities to close the base had resulted in buildings left dilapidated or otherwise exposed. How long would there be left to act on the possibility to develop? Acting quickly seemed to be an issue here. The Greenlandic ministries however pointed in another direction, namely unresolved issues of soil pollution and waste disposal after many years of running the base—a theme that had also previously been addressed in the media (Sørensen 2015). Here, a slowing down of the process was considered crucial. A third position was taken by the municipal authority, expressing concerns about the possible rising public costs and responsibilities connected to an eventual reopening. More facts were needed before proceeding.

The only time during the five-hour meeting where attendees seemed aligned was during the exercise of mapping natural and cultural resources

present in the lush Arsuk fjord of South Greenland, where Grønnedal is located. While it started out with low expectations after an opening statement of one of the attendees that "there is absolutely nothing here", people continuously kept coming up with things to do and see. After half an hour, trophy hunting, fishing, geology hikes and underwater diving in rare drip stone caves were some of the things that had been added to an impressive list of potential tourism products and experiences. However, as discussions diverted into talks of investments, time schedules, responsibilities and costs, affinity and excitement quickly vanished. After the day-long meeting and subsequent dinner, people went their separate ways. Over the following months, a few, smaller meetings were held between different parties mediated by the Ministry of Defence, but eventually the conversations died out.

What this story tells us is perhaps how apparent political inertia killed a project before it could ever take off. Or how timing, political flair, entrepreneurial drive and many other things are key to 'getting things done' in tourism (Jóhannesson 2012). Perhaps Grønnedal is simply too remote, too uninteresting, too abandoned for an investment of this size, for going out of the way? In this chapter, these questions are taken as a starting point to explore attempts to re-imagine Grønnedal as something more than a naval base located in a remote fjord in South Greenland and to ponder why to this day, nothing has come out of any of the many efforts—albeit filled with and fuelled by good faith—to re-dress Grønnedal.

The chapter uses the case of Grønnedal to explore and discuss *how remote places are re-dressed*. The aim is to situate and investigate the role not only of presence, but also of absences—what *is* absent, what *has become* absent or what *remains* absent—as crucial social, political and cultural phenomena in place-making. Looking at the ongoing reproduction of places such as Grønnedal as too difficult, too remote or too sensitive, the idea of *marginal imaginaries* suggests that perhaps the re-dressing of Grønnedal as a place for 'something else' perished under *a lack of love* (De Laet and Mol 2000)?

In the following, I unravel the story of absence and 'presencing' Grønnedal based on three propositions: Grønnedal as a tourism resort, as a refugee camp and as a place of mourning. Because although unusual, the above story from the Danish Ministry of Defence only reflects one out of many activities that took place to develop Grønnedal for tourism in the time after its reopening, as we shall soon see. The research on which this

article is based consists of observations and notes from meetings related to tourism development in Grønnedal, on correspondence, conversations and interviews in 2017–2019 with various stakeholders interested in tourism development in Grønnedal, and on media sources and document studies predominantly of prospects and reports presented to the Greenlandic committee (Grønlandsudvalget) of the Danish Parliament (Folketinget).

By looking at how past, current and future landscapes are imagined, the chapter explores how a place and its landscapes, physical structures, past and neighbouring communities and cultural and natural heritage become subjects of remembrance, (re)discovery and contestation among different actors. The chapter shows how things, feelings and politics interfered with this 'obvious' idea and discusses 'what it takes' to re-dress marginal spaces.

Re-Dressing Place Through Absences and Presences

While being remote, uninteresting or abandoned might work as explanations to why Grønnedal to this day remains 'closed for business', other ways exist to narrate the story of Grønnedal after its closure in September 2014 and—following a shift in geopolitical interest in the Arctic—its reopening shortly after. One such way consists of seeing it as a (failed) attempts to 're-dressing'. The notion of re-dressing builds on the idea of *undressed places* first defined by Veijola et al. (2019) as places "left behind with only a little human life in it" (Veijola et al. 2019, 25), such as abandoned industrial facilities, decommissioned construction sites or settlements or mining towns in decay often found in what we may term as geographical margins or peripheries. Grønnedal in the Arsuk fjord is located in what once was Greenland's prime tourism spot, South Greenland (Fig. 6.1). Today, the region is severely challenged by depopulation, degrowth, poor physical infrastructure and lack of connectivity. It is, we might argue, an undressed space.

Undressed places may be defined through metaphors of loss or lack, where people, resources, competences or dreams disappeared abruptly or slowly, along the way. Now, these abandoned places have been left behind, idling. Yet in many cases, people or institutions remain connected to a higher or lesser degree to these places, whether emotionally (current or former inhabitants or descendants), financially (investors, property
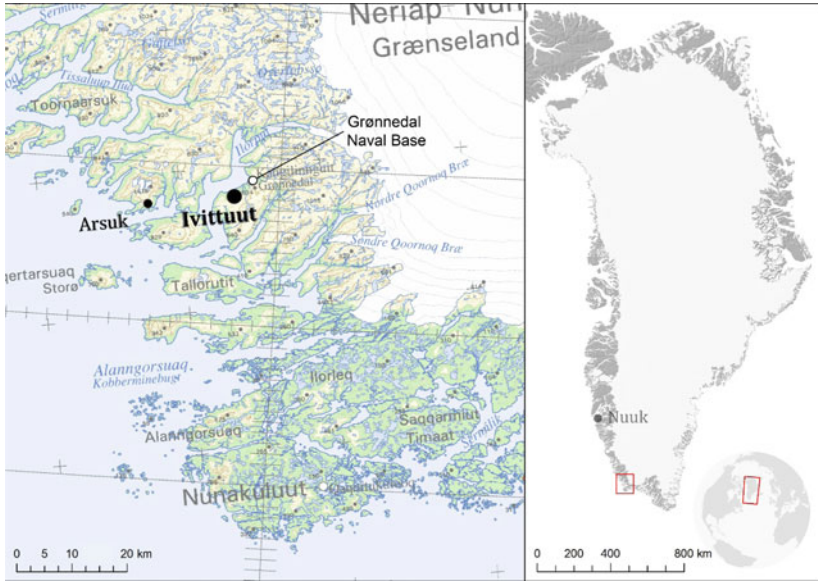
Fig. 6.1 The location of Grønnedal Naval Base and neighbouring Ivittuut. Data: Arctic DEM; Grønlands Topografiske Kortværk; Natural Earth Data; QGrenland (Map by Michaël Virgil Bishop)

owners) or institutionally (local administrators, planners). In the case of Grønnedal, we see actors that wait around, dreaming and planning for 'something more' and how in that process, reversed attempts of re-dressing take place.

It is these processes of re-dressing, of dreaming and planning, that are explored in the following, where we turn to the relational place-making surrounding Grønnedal. What enables, or reversely disables, the re-dressing of places is the ability to orchestrate a certain 'presencing' (Bille et al. 2010) by way of balancing or 'proportioning' absences and presences. This entails bringing forth, bringing together and spatially distributing people, funding, infrastructure or importance as developers, politicians, tourism stakeholders, past residents and researchers attempt to conjure place-related resources to rethink and renegotiate the re-dressing of places.

"Keeping the Thermometer at Five": The Closing and Reopening of Grønnedal

How did the naval base become a centre of discussions around tourism development in the first place? Already in 2011, a decision was made as part of the 2010–2014 defence settlement to shut down the Greenland Command that was based in Grønnedal at the time. A few years later, in 2014, a report from the National Audit describes the ongoing activities that had now been initiated in connection to the closure of the Grønnedal naval base. The report describes how the decision was "based on a desire to streamline the structure of the North Atlantic Commands" (Rigsrevisionen 2014, 1, my translation[1]). The decision was seen as strategic and aimed to consider the expected development in and around Greenland and the Faroe Islands at the time. This meant, among other things, a relocation of the military marine station in Greenland from Grønnedal to capital Nuuk by the Armed Forces. The armed forces began to leave Grønnedal around 1 January 2012 and were, according to the report "expected to be finally vacated in 2017" (Rigsrevisionen 2014, 1).

The expected closure marked the end of a long Danish military presence in South Greenland, as the Greenland command was established in 1951 in Kangilinnguit at the bottom of the Arsuk fjord. The main purpose of the time was to protect shipments from Ivittuut, the nearby cryolite mine, and to provide support, repair work and supplies of ammunition and fuel among other things. However, as the mine was closed in 1987, the necessity and strategic position of the naval base slowly diminished. After the decision to close Grønnedal, the base and, along with it, its sizeable structures, were put up for sale for a few years after the Greenlandic government had turned it down as a gift. This reluctance to take over the base was explained by the costs that the clean-up after suspected major pollution problems would cause.

At this point in time, we see how resources, use-value and strategic importance vanish, leaving behind only the physical structures. The personnel are called home or elsewhere, the weekly sailing route is terminated. Hereby, regular passage to the nearby settlement of Arsuk, at the time inhabited by around 170 people, are also cut off, also hindering the onward connection to larger towns in the area and, further away, the

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[1] This and many other quotes have been translated by the author from Danish into English.

airport of Narsarsuaq. The closing disrupts not only the naval base itself, but also the marginality of the settlement and broader region.

But somewhere far away, things begin to change and other things, things deemed significant, are moving closer as around 2016, shifts take place on the global geopolitical scene. The "expected development" mentioned in the 2014 national audit report in and around Greenland and the Faroe Islands did not play out as planned, as geopolitical circumstances in the Arctic and North-Atlantic radically changed in the years to follow. In its Arctic analysis that almost overlapped with the closing of Grønnedal, the Danish Ministry of Defence (2016) described how "China's desire for access to natural resources outside China has in recent years meant increased Chinese interest in the Arctic, including Greenland" (Forsvarsministeriet 2016, 29).

And this was true indeed. In early 2016, a Chinese company had expressed interest in purchasing Grønnedal, supposedly to develop a resort, and from that point on, things began to move fast. The view of Chinese presence in South Greenland, a place known for its rich deposits of rare minerals, led the Danish Government, strongly encouraged by the United States of America, to reconsider the selling of the naval base. A brief press release was issued in December 2016 by the Ministry of Defence stating that a depot and training facilities were still needed in Grønnedal. For that reason, it was decided to preserve the area with a few men on foot and in 2017; the base reopened only a year after it had been abandoned.

The decision was surprising and propelled Grønnedal right into the centre of geopolitical interest. According to Søfart, a Danish online maritime media, "the Danish base in South Greenland has become a pawn in a grand political game between China and the United States. The prospect of a Chinese presence in southern Greenland is unacceptable for the Americans - and the Danish allies" (Søfart 2016, n.p.). For the Greenlandic Government however, the Danish intervention clashed with the country's attempt to attract foreign investors to assist in developing and diversifying the economy and confirmed—once again—the unwillingness of the Danish government to involve Greenland in decision-making about central matters concerning the country. On the website of the Greenlandic Broadcasting company (KNR), then-minister of Independence, Nature, Environment and Agriculture Suka K. Frederiksen stated her dissatisfaction, but eventually, no official complaint was made.

Others found the decision downright incomprehensible. As argued by Christian Brøndum, editor of the media Defencewatch, the new Danish presence "made no sense" as to him, Grønnedal was only "a small pickle jar with a few men running around" (Fischer 2018, n.p.), reducing the re-dressing of the base to mere window-dressing? In an interview in 2023, foreign minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen recounts his past as Danish minister of state with reference to the last decade of Arctic security, which the authors describes in the following way: "'As I remember we concluded, based on some rational considerations, that we still needed Grønnedal' says Lars Løkke Rasmussen with a small laugh. He knows very well that it was a ruse to keep the Chinese out of Greenland. Not a rational military strategic decision" (Krog 2023). However, while a ruse, it was also an expensive one and on top of that a very unpopular decision in Greenland, displaying the lack of dialogue and involvement in the Danish/Greenlandic relationship. For this reason, the Ministry of Defence—as well as others—were working on new (tourism) plans for the base to mend the fact that a vast structure was 'idling' for no obvious reason and without any value in a picturesque South Greenlandic fjord.

Prospecting Grønnedal—From Liability to Asset

The series of meetings instigated by the Danish Ministry of Defence was not the only initiative seeking to re-dress Grønnedal in the time between its closure and reopening. Two other propositions were officially put forward. The first was a feasibility study for a *Grønnedal Arctic Village and Resort* project published in 2018 and led by the architect Peter Barfoed, an outspoken critic of the original closing. After the reopening, Barfoed, who had lived on the base as a child, became a strong advocate of developing the place through tourism.

The first feasibility study was developed by Arsuk Fjord Real Estate and concluded that "The development of Grønnedal will provide both Danish Defense, Sermersooq Municipal, Naalakkersuisut [the Greenlandic Government] and private investors with a unique opportunity to do something good for Southern Greenland. Grønnedal is an attractive investment opportunity both from a business perspective and from a development impact perspective benefitting the local community and the region" (Barfoed 2018). The Arctic village study was complemented with media-directed activities, which created headlines such as "Architect: Grønnedal is forgotten when it comes to tourism" (Turnowsky 2018).

The study suggested that Grønnedal as a destination would be able to attract 4000 tourists a year, generating a yearly profit of 10 million Danish crowns and creating 40 jobs. These were, it was argued without further explanation or documentation, investments that could convert Grønnedal "from a liability to a valuable asset over a 10 year period" (Barfoed 2018).

A second initiative was the prospectus *The future of Grønnedal*, presented to the Greenland committee of the Danish Parliament in 2015 after the decision to shut the base, a decision which the prospect sought to challenge. The work was led by Kjeld Wetlesen, a retired computer engineer living part-time in Denmark, part-time in Thailand. He also had lived in Grønnedal in his childhood. In the project, he was assisted by the then chief of staff of Grønnedal, Jan Bøgsted. Like the feasibility study, the prospect offers a view of Grønnedal as a positive part of larger plans to develop the region and improve local connectivity (Wetlesen 2015). The authors make use of comparison to insert Grønnedal in a Northern context, first by contrasting Greenland's tourism numbers to Iceland's (much higher) numbers, hence suggesting an unfulfilled potential in the nearby South Greenland region (for more on Icelandic-Greenlandic comparisons in tourism, see Ren and Jóhannesson 2023).

Another comparison made to insert Grønnedal in a Nordic setting is coastal connectivity, as the authors suggest rethinking the Sarfaq Ittuk, a coastal ship sailing between the towns and settlements on the West coast of Greenland similar to the Norwegian Hurtigruten connecting 1400 km of the Norwegian west coast from Bergen to Kirkenes. The authors argue that Greenland should have a similar route that would run between Prins Christianssund and Ilulissat, an 1100 km stretch on the Greenlandic West coast. With ports of call in both Narsarsuaq and Grønnedal in South Greenland, this solution would not only reduce (high) travel costs for local inhabitants, the authors argued, but at the same time make the challenging and lengthy) travel a part of the experience.

By way of actual and prospective numbers (tourists, jobs, profit, travel costs), comparison (with Iceland, with Hurtigruten) and future scenarios, the *Grønnedal Arctic Village and Resort* project and *The future of Grønnedal* prospect attempt to re-dress Grønnedal as a place, a destination of high economic value, creating local jobs and improving local and national connectivity.

Too Many Feelings? Affective Places and Memories

Another activity seeking to intervene into the closing of Grønnedal is a *Keep Grønnedal open* campaign, started in 2013, raising signatures in support of the continued use of the naval base. The signature campaign, according to its website, was initiated "On behalf of a number of citizens in Denmark and Greenland, many with connections to Ivittuut and Grønnedal, in connection with work stays, or because you grew up or were born in the place, know the place from visits, or are simply a curious taxpayer" (Barfoed 2014, n.p.). The campaign, also presented in the Danish Parliament, highlights the benefits of reopening Grønnedal beyond the naval base by referring to the nearby settlement of Arsuk. Also, different types of costs connected to the potential closing of the base are foregrounded, for instance, by stating that "the decision of the military defense to move also entails other costs. As a consequence of the move, the nearby settlement of Arsuk has lost its helicopter route, as well as medical and dental services" (Barfoed 2014, n.p.).

Like the prospect, the campaign also makes use of comparisons to other places by referring to how Arsuk in the 1960s had been 'Greenland's Kuwait' because of its great prosperity due to extensive cod and salmon fishing that has now disappeared. The campaign material envisaged that the closure of Grønnedal, whose buildings and facilities it claimed are among the best kept in Greenland, would lead to the depopulation of Arsuk. This, it is argued, would contribute to and further propel the centralisation of Greenlandic society with the consequence that "a long stretch of coast would lay bare" (Barfoed 2014, n.p.). As well as massive local impacts, this would influence the capital of Nuuk, where "rental properties are also in a situation where there is a major housing shortage" and where people are gathered in "housing silos" and are "as little integrated into the surrounding society as possible" (Barfoed 2014, n.p.).

In the conjuring of a future for Grønnedal, we see how vivid past comparisons (Kuwait), bleak future prospecting (bare coastal stretches, housing silos), 'facts' and emotions entangle. In a study of memories in the Arsuk fjord, Bjørst et al. (2022) explores cultural encounters between residents of the settlement of Arsuk, miners in Ivittuut and military personnel at the Grønnedal naval base. While today Ivittuut is a ghost town and Grønnedal dramatically reduced, Bjørst presents the confluence of three very different worlds in the Arsuk fjord: a Greenlandic fishing and

trapping settlement, a modern industrial complex, and a naval station with Danish marines. As she shows, life in the Arsuk fjord afforded cultural encounters and connected stories.

Today, the grounds for cultural encounters have changed due to the closing of the mine, the cuts in naval station personnel and the (related) drastic reduction of Arsuk's population. Yet, stories and memories of cultural encounters and relationships across Arsuk, Ivittuut and Grønnedal prevail, offering a historical view into the power relations connected to the industrialisation in Greenland. Bjørst's analysis of remnants in the landscape from past lives, combined with 'troubled stories', sets up alternatives to the one-sided narrative often presented about cultural encounters in the Arsuk fjord according to which all parties feel an attachment to the fjord. As she shows, sadness is embedded in many memories and stories in the landscape, in which grief and worries link closely to thoughts about the past and future of dwelling in the regions.

Feelings are also present in the discussions and reporting from the closing of the base from the viewpoint of representatives of the naval base. In an article for the Greenlandic Broadcasting network entitled "Captain on Grønnedal: Closing not without feelings", commander Michael Hjort, who served as head of the operating unit of the Arctic Command, stated that: "As we shut Grønnedal, we are also writing the last part of a significant chapter in the history book of our armed forces. And that section is also associated with many emotions, also for the many who have worked there" (Søndergaard 2014).

We also discern the contours of affect around the possible futures of the area in the 2013 campaign as it warns against the closing of the base, comparing it to the previous temporary closure of the Narsarsuaq airport in 1958 by the Danish state after it had been abandoned by the American army that same year: "In 1958, the Danish state decided to close down Narsarsuaq. And in 1959, the Danish state decided to reopen Narsarsuaq. This was due to Hans Hedtoft's shipwreck on 30 January 1959. Unfortunately, a Norwegian demolition contractor had already managed to demolish parts of [the airport], so some costly restoration was necessary. But it is expensive not to think about it. Then as now, the *storis* [Danish term describing very difficult sailing conditions caused by drift ice around the Southern tip of Greenland, literally 'big ice'] that caused the shipwreck in January 1959 is still there" (Barfoed 2014, n.p.).

In this passage, the authors point to the rushed closing of Narsarsuaq as an example of good money having gone to waste in the past. At the same time, they allude to a bleak future if Grønnedal was to close by referring to one of the most tragic disasters in Danish-Greenlandic shipping history, the sinking of the M/S Hans Hedtoft. Named the Danish Titanic, M/S Hans Hedtoft sank during its maiden voyage south of Cape Farewell, the southern tip of Greenland. All 95 passengers and crew perished. It is suggested how something similar *could happen again* today due to dangerous sailing conditions and that this would have even more catastrophic consequences should Grønnedal (and the Arctic command placed there) be shut down.

Kramvig and Avango (2021) have shown the strong discursive power associated with the right to judge what may count as 'reason' and what must be dismissed as 'emotional'. To have the power to define *what counts* as facts as well as getting the facts *right* are essential parts of gaining control, of defining *what is*. In a Greenlandic context, Bjørst et al. (2022) explore similar discursive oppositions between facts and emotions in the support of and resistance against mining in South Greenland, which they see as a firmly established rhetorical configuration in conflicts concerning extractive industries. In the hegemonic discourse on mining and extraction, financial gain is equated with 'facts', while'softer' values such as well-being and ecology are equated with 'emotions'.

The decisions and effects of first closing and then reopening Grønnedal and ongoing attempts to re-dress it for other purposes unravels itself as emotional as place is imagined as affording more, different, impactful or valuable human activity, connectivity and liveability. While a clear distinction of emotions and facts might be discernible in the analysis of mining discourses in South Greenland, emotions do not 'reside' or attach themselves neatly to one party in the case of Grønnedal. Rather, emotions are distributed broadly across former residents, tourism planners, naval officers and signatories of the *Keep Grønnedal open* campaign.

The Detention Centre: An Unexpected Imaginary

The above shows a diverse range of activities and emotions put forward to convey and perform the importance, the value and the capacity of Grønnedal as a motor for tourism, job creation, local regeneration and improved regional connectivity. Amidst this, a new set of actors unexpectedly entered the stage seeing Grønnedal as a resource for a completely

new activity that of the *detention centre*. First proposed during a newspaper interview by MP Søren Espersen from the nationalist right-wing party Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti/DF) in 2015, the idea was to send asylum seekers and rejected refugees to Grønnedal. As he argued at the time, the naval base was highly useful and "could be put into use today" (Lilmoes 2015). As he continues, "Everything is ready. From a dental clinic, a library, classrooms and wonderful lodging. And then there is the exceptional nature, that all of us that have been there are crazy about" (Lilmoes 2015). It is interesting how Espersen describes facilities and the surrounding nature in a way similar to those prospecting Grønnedal as a tourist resort.

In the years that followed, discussions around Grønnedal's suitability as a detention centre continued in the Danish press and solidified further in 2021 as DF put forward a proposal in the Danish parliament to use the idling structures to house so-called unwanted migrants to Denmark (Kjærsgaard et al. 2021). During a debate at the first reading on 6 May 2021, head of DF Pia Kjærsgaard declared: "We wish, and we believe, that a Danish deportation centre in Greenland can be a success. Both for Denmark and for Greenland" (Kjærsgaard et al. 2021).

This new imaginary of Grønnedal as a place for a detention centre—emphasising just how marginal it was now considered by Danish politicians—was contested on multiple occasions by Greenlandic member to the Danish Parliament Aaja Chemnitz. In the television programme Detektor and in later interviews, she argued that no political parties in Greenland were interested in establishing a deportation centre in Grønnedal. According to Chemnitz, "The facilities are not there, because they have actually been neglected […]. It is not a place to send deported asylum seekers" (Blach 2021, n.p.). In her argumentation, Chemnitz accentuates the poor quality of the building mass as well as the lack of facilities, and in the later press coverage, Grønnedal's suitability for habitation continues as a returning issue. In 2021, the Building Department of the Ministry of Defence was officially asked to report on the issue. In an answer to Detektor, the department stated that Grønnedal was composed of 60 buildings, such as a school and kindergarten, a large cafeteria and a service building with a gym and 36 hotel rooms. The department was not able to assess how many people would be able to move into the buildings and in an email to Detektor; it was specified that "50% of the buildings would be able to be used after cleaning and thorough ventilation and that an additional 25% would be able to be taken into use through

relatively little effort" (Blach 2021, n.p.). But as experts and the Greenlandic MP repeatedly stated, time was running out for Grønnedal as the harsh sub-Arctic weather is quick to degrade unheated and unmaintained structures.

In the debate between Greenlandic and Danish Folk Party MPs, Chemnitz argued that she was "not dismissive of Grønnedal being used for tourism" (Blach 2021, n.p.). Elaborating on this view, she continues: "Greenland did wish for Grønnedal to be used for something that was not an immigration centre. And then there were the Chinese who have shown interest in doing various activities, and they have been rejected by the [Danish] government. I think it's interesting to look at. Could [Grønnedal] have a function in relation to tourism? However, there was no support for this from either the government or any of the other parties" (Blach 2021, n.p.).

RE-DRESSING REMOTE SPACE: MESSMATES, POWER AND RE-IMAGINING THE ARCTIC IMAGINARY?

In the end, the idea of deporting asylum seekers and refugees to Grønnedal never materialised. To this day, in 2023, a new Danish government is still in the process of searching for other places outside Denmark and Europe as detention centres. The story told at the outset of this chapter bears witness to how Chemnitz's claim of a Danish lack of interest in tourism might not be entirely true—the government *did want* and *did try* to look at tourism prospects in Grønnedal. But once again, absence is at the core of re-dressing Grønnedal: an absence of responsibility, interest and support but also of suitable buildings and infrastructure.

As we follow Grønnedal from the closure in 2014, through the ensuing interest from Chinese developers to the reopening as 'logistical strongpoint' in 2016 and across the many dispersed attempts of re-dressing Grønnedal for tourism, local revitalisation, regional (re)connectivity and deportation, we see how gaps and absences prevail. According to Cheer et al. (2022), place-making in peripheral areas has become an increasingly critical research agenda in tourism geography. So what does this story about a (so far, seeming) 'failure' to develop tourism in the abandoned and dilapidated naval base in Greenland tell us about marginal imaginaries and about how remote places are reimagined and re-dressed through place-making?

In the first instance, it might be able to instruct us on how re-dressing places is *not a straightforward and purified activity*, often far from being only about 'planning', 'development' or in our case 'tourism', in a narrow, functionalist sense. The meeting in the Ministry of Defence, the reports, the concerns, the conjuring of absent or potential resources—resembling almost elegies to lost places, to lost opportunities—make us think of tourism development somewhat differently. In this case, it more seems like what Ren and Jóhannesson term an *overflowing activity*, seen as "an effect of and addition to a world 'continually on the boil' (Ingold 2008, 14), coming together thanks to – and reversely leaping into – many corners of the social, the natural and the more-than-human" (2018, 25). As the authors argue, a more inclusive tourism mapping brings forth the many actors that abound in assembling and holding together tourism, actors that "have to an extensive degree been labelled as 'other' to tourism as an industry: those which have been made invisible or absent and whose impacts, roles and stories have been left out of the models, metrics and accounts of tourism for far too long" (Ren and Jóhannesson 2018, 25).

Despite reports and presentations stipulating the opposite, the tourism development idea for Grønnedal did not prove to be a universal solution for its re-dressing. Attempts to re-dress an abandoned space became an occasion for actors to deliberate about the future as well as remembering, and grieving, the past of the naval base, as well as of the broader Arsuk fjord and of South Greenland. In that process, messmates gathered around common and diverse concerns and issues, not to offer "simple or quick solutions but […] a common process of becoming-with" (Ren and Jóhannesson 2018, 35)—or in our case of non-becoming, of failure to re-dress. This re-dressing of Grønnedal according to set plans and prospects perhaps failed due to other absences during the first meeting in the ministry, in the project, prospectus and campaign, as well as in the Danish and Greenlandic press. Namely, those that were *missing* around the table.

The most obvious absence was that of local community representatives and elders of nearby Arsuk, but also previous Greenlandic residents of Grønnedal, local tourism operators or teachers and students from the guide school in South Greenland. While actors such as naval officers, politicians, previous Danish Grønnedal residents (often adult who had spent their childhood there in the 50s and 60s), municipal planners and clerks (and a Danish tourism researcher) emerged, the lack of local and regional representation was blatant. This points to another story, tucked

away between the lines, about how South Greenland has moved over the decades from being a prosperous locality to becoming marginal in the context of tourism, infrastructure and development.

This brings us to the second way in which this story on place-making at the margins may instruct us on *marginal imaginaries*. The Arctic is often portrayed as sublime, extraordinary and beyond comparison (Ryall et al. 2010). According to Abildgaard (2022), the Arctic became a literary trope following an increased influx of stories from explorers in the early nineteenth century. Arctic imagery became to represent "the Sublime, a greatness, which was both terrible and awe-inspiring, beyond imitation and measurement, and thus, unmappable" (p. 6). But Arctic realities may also be perceived and framed quite differently: as mundane, dreary and depleted as they lay back undressed and abandoned. In the case of Grønnedal, the reopened naval base is not only stretched between continuously shifting perceptions of marginality and centrality in geopolitical and economic terms, but activities to develop it also draw on imaginaries of liminality and centrality, abandonment and potentiality.

In this process, Grønnedal is perceived as being everything from 'nothing of interest' to a 'bucketful of unique experiences', as suggested during the first tourism meeting in the Ministry of Defence. Exploring the Grønnedal activities as projects of valuation, the margin imaginaries of Grønnedal feed into ongoing, larger discussions on the future of Greenland as entangled into geopolitical, climatic and economic events (Bjørst and Ren 2015). As we learn, nothing came of the many plans for Grønnedal and to this day, there is no organised tourism or other development activities connected to the now reopened naval base of Grønnedal. However, as Veijola et al. (2019) remind us: "just because the land is 'undressed', it does not mean it is without a destiny. Its clothes may be waiting in the wings" (p. 27).

This leads us to the last insight generated by this story, which is that re-dressing places is not an *innocent endeavour*. As with all place-making, tourism or destination development are taxing and troubling tasks of valuation, ordering and drawing boundaries. Despite powerful actors—politicians, national institutions, well-educated elites—none of the attempts at re-dressing came into existence. The plans to turn Grønnedal into an Arctic village and resort, or into a deportation centre, never materialised but withered away as attempts failed "to marshal a community around it" (De Laet and Mol 2000, 245). The Grønnedal

naval base was never recognised as a suitable object for tourism development despite attempts from various authorities to repurpose Grønnedal. The vision, the idea and ultimately hope withered away, perhaps from a lack of love. Arsuk, 'the loved one' in Greenlandic, might fascinate and leave visitors in awe, but re-dressing place to a degree that creates lasting change is yet to come or perhaps, waiting in the wings.

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On Being Moved: The Mobility of Inner Landscapes

Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir

Introduction

Landscapes are full of movement. They are made of human and more-than-human processes, entangled in an endlessly moving rhizome that connects the past and the present, the invisible and the visible and the inner and outer. The movement, the connection and the entanglement appear in the inner aesthetic response that is constantly occurring into and from the visible outer environment, creating moving atmospheres that fuse together the outer and inner. Both inner and outer belong to the same flesh of the world (Merleau-Ponty 1968), and it is through sensing ourselves being moved and touched by the world that this belonging makes itself felt. To explore this entangled mobility of what I call inner and outer landscapes I will examine my own experience of being moved by a particular and personal landscape in Melrakkaslétta.

When I started my participation in the project *Mobilities on the margins* the two case study areas had already been chosen. Knowing that we would

G. R. Jóhannesdóttir (✉)
Department of Arts Education, Iceland University of the Arts, Reykjavik, Iceland
e-mail: gudbjorgr@lhi.is

be exploring Melrakkaslétta in north east Iceland immediately sparked an interest in me since I knew that my family had a history there; my great grandmother was born and raised on one of the farms in that area. However, it was not until we went on our first field trip that I discovered how this connection to the area affected my perception of it. I became moved by the landscape by sensing it through other family members that had moved in and through it before me. This mobility thus became my focus in the project, and my exploration of the experience of being moved led me to think about alternative approaches to tourism development where the opportunities to be moved from within are emphasised.

To prepare the ground for guiding the reader through my journey I will first briefly discuss the concepts of landscape and the aesthetic, how they are intertwined and how they shed light on the intertwining of humans and environments, people and places and inner and outer landscapes. Then I will go on to examine how the landscape of the farm in Melrakkaslétta has moved within my great grandmother, my father and myself and participated in the creation of other places. Through this example I show how landscapes are not only mobile through the manner in which their physical qualities change and develop through time, but also in how they become intertwined with our very being, moving with us to create new places and landscapes of meaning.

The Aesthetic Dimension and the Movement of Inner Landscapes

To explore the movement and creation of inner landscapes, I first want to make clear the connection between landscape and the aesthetic, or felt, dimension of experience. From the phenomenological perspective on landscape that I have developed in previous work, the relation between the concepts of landscape and beauty is central (Jóhannesdóttir 2010, 2016). Beauty is here not understood only as a simple pleasure in response to aesthetic qualities but rather as a concept that lies at the heart of the aesthetic dimension in general and describes a certain type of relation that we are given to have with the world. It describes the moments where we open our senses to receive meaning from what we are perceiving and follow the felt inner movements that are created in response. Landscape can thus be defined as environment perceived aesthetically (Ritter 1989); we speak of landscapes when we are speaking of perceiving an environment only to perceive, and to sense how all its qualities, visible

and invisible, come together in one's perception of the environment as a whole. We speak of emotional landscapes and political landscapes, which also hints at how we use the word to describe how we sense a particular space or situation (whether material or immaterial) as a whole, and how we sense ourselves in relation to it. From this perspective, landscape refers to the intertwining of the perceiver and the perceived, the body and its environment. Landscape as an environment perceived aesthetically always includes a body moving through it and resonating with it, noticing the inner movements that occur with the outer (Jóhannesdóttir 2023). Describing a landscape does not only involve listing the *what*—the entities that create the whole of the landscape; mountains, beaches, buildings, stories, smells, sounds, plants, people—it also refers to *how* you sense this whole affecting you right here, right now. Included in this whole situation affecting you are the invisible narratives that the materialities of the landscape tell, as well as the invisible patterns that you carry within your body as sediments of other landscapes that have moved within you before. Your whole experiential background is an ingredient in what I like to call the inner landscape that emerges in interaction with the outer landscape you are situated in. What I call inner landscape can also be described as a "felt sense" of a situation (Gendlin 1992, 347), sensing the "dominating quality in a situation as a whole" (Dewey 1984, 249) or the "feeling of situatedness" (Skúlason 2015, 52). Speaking of inner landscapes allows me to underline the felt dimension of what landscape is—that it always already includes what we are feeling and sensing in a bodily way, or in other words, what we are aesthetically perceiving.

This aesthetic aspect of the landscape concept is too often ignored or reduced to the visual. When scholars have tried to reclaim the landscape concept from the visual understanding of it as only a physical phenomenon to be looked at from a distance and emphasise instead how landscape is an intertwining of humans and land, the aesthetic dimension got lost with the visual; the aesthetic was narrowly understood as the visual, so an escape from the visual meant an escape from the aesthetic (Benediktsson 2007; Jóhannesdóttir 2010). As has been emphasised within environmental aesthetics, the aesthetic is so much more than the visual. It includes all our senses, imagination and our moving within, touching and being touched by the environment (Berleant 1997; Brady 2003). Bringing the aesthetic dimension to bear on the way we understand our relations to place, environment, to each other and ourselves

allows us to become aware of the relational dimensions of our existence. This felt dimension is the source of the meaningful relations that contribute to the quality of our lives. Quality of life and meaningful relations (Holland 2012) are terms that should perhaps play a bigger role in the way we think about tourism development, landscape development and planning processes in general. As Bunkše (2007, 217) emphasises, "landscapes matter to the individual", and although he does not use the concept of the aesthetic, his understanding of landscape as "a unity in one's surroundings, perceived through all the senses" (Bunkše 2007, 222) clearly resonates with the understanding of landscape as environment perceived aesthetically—through all the senses. The sense of and relation to a place that is created through aesthetic experiences of landscape is at the heart of making landscapes matter to individuals. With this line of thought to follow, I now proceed to explore how the landscape of Melrakkaslétta became something that matters to me.

Sensing the Landscape Through Another

I'm 8 years old on a summer holiday with my parents and sister. One day we drive to an old farm to visit my father's relatives. The road we turn onto from the main road feels long and bumpy and when we arrive, I see a very big old house, unlike any I have seen before. I'm curious but also a bit scared, the place feels so unfamiliar, it feels as if we are at the edge of the world somehow, at least the edge of the world that I know.

An old couple greets us at the doorsteps and my fear grows as I realise there are dogs in the house. As we enter the house, I hear them barking from the basement where they have been locked while we visit since my sister and I are afraid of them. We move into the corridor and from there into the kitchen where we are invited to sit down to have some refreshments. The dogs have stopped barking. The grownups are talking, happy to see each other after a long time, and I sit there silent and shy, curiously looking around me at all the old things in the old kitchen furniture, still a little scared in this unfamiliar environment.

Then they ask us into the living room next door to the kitchen and ask me to play a song for them on the old piano in there. I play a song for them, feeling extremely shy and timid while playing. We then move back into the kitchen and as the grownups continue catching up, me and my sister are encouraged to go and look around. We move slowly around as we explore the workspace in the other side of the building. It's dark in there, and lots of old

tools and strange things we've never seen before spread around such as eider down laid out on a table for cleansing. This is all so strange to us, almost spooky.

This was my first visit to Melrakkaslétta and these are the memories that have stuck with me from that visit. These memories have always stuck with me, they stand out somehow. I realise now as I'm writing this down, sitting in the same living room where I played the piano 34 years ago, that the reason why these memories stand out is the strongly felt sense that was moving within me in response to the situation. It is the atmosphere I entered and the emotional and felt inner landscape that stands out; the fear of the dogs, the shyness while playing the piano, the curiosity and feeling of unfamiliarity in response to everything I saw, heard, smelled and touched. The emotional, the bodily felt and the aesthetic dimensions are so closely intertwined and entangled in experiences like these. Emotions are an integral part of our understanding and experience of the environments we are situated in and our emotional response to place shows us how the boundaries between bodies and environments are fluid and permeable (Davidson and Bondi 2006), and the same can be said about our aesthetic perception (Johnson 2009; Berleant 2010). It is in our aesthetic and emotional responses that we sense the boundaries between us and what we perceive disappear. This is one aspect of how we are moved by places; strong emotional and felt aesthetic responses help places create and imprint patterns in us that are retained in our passive memory.

By coincidence, my research has brought me back to this house 34 years later. Up until now, Melrakkaslétta was a name that I had heard from my father again and again through the years, as he told stories of the summers he spent there as a child in the farm his grandmother's sister owned with her children, one of whom was still living there when we visited decades later. My first visit and my father's stories formed the experiential background that I had of this area, along with one time I drove through it when I was a 28-year-old PhD student working on data collection for the Icelandic landscape project.[1]

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[1] The project was a part of work being done for the Icelandic government's Master Plan for Nature Protection and Energy Utilization (n.d.). The aim of the project was to define and categorise natural landscapes in Iceland based on their physical and visual characteristics, in order to determine their conservation value relative to one another (Þórhallsdóttir et al. 2010).

We are driving to a place called Blikalón. Our job this summer is visiting random GPS dots all around Iceland to collect data on visual landscape qualities to get an overview of the landscape types that exist in the country. But we are also collecting data on "natural pearls" – a specific Icelandic term that is used for landscapes that are known for their beauty and uniqueness. We only have the list of place names and not much further knowledge of what features exactly they are known for, so we look on the map for Blikalón and drive there. The other places on the list we have either known before, or we see immediately when we arrive there why they are known as pearls. We find an old farm with the signpost Blikalón, and a big lagoon between the farm and the ocean. We set up our camera, shoot some photos and fill out the checklist of landscape qualities, but we can't help but wonder why this place is on the list. There seems to be nothing there, nothing special or spectacular about it. All we have seen on the way there is an endlessness of the same rocky heathland, and a few farms and lagoons. I tell my travel partner that my father's family is from around here somewhere, but I don't remember where that place is. We move on towards Ásbyrgi, another natural pearl that we have no problem understanding what is so spectacular about. Later we find out that the actual natural pearl of Blikalón is a rift valley on the other side of the road from the Blikalón farm, a valley that is hidden in the expansive nothingness and invisible to an untrained eye moving fast between "pearls" of attraction with no time to dwell.

So, this was the image I had of Melrakkaslétta when I started my participation in this research project on mobilities on the margins: A strange and almost spooky unspectacular nothingness at the edge of the world that my father loved so deeply for some reason I didn't understand. At the start of the research project, the group of researchers took a fieldtrip to Melrakkaslétta, and on this trip that was made in stormy September weather I got to dwell in and with the landscape for the first time (Fig. 7.1).

I'm on my way to the airport to go on a fieldtrip with a research group I'm starting to work with when I get a phone call. I receive difficult news that shake up very strong emotions within me. I want to cry but I don't have the space to allow myself to do that, I must go meet my colleagues at the airport. I swallow my tears, and the heaviness I feel in my chest and stomach must stay there unable to move and release. We arrive in Raufarhöfn in the evening, and I feel exhausted. The next morning, we have meetings with local contacts of the project and walk around town in wind and rain. I manage to put my emotional state aside and concentrate on the work we

Fig. 7.1 The Crashing waves (Photo by Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir)

are doing. Then we decide to go for a walk to the lighthouse at Hraun-hafnartangi, one of the northernmost points of Iceland. As we walk along the rocky shoreline the storm is heavy and the waves are crashing on the shore with fierce power. I start breathing deeply in response to the wind that hits my face and almost makes breathing difficult, and the wind goes into my eyes, creating tears. The raindrops on my face get mixed with tears and I don't know whether they are the result of the wind or my emotions. I look at the enormous waves crashing, the rocky harsh landscape and feel the wind and rain shaking my body so that it is almost difficult to walk, and I already feel how this landscape and these natural elements are moving something within me, somehow helping me clean out my emotions. The heaviness that has been in the middle of my body is softening a bit. As I move through the landscape, I start thinking about what it must have been like for my great grandmother to be raised here, and for her mother, my great-great grandmother to live here all her life and survive in this harsh rocky landscape in all the extreme weathers that can hit this island. I start sensing how powerful they must

have been, being able to survive here. I imagine that the attitude you would need to survive in this landscape would be characterised by a strong belief in yourself, that you can do anything, you can take on whatever the next day brings. As I thought about this, I started feeling this kind of strength move within me. My emotional landscape that had been so fragile when I started walking, then cleared out by the wind and rain, was now being filled with the strength I was sensing that my ancestors must have had to survive in this type of landscape. If you can survive the storm and waves crashing over you like that, you can survive anything.

A year later we returned on a second fieldtrip to Melrakkaslétta, and this time the weather was a little bit better, at least we were able to do what we had planned to do in the first trip but had to cancel because of the weather, hiking to the edge of a big hill being eroded by the ocean. There are two ways to get there, and we decided to take the longer route, which meant we had to start hiking from my father's family's farm that I had last visited 33 years earlier.

I'm happy that we are here at the farm my father loves so much because I know it will make him happy to know that I am here. We see that there is a car outside the old house, and I know that this is a distant relative of mine who's there and I feel a curiosity in me that wants to go inside, but I don't want to interrupt. While the group is getting ready to go I sit on the rocky shore (Fig. 7.2) *and wonder whether my great grandmother and her mother sat sometimes at the shore to look at the waves like I was doing?*

I'm smiling, there is such happiness within me, just being there. My colleague notices me and takes a photo, her family is also from around here, from another farm close by, I guess she knows how I feel. The group starts walking from the farmhouse along an old trail towards the hill. As we begin our walk, I immediately start wondering whether this is the trail that my father used when he went horse-riding on Sundays to meet the boys who were at the next farm? Did he use this trail when he was herding sheep? I was constantly seeing the landscape through his stories, trying to imagine how he perceived this landscape, how he felt when he was there. When we come back towards the house, me and another colleague decide to knock on the door and ask if we can use the bathroom. My relative invites us in and when I tell him that my father had spent summers there and that my great grandmother was from there, he offers to show us around the house. I walk around and somehow feel the nostalgia that I imagine my father would be feeling if he was there. I look curiously around me and imagine in which rooms my father used to dwell. Which of them was the library room that he

Fig. 7.2 Photo by Gunnar Þór Jóhannesson

loved reading and sleeping in? When the rest of the group arrives my rela-
tive invites us all into the kitchen for coffee, he is so warm and welcoming
to us all, and it moves something within me to look into his eyes and see
something so familiar in them. He reminds me of my father. We talk more
about our family, finding out how exactly we are related. Meeting him there

and learning more about how my great grandmother and her parents and siblings lived gives me a feeling of deeper connection to this place, and I tell him that I must come back here with my father and hear his stories where they actually took place. He tells me that the family will be tending to the eider down in May and June and that we are very welcome to visit. In the evening I send some pictures from the farm to my father and talk with him on the phone about my visit. He is so happy that I was there.

In late June me, my sister and our parents travel together to the old family farm, just like we did 34 years ago.

As we drive through the landscape, my father constantly points out the window to places that are engraved in his memory because of stories that happened there. Some are stories that he has heard from others, but have somehow affected his experience of the landscape, others are stories that contain excitement or emotional stirring that have left a strong memory: "here is the next story, this is where the herd of horses always turned back one day when I was herding them back home. I understood later, after hearing a gunshot outside, that their old leader Bleikur knew somehow that when we would come home his life would end, and that was why he turned back again and again". We come to the house and my father continues his stories, telling us in which rooms he slept, where the kids were bathed and where they played. I listen attentively, trying to imagine his life on the farm those four summers from the age of ten to thirteen.

In the autumn, I get the opportunity to stay in the house for two days, writing this chapter. I have already interviewed my father in the summer and documented the trip we made, and from this data as well as the living data of my body constantly experiencing the landscape through his eyes, my father's story starts to emerge (Fig. 7.3):

I'm ten years old, and finally I get to go spend the summer at the farm my grandmother grew up on. I have been asking her for years, but she always says I'm not old enough. At least I get to spend the summers with her in the summer cottage she and my grandfather have, where I get to meet horses and play out in nature with my cousins. I have been going there with her every summer since I was five, but knowing of my older brother's adventures on the farm up north, I'm always dreaming of getting to go there. And now the day has come. As we drive to the farm on the harsh gravel road I look out the window at the landscape that seems so barren and empty, so different from what I'm used to. When we come to the farm, I meet my grandmother's sister and her three children who live there with her. I feel a

Fig. 7.3 The Tussocks (Photo by Guðbjörg R. Jóhannesdóttir)

strong connection with them right from the start, and the way they all greet me with loving eyes makes me feel immediately at home.

I have been here for some weeks now, and I've already learned how to drive the tractor and the car! There is always something fun to do here and I feel so free. I've gotten to know three other boys at the neighbouring farms. Every Sunday I get a day off and then I can go horseback riding. I ride my favourite horse to the next farm, where Halli joins me, and then we go on to the next farm to meet Haukur and Stefán. Then we all spend the day riding between farms. I love these Sundays, getting to spend all day on horseback and having fun with my friends, singing and joking on the way, and competing whose horse is the fastest. In the evening when I'm riding home to the farm alone, I just let the horse find its way while I'm gazing at the ocean and the big sky, listening to the sounds of waves crashing and birds chirping…

I'm here early this year and its lambing season. My cousins are here, and we have lots of fun taking turns feeding the lambs. One of the lambs behaves

like a dog, following us everywhere we go. We agreed that she should be called Sóley since she is always eating the sóley flower.[2] *Wherever we go, she goes; we go out berry picking Sóley is with us, if we go to the beach Sóley is there. The girls keep telling her: "Sóley! You are forgetting! You are not a dog, you are a sheep!" One day we get to help with shaving the wool of the sheep. When the leader sheep is shaved, I have to hold its horns, and when I ask why, I'm told that you can't tie down a leader sheep completely, it has to be able to have some room to struggle against being held, otherwise it loses its leadership talent. I learned last autumn how important it is to have a good leader sheep. When I was herding the sheep down from the cliff, I didn't really have to do much; the horse helped me follow the sheep and then the dog went after them to bring them onwards, and then as we got closer to the farm the leader sheep took over and guided the herd home. The animals know so much. I learn a lot from them.*

One evening I have to go out into the complete darkness to turn off the electricity on the concrete mixer we had been using to build the new barn. I'm very much afraid of the dark, but I want to do it. I have decided to become a sailor like my father and I know that I can't be afraid of the dark as a sailor. I start walking slowly in the darkness, my heart beating as I repeat to myself: I'm not going to run! I'm not going to run! Then the dogs, Bósi and Glói come running behind me, playing and having fun, and I think: If they aren't afraid, there is no reason for me to be afraid! They taught me that there is nothing to fear in the darkness.

It's my last summer here. I feel so calm and connected to every living being here. In the evening I can sit for hours out in the huge tussocks behind the house, and just listen to all the nature sounds around me.

When the waves are heavy, I can hear them crawling out and bringing all the stones and gravel with them, it's a rocking soundscape that forms the background of all the other nature sounds from the animals, the wind, and my own inner voice and breath. Within all these sounds I feel deep inner silence and peacefulness.

I get to stay alone in the library room this summer. It's like heaven to me, my own suite, where I have all these books to read in peace and quiet with an oil lamp. The light from the lighthouse rocks me to sleep as it shines through my window. When I go back home to start school in September, I

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[2] *Ranunculus repens/*Creeping buttercup. Sóley is both a female name and the name of this flower.

know I won't come back next summer, so instead I will take this place with me back home.

What stands out to me as I listen to my father's stories, are the meaningful relations with the more-than-human that he was drawn into through dwelling on the farm. On the second fieldtrip, when we walked from the farm I felt immediately drawn to the big soft tussocks that seemed to call out to me to lie down and listen to the waves and the birds that also called out to be listened to. Hearing my father talk about the same attraction to the tussocks and the sounds of nature reveals to me how nature reaches out to communicate with us in how it draws our attention towards it. The animals my father spent time with on the farm also called for his attention through their being and behaviour. The connection and respect for animals and their wisdom that was ingrained in my father there created meaningful relations with animals which he then shared with me and my siblings. This sensitivity and attentiveness that results in meaningful relations is cultivated through the type of interaction between inner and outer landscapes that the Melrakkaslétta landscape afforded my father which then later moved with him to create other outer landscapes.

As I went through all these stories and imagined my way into the inner landscape that the place I was now in had created within my father I became more and more curious about the woman who had brought him there; my great grandmother. When listening to my father speak about his childhood, I started understanding how the seeds of his love of nature and animals that then pulled him to the farm were actually planted in the summer cottage where he used to dwell with his grandmother. So I became curious about this cottage that she and my great grandfather had built sometime in the early 1930s. It wasn't very common at that time to have a cottage. What was it that led them to build it? I start imagining my great grandmother's story from the few facts that I know:

I'm 18 years old and I'm packing for my journey to Reykjavík, where I'm going to the Homemaking school. I'm going to miss this place so much. I'll miss the laughter at the kitchen table, the long walks to herd the cows back and milking them outside while listening to the waves crashing, the long walks to visit our neighbours, lying down in between tussocks on the way, looking up into the sky and listening to nature. I try to comfort myself with the thought that I'll always come back to visit, and the school is only two years.

I've finished school now and I've met somebody. He is the son of a merchant and is supposed to take over his father's business. So if we get married we will have to live in Reykjavík.

It's been 16 years now since we got married and I still miss home. When I take my daily walks around the neighbourhood and along the shoreline I imagine the big tussocks, the enormous sky, and the special sound of that heavy undercurrent surrounding me. Even though its quiet and nice at the beach here in Reykjavík the town has become more and more busy and noisy since I moved here. I'm really starting to feel the need for more peace and quiet. I also long for my kids to experience the same freedom as I did to roam around in nature. I'm going to talk to my husband again about my idea of building a summer cottage in the countryside.

I just arrived in our cottage near Þingvellir. The kids have finished school and we are all up here for the summer, me, my daughters in law and my grandchildren. My husband and sons come in the weekends when they can get away from work. I love this place. My own little heaven where I can take long walks to visit neighbours and lie between tussocks immersed in only the sounds of nature. I love how free my grandchildren are here, always finding new things to do and projects to work on. Yesterday my grandsons went horseback riding on the neighbouring farmer's horse without asking for permission, and at the same time as I'm angry at them for misbehaving I'm glad they had the chance to get to know the horses here. I'm convinced that being around animals and having the chance to play freely in nature is so good for them.

Through my father's and my great grandmother's stories, I understand how the places we move through also move within us and with us to other places. I imagine that my great grandmother's relationship with the landscape she grew up in sparked the need to create such a place close to the home she now found herself in, a summer cottage in the nearby countryside was built.

My great grandmother was born into the landscape of her home farm, and the landscape became part of her. When she moved to Reykjavik, the farm moved with her as part of her way of being; having the need for open expanses of nature to walk and dwell in and having space for enjoying a quiet and relaxed atmosphere with her family. And through this mobility of the farm a new place came into being—the cottage where she could re-create these patterns she knew from her childhood. The relationship with nature and horses my father developed during summer stays in the

cottage, later grew into his interest in going to his grandmother's child-hood home, the farm. There this relationship became stronger, resulting in him lastly building such a getaway of his own.

These two places thus became part of my father and his way of being, and moved within him to create a new place, and the pattern has now been repeated in my way of being and place-making. In my parent's summer cottage, I had the same opportunity as my father in his child-hood, to be with horses and other animals, to be with nature and myself in the peaceful rhythm of the sounds of water, sky and earth. The rela-tionship with the landscape I was able to cultivate through dwelling there every summer then resulted in the building of my own home next to the cottage. My great grandmother left the countryside for the city, but she left traces for us to follow the path back from the city to the country-side. The inner landscape that was formed by her interaction with her childhood home travelled with her and became entangled with other landscapes, inner and outer.

Through the process I have gone through with my father in relation to this project, listening to his stories and imagining myself into his inner landscape I also understand how it can affect people to be listened to in that way. My father's experiences of dwelling on the farm and in his grandparent's cottage are an important part of him, and by entering a situation where he was able to share these experiences through showing and storytelling, he became more aware and appreciative of this part of himself. My interest in his stories created a space of acknowledgement and gratitude in him.

Through my exploration of how sensing the landscape through another moved me I understand how the mobilities of inner and outer landscapes are always already intertwined. My own vulnerable situatedness at the time of our first fieldtrip, the fierce wind and waves of the storm, and my experiential background of knowing that my ancestors had lived in this place all played their role in the entanglement that moved me to begin with. The trails we walked through the endless expanse of huge soft tussocks covered with moss and heather on our second fieldtrip, as well as the sound of the heavy undercurrent, the hospitality of my relative, the farmhouse itself and the chance to really dwell in the area all played a role in deepening this movement of my inner landscape, which has created the meaningful relation I now feel I have with this place.

Being Moved by vs. Gazing at the Landscape

How can these patterns I extract from my own personal journey be applied to tourism development in Melrakkaslétta, and perhaps tourism in general? Firstly, they show how examining the tourist's mobility not only allows us to see how they move between places and thus become part of creating them, but also how tourists can be moved by places that then move with them back home, possibly creating new places and inner landscapes that shape their way of being and acting in the world. Secondly, they show how directing the tourist's attention to sensing the landscapes they visit through another provides a space of awareness, appreciation, acknowledgement and gratitude for the other's life and existence in tune with the rhythm of the landscape. What I am arguing here is that there is something important to be gained by focusing on the opportunities created for the tourist to be moved from within (Sverrisdóttir 2011) rather than the opportunities created for the tourist to move between places on the tourist destination checklist of been there, done that.

The tourist's gaze (Urry 1992) is too often directed towards spectacular natural environments that the tourists approach as objects to be looked at, photographed and shared on social media for others to gaze at. Many of the tourists who visit Iceland go on this kind of trophy-hunt, covering as many of the spectacles of nature as they can on their fast move along the south coast (Sæþórsdóttir et al. 2020), going through the checklist of waterfalls, black beaches, lava fields and glaciers. In all these landscapes, just like in the at-first-sight unspectacular Melrakkaslétta, the possibility of being moved by another being and its experience is certainly there. But we tend to miss out on the opportunities to notice in this way when we are moving fast from one "natural pearl" to the other to take a photo, like me and my co-worker were doing on my second trip to Melrakkaslétta as we were passing through, looking for the Blikalón pearl that was hiding from us in the nothingness. In this manner of travelling, our aesthetic perception thus only scratches the visual surface of what the landscape can provide, given the appropriate attention and time.

Every place we encounter holds the countless stories of all the beings that are and have been a part of it, but we need time and space to notice it, give our full and open attention, dwell with it and sense it resonating within us. There is an opportunity to be moved by the everyday past and present, human and more-than-human processes that created these places—processes that we can only sense but not see and photograph.

There is an opportunity to be moved by approaching natural phenomena like waves, tussocks or rift valleys as friends; as beings to engage with and listen to instead of objects to gaze at. I am arguing that the key to being moved by a landscape is to dwell with it and spend time gaining insights that allow you to sense and imagine the movements of all the other beings that are and have been a part of it.

When I visited Melrakkaslétta for the first time in many years with the *Mobilities on the margins* research group, the stories of my father's and great grandmother's movements in the area were already part of my experiential background and were simply brought up to my awareness by my being there. What about the typical tourist that does not come there with this previous connection? How can we as hosts create opportunities of gaining insights that allow our visitors to sense and imagine the movements of another? One classic way is to provide information signs that tell the visitor stories of these movements, but can we do more? Can we create information signs that go beyond telling *about* these movements and stories towards placing the visitors *within* them, directing them towards sensing the landscape through another like I did with my father and my great grandmother? Knowing *about* the situation is not the same as sensing *within* the situation. Would a simple addition to the story *about*, like a question directing the visitors to sense *within*, make the difference needed to help them be moved? What if visitors were not only told *about* places/phenomena but also asked questions that direct them to their own sensing *within*, questions such as: what do you think the landscape has seen through its lifetime? Or: close your eyes for a while and listen to the landscape. What do you hear? What do you sense in your body? What does the landscape say to you? Can you hear it whisper? Directing the visitors' attention to the felt, aesthetic dimension of their experience of the landscape in this manner creates opportunities to travel more slowly and mindfully. This allows the whole landscape to start speaking through its human and more-than-human, visible and invisible processes and stories that we touch and are touched by, we move through and are moved by.

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Melrakkaslétta the Meeting-Ground: Performing Qualitative Research at the Tourism Margin

Þórný Barðadóttir

Introduction

Hraunhafnartangi is a place where no one has ever lived. That is, no humans have ever called it home. In a human sense, this place is therefore on the margin of nothingness—in other contexts it might be the core of everything. This place is real; it is a marked location on maps. To me this is also a personal place, connected to my childhood by family visits. The salty smell of seaweed and the ocean. A flashback to my small feet trying to balance a walk on the wet stones in slippery rubber boots. Sweaty sandwiches eaten at the foot of, what then felt like, a giant light-house; fights with my siblings over the last drops of lukewarm cocoa; the overwhelming threat of potential attacks from an army of arctic terns, a real threat to me-the-girl, although my parents probably never planned a visit here during the 'angry tern-bird' season. Hraunhafnartangi, one of

Þ. Barðadóttir (✉)
Department of Geography and Tourism, University of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland
e-mail: thorny@rmf.is

the northernmost points of the Icelandic mainland, located on the coast of Melrakkaslétta, northeast Iceland.

Now, this place to me somehow resembles Melrakkaslétta overall. The place where my foremothers and forefathers were born, lived and died. On this peninsula is the farm where my mother was born, spent her childhood, sought her identity and always called home. And close by is the place where I grew up—in my father's childhood home—the place I for long called home, my roots. Today's visit to Hraunhafnartangi—the first in decades—awakes pleasant childhood memories yet interrupted by a sad reminder of what has been and of those who are not 'here' anymore.

Today, the heavy northern storm is powerful and loud, the ice-cold rain bites the few bits of skin not covered with layers of clothes. The overwhelming North Atlantic Ocean hammers its huge, smashing waves on the bulk of rocks it has for centuries thrown and built to a wall on the seashore of Melrakkaslétta's flatland. The lighthouse is still here, not as huge as it used to be, but now even a stronger reminder of seafarers touring the massive ocean waves—not always successfully.

It's early September 2020. No longer am I a child, visiting Hraunhafnartangi with my family. I am an adult with an agenda: a field trip to Melrakkaslétta as a kick-off into a research project. At this point in time, I have for two days been able to call myself a doctoral student in Tourism Studies at the University of Iceland.

These lines are from the first pages of my research diary, written as I started my newly assigned position of a PhD student at the University of Iceland. In early 2016, I had been employed as a researcher at the Icelandic Tourism Research Centre. That was in the midst of the Icelandic Tourism Boom. That year this island of 330,000 residents welcomed just under 1.8 million foreign visitors. By the time the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 harshly paused most of the world's travels, annual arrivals had for a couple of years exceeded two million (Icelandic Tourist Board, n.d.), making the tourism sector the main creator of the country's foreign exchange value (Sæþórsdóttir et al. 2020). The Icelandic capital area and the country's south and southwest are where the most tourism-related activities, development and economic effect have occurred (Árnason and Welling 2019). This chapter, however, is about the becoming of tourism research performed on the 'other side' of Iceland and the 'other side' of the Icelandic Tourism Boom; an area on the tourism margins annually visited by around 1% of the country's foreign tourists (Óladóttir 2020); the rural area of Melrakkaslétta, northeast Iceland.

The aim of the research is to explore place-making processes, the interactions and coexistence of humans and the more-than-human as well as the interlinked networks of tourism and other mobilities in this remote, non-touristy area. This chapter is about the designing of this research, set within a qualitative research paradigm, where through flat ontology and using a post-ANT lens, ethnographic methodology is applied with the aim of co-creating knowledge with the humans and the more-than-human world of Melrakkaslétta. Conducting qualitative research requires self-reflexivity (Pezalla et al. 2012). Writing the chapter offered a chance to critically reflect on the research agenda and my—the researcher's—role in the process. The introduction above, written to situate the reader in Melrakkaslétta, is furthermore a statement of my connection to and appreciation of Melrakkaslétta.

The becoming of the research is here explored through autoethnography, a qualitative research method that is at the same time a process and a product (Ellis 2004), applied when "the researcher is the subject of study" (Hughes and Pennington 2017, 5), a method partly emerging from the way that "some anthropologists began actively questioning their ways of knowing about others" (8). The method seemed well suited to investigate and review my journey throughout the research process. Finding courage in the notion of Braun, Clarke and Gray that when publishing academic papers, researchers rarely provide information on their uncertainties, challenges and "what at the time can feel like complete disaster to manage" (2017, 6), what follows is an honest telling about my 'travels' through the research process. The chapter, arranged in chronological order, trails the setting of the research outline, its aim and scope and follows the performing of the research before narrating some lessons learned during the process.

The Search for Ground Zero

As can be gathered from the title and context of this book, my position as researcher was within the research project titled *Mobilities on the margins—creative processes of place making*, funded by The Icelandic Centre for Research. While the title of the underlying project set the general tone, by the time of my employment the part I was to conduct, tourism research in Melrakkaslétta, was still scarcely defined. In retrospect, I should from the start have set my focus on the *why* and *what-for* of the research—as in why conduct tourism research in a non-touristy area, and

to what purpose. Truth be told, those were not my focus points. Instead, I went straight on and got lost in the question of *how* to perform the research.

Diving in headfirst, my PhD study felt like *the* chance to learn and try out new ways of conducting research. I drowned myself in literature on research methods and then eagerly stressed to my supervisors my many ideas on methods to apply within and beyond Melrakkaslétta. Their reply was something in the line of "You need to think about the ontological and epistemological approach of the research". Such big words. Coming from applied research, this was a bit far from my everyday language, whether in English or Icelandic. It turned out that I was getting lost in a familiar process of being "more interested in solving a problem than in promoting analytical, theoretically informed work" (Gobo 2018, 66). Back to the reading, this time on research design, study outline and paradigms; ontology, epistemology and methodology—only to find somewhat conflicting information and an interchangeable use of terms. This led me to a vast literature on philosophical thinking where the list of what felt like necessary readings just kept growing. What I became sadly aware of during these months of falling further down the bottomless barrel of existing literature was that, given the half a century I had on my back, chances were my years ahead just would not cut it.

I had some breaking points for my gradual landing from reading mode. The real saviour, however, was Punch's subtle advice on getting back to "What are we trying to find out here?" (2014, 5). Not that this should have been news. Only, becoming a student yet again seemed to have robbed me of much of my experience, knowhow and even common sense. I grabbed a hold on Punch's lifeline and slowly got my head around the assignment. What I needed to do was to demarcate the project by drafting my first research questions. Those would become my ground zero—the *what* would lead me to the *why* and from there I would get to the *how*. Best of all, having started the process during travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, now months into the project, this would mentally reconnect me with Melrakkaslétta, the area of research.

MAKING READY FOR RESEARCH

Historically Melrakkaslétta is the northernmost part of a peninsula on the Icelandic northeast coast (Fig. 8.1). Its history of human settlement traces back for centuries where sheep-farming and fishing were the main

occupations. Although rich in natural resources, Melrakkaslétta's bare and hence scarcely sheltered rocky tundra has nevertheless been considered rather harsh for modernised farming (Lund 2016). In recent times, the area has faced vast depopulation leaving most of the farms on its northern coast abandoned during winters.

Two small villages are on each of the peninsula's coastlines (Fig. 8.1), Raufarhöfn, growing from fishing and fish-processing (Kokorsch and Benediktsson 2018) and Kópasker, growing from services to its neighbouring farmlands (Björnsdóttir 2003). Kópasker has remained the smaller of the two villages, yet more stable at around 130 inhabitants. Raufarhöfn's residents peaked at little over 500 in the late 1970s whereafter vast depopulation has left the village to count around 180 residents (Statistics Iceland, n.d.).

In 2012, Raufarhöfn became a pilot settlement in a project titled Fragile Communities, initiated by the Icelandic Regional Development

Fig. 8.1 Melrakkaslétta and its location in Iceland (*Source* The National Land Survey of Iceland. Place names added by the author. Map by Michaël Virgil Bishop)

Institute (IRDI), set to counteract the long-standing depopulation from rural areas (IRDI, n.d.), faced in particular by areas furthest away from the capital area and regional service centres (Bjarnason 2020). In 2015, Kópasker entered the project as a part of the neighbouring agricultural area, Öxarfjarðarhérað (IRDI, n.d.). In the project, applying a bottom-up approach to include and enable the locals to come up with feasible ways for their area's development, the residents of both Raufarhöfn and Öxarfjarðarhérað named local tourism development as one of their homestead's main possibilities (IRDI, n.d.).

This, I thought, would be my starting point. What I 'wanted to find out here' was to gain knowledge of the status and perceived role of Melrakkaslétta's tourism—that is, if the locals still regard tourism as the way forward in their area's development. But these were still questions for applied research, and I needed to dive deeper.

Designing the Research

After consulting with my supervisors, the research was set within relational materialism seen through a post-Actor-Network Theory (ANT) lens. ANT has its base in flat ontology, the form Harman calls Latourian, which "treats anything as real as long as it has an effect on something else" (2020, 375). According to ANT, reality is created within networks of actors where "all things are relational" (Jóhannesson and Bærenholdt 2020, 34). For Latour, researching social phenomena is not as much a "science of the social" as it is about "*tracing of associations*" (2005, 5). Research within ANT is therefore on how social order is established through networks of interconnections between humans and the more-than-human with an emphasis on the role of materials in these processes (Latour 1998), as materials are themselves seen as active players in the establishment of actor-networks. While ANT evolves around how stable order is established through actor-networks, post-ANT studies have broadened its scope by focusing equally on how networks evolve, change and are disrupted (Jóhannesson and Bærenholdt 2020). The post-ANT lens furthermore sees, e.g., experiences and feelings as being able to have an effect and be affected by actor-networks (Haug 2012; Jóhannesson and Bærenholdt 2020).

In setting the research's key concepts, I decided to follow the threads set in the underlying research project and focus on the concepts of *mobilities*, *place* and *margins*. By this, I felt I could combine its core with my

urge to capture the status and perceived role of tourism in Melrakkaslétta. Human travels are dependent on—and the driving force of—various forms of *mobilities* (Sheller and Urry 2006) through dynamic, complex and non-static systems, created through cooperation and integration of the human and the more-than-human (Ren et al. 2020). Mobilities are bound in relational patterns of movement, representation and practice through what Cresswell (2010) calls 'constellations of mobility', patterns that need to be studied holistically in order to be understood. In the context of tourism research the concept therefore seemed a highly relevant focal point.

Melrakkaslétta is as other *places* not fixed in time and space, but rather "always in the process of being made … a simultaneity of stories so far" (Massey 2005, 9). Thinking of *places* in the context of tourism brings forth how they, for the purpose of destination marketing, often are portrayed as specific locations with well-defined characteristics (Boisen et al. 2018). However, the locals' connection to the same place tends to be diverse (Ren and Blichfeldt 2011) and closely related to perception, symbols and memories (Frisvoll 2012). Places are where communal thinking and social characteristics are created (Shields 1991) although rarely being a defined point but rather existing in the context of what surrounds them, in the minds of those who stay there (Ingold 2000). Investigating Melrakkaslétta the place hence felt like a relevant task.

Margins are relational in that they occur as the margin *of* something. Conducting tourism research in a rural, non-touristy area might entail margins as a given, even more so when seen in the context of how rural tourism has been used to preserve and restore cultural heritage (Rytkönen and Tunón 2020). While Shields proposes places on the margins as being "left behind" and yet still able to "evoke both fascination and nostalgia" (1991, 3), Western media tends to portray daily life in the rural as rooted in the past, even presenting a depressing picture of rural existence (Mankova 2018). Research carried out in rural areas likewise tends to focus on various challenges, struggles and existential problems (Graugaard 2020).

I intentionally decided not to include in the core concepts the somewhat obvious conception of power in relation to the rural (Carson et al. 2020). Melrakkaslétta is an area "located beyond the immediate influence of either the Reykjavík capital area or any of the [country's] regional centres" (Bjarnason 2020, 58) and its societal vulnerability is evident from its fragile community status. Margins, however, do not only occur

through geographical remoteness but also as a result of remoteness from decision-making and lacking connections (Bock 2016). Melrakkaslétta's local government is based in the Western end of the municipality Norðurþing while Melrakkaslétta marks its eastern end. Despite good road connections, Melrakkaslétta is situated northeast of the domestic travel systems of aviation and public buses, while a visit to a specialised doctor or a hardware store demands a 2.5-hour drive to the regional service centre of Akureyri in central north Iceland.

While not wanting to hide from the obvious challenges these and other hindering factors are bound to cause, I felt that directing the research towards power-imbalance and hardship would clearly leave me with answers on just that. However, neither did I want the research to become an uncritical rant on Melrakkaslétta's greatness or a 'rural idyll' (Frisvoll 2013). I wanted to learn about Melrakkaslétta the place and find its "characteristic of localness" (Ingold 2000, 229) based on the assumption that challenges *and* wellbeing are part of everyday life in Melrakkaslétta as it is elsewhere in the world (Clark 2019).

Towards the Research Practice

As can be gathered from the introduction above, the setting of this research is close to my heart. Growing up in Kópasker as a descendant of Melrakkaslétta's farmers, this is 'my old home'. The peninsula's other village, Raufarhöfn, set to be at the centre of the research, felt somewhat more distant. Due to that, as well as to the number of decades passed since I last lived in the area, I did not expect to feel like researching a community that I would feel connected to. And yet, early on I realised that I was perhaps not an insider, but neither was I an outsider.

This might seem alarming to those embracing quantitative research methods that assume "a detached and value-free researcher in the acquisition and interpretation of gathered data" (Pezalla et al. 2012, 167). Those working within qualitative research might be less worried about my possible lack of true impartiality as the researcher is, within qualitative methodology, regarded as an active part and a tool within research. Qualitative research not only emphasises and embraces the active role of researchers, but is furthermore about "embracing researcher subjectivity, rather than viewing it as a 'problem' to be managed" (Clarke et al. 2015, 223). It felt clear that for me to capture the essence of tourism in the

everyday life of Melrakkaslétta and make use of my connection to the area, the research would be set within qualitative approach.

Qualitative research includes ethnography, which in the words of Ortner is "the attempt to understand another life world using the self – as much of it as possible – as the instrument of knowing" (2006, 42). I however did not want to merely utilise my own self and senses as research instruments. Avoiding seeing it as my role to "mine data, analyse it and represent reality 'out there'" (Ren et al. 2020, 2), I wanted to strive for the research developing through co-creation. This would be not merely through a community-academic partnership (Drahota et al. 2016) or even as a collaboration in rural tourism development (Chimirri 2020). What I wanted to aim for was research conducted within "a spatially and temporally situated practice … created through the combined effort of researchers and others" (Jóhannesson et al. 2018, 39). Setting out to conduct research *in* rather than *about* Melrakkaslétta, I was striving for its becoming through "*working together* in ways which strives for *critical proximity*" (Ren et al. 2020, 10), hence staying close to the research matter, still in the belief that "knowledge is always co-created through situated practices" (Ren et al. 2020, 10). That is, I was aiming for research that would be a co-creation *with* the humans *and* the more-than-human in Melrakkaslétta.

Having set the core concepts of the research and its ontological and methodological approach I was heading back to the methods and the performing of the research. For that I decided to aim for traditional ethnographic methods: observation, interviews and focus-groups, where the latter two are according to Braun et al. (2017) the 'gold standard', 'go to' and 'über-methods' of qualitative research. For analysing the data, I applied reflexive Thematic Analysis (TA). This felt well-fitting to analyse data gathered from qualitative research conducted through post-ANT thinking.

Applying a post-ANT lens means appreciating the relational complexities of the world and hence respecting the potential inability to "reach the end point of network order" (Jóhannesson and Bærenholdt 2020, 34). Analysing data through reflexive TA means staying true to the core of qualitative methodology by acknowledging the active role of the researcher throughout the research process (Braun and Clarke 2006, 2019; Clarke et al. 2015). Furthermore, reflexive TA is about recognising that data can be introduced either through predominant themes or as a detailed analysis of particular themes. The former means that "some depth

and complexity is necessarily lost" (Braun and Clarke 2006, 83), while the latter is about detailed analysis on data relevant only to the theme in question (Braun and Clarke 2006, 2019).

PERFORMING THE RESEARCH

The research was conducted during travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While able to plan and adapt dwelling on site and the face-to-face interviews according to the changing situation of the pandemic, running the repeatedly planned and cancelled focus-groups turned out to be 'a complete disaster to manage', ending up in me having to cancel the idea.

Despite my connection to Melrakkaslétta, I felt the need to reconnect to and (re)learn about the area and thereby escape what Graugaard (2020) calls 'hit-and-run' research, when researchers arrive in the field, staying only while collecting raw data, hence never connecting to the sites of research. I was able to dwell in Melrakkaslétta during all seasons, for four months in total, from the spring of 2021 to the autumn of 2022, conducting participatory observation (Phillippi and Lauderdale 2017), face-to-face semi-structured interviews (Brinkman and Kvale 2015) and planned as well as unplanned noted conversations (Radel 2018). For the semi-structured interviews, I drafted an interview guide (Brinkman and Kvale 2015), formed in accordance with the research design, to capture the issues of mobilities, place and margins, the conditions of the local tourism as well as the interactions of humans and the more-than-human in Melrakkaslétta.

Already feeling the connection to Melrakkaslétta, I initially thought I knew its location. And yet, after months of reading, I had realised that a place just isn't out there for me to make into a field. As with other matters of research, places "do not rest stable, waiting for us to unravel or map them with our tools" (Ren and Jóhannesson 2018, 35). I, therefore, decided to start the interviewing process in the village Raufarhöfn and amongst the landowners out on the northernmost flatland. It soon became clear that Melrakkaslétta the place has been (re)framed and enlarged by a new road at the roots of the peninsula (Barðadóttir et al. 2023) including 'my old home', the village Kópasker. Hence, this became the area of research (Fig. 8.2).

In order to capture Melrakkaslétta's 'characteristic of localness', I wanted the interviewees to be those with first-hand and felt knowledge
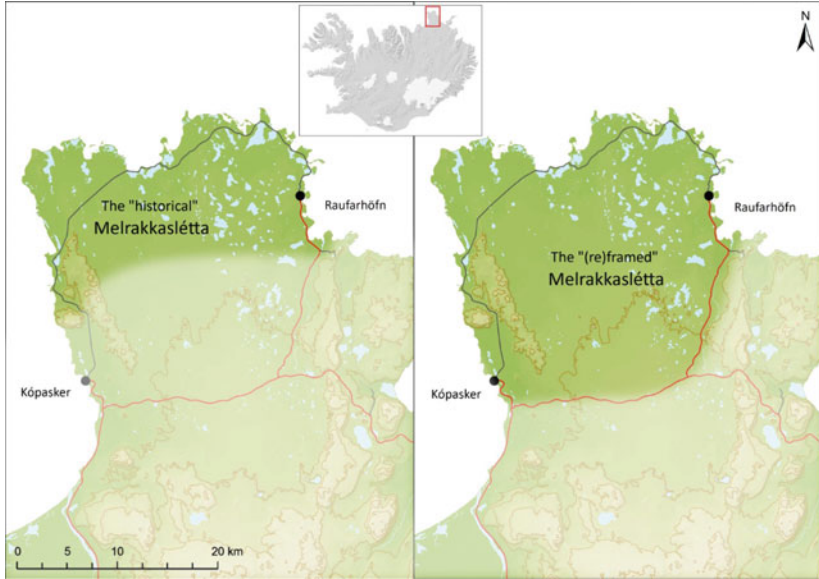
Fig. 8.2 The location of Melrakkaslétta. Historical location on the left—enlarged Melrakkaslétta, the research area, on the right (*Source* The National Land Survey of Iceland. Place names and area-definition added by the author. Map by Michaël Virgil Bishop)

of Melrakkaslétta. I applied targeted, chain-referral sampling (Heckathorn 2011) when selecting representatives of permanent residents in the two villages and in the area, landowners and frequent guests. Amongst the respondents were permanent residents who had been raised in Melrakkaslétta, others who had immigrated years ago, while yet others had a shorter record of residency. Amongst the landowners were those I identified as summer residents and summer dwellers. The summer residents annually arrive in early spring for a stay in Melrakkaslétta until the autumn when they leave to spend the winter elsewhere. The summer dwellers are those co-utilising their land and houses with others for shorter or irregular summer stays. Then there were the frequent visitors, those with no connection through ownership, yet repeatedly visiting Melrakkaslétta. The only respondents not with a felt connection with the

area were those directly targeted as representatives of the municipality, regional tourism and regional marketing office.

After having conducted 36 semi-structured interviews, I felt I had for the most part reached saturation based on the interview guide (Braun et al. 2017). For further clarification of selected subjects, I conducted ten planned noted conversations (Radel 2018) with regional and local (tourism) operators, landowners, residents and former residents, while the voices of tourists in Melrakkaslétta were collected through 54 unplanned noted conversations (Radel 2018). During and after the phase of fieldwork, I transcribed the recorded interviews. Analysing the data collected applying reflexive TA (Braun and Clarke 2006, 2019; Clarke et al. 2015) I started out with a semantic, inductive analysis on the combined data and thereafter conducting latent analysis on predominant themes, that is, on the "particular patterns of shared meaning across the dataset" (Braun and Clarke 2019, 592).

Some Lessons Learned

In my research proposal, I had suggested walking as a possible approach to explore the human and the more-than-human encounters of Melrakkaslétta. Having read how walking offers the opportunity to interact with the land—the nature (Lund 2012)—in that walking can awake something far beyond "what is registered on the ground in the monotonous tread of feet" (Ingold and Vergunst 2008, 10), the method had me curious, yet a bit hesitant. Conducting PhD research felt as the time to follow the rules of research. However, not only did the rules of the walking method seem hard to grasp, it even seemed as if the goal was to escape all rules, as formulated by Vannini and Vannini: "In treating walking as a means to gather data in the traditional sense the act of walking becomes detached from both body and place, and this reduces walking to a set of overly planned instrumental protocols and procedures" (2017, 187). This did not make the matter less perplexing.

Then, during one of my stays in Melrakkaslétta, I went on a four-day guided walking trip in the area. The trip was enjoyable and informative, even more so since it provided the opportunity to see and feel the area through the notions of my walking mates. On three of the four days, we followed old coastal trails, some new to me, others I had last visited as a child. On the fourth day, the plan was set to visit the uninhabited heathland of Melrakkaslétta. Unable to join as the group headed out, I

followed later. The first hour or so I was not really enjoying or focusing on the walk. The weather was cold, the wind loud and the drizzle seemed unsure as to whether it should turn into full-blown rainfall. Furthermore, my concentration was on searching for fresh footprints in the moss and mud. Suddenly, I realised that I was more alone in the world than I had ever been in my life. Despite the proximity to my childhood grounds, never before had I been alone in the heathlands. No traces of humans, nothing but the flat moorland in view. Then, out of nowhere, the fog appeared on the horizon, approaching at the speed of an avalanche. There it hit me, my uncontrollable reaction, my fear, was the embodiment of what my interviewees had been describing, yet without me having the connection to really relate to it. Here, in the homogenous endlessness of Melrakkaslétta's heathland, fog is not just an irritating blurring of view, it is an overpowering, dangerous force of nature—an active player in the networks of human and more-than-human coexistence of Melrakkaslétta and my understanding of it came through the act of walking, of being there. I was learning, not just about walking as a research method, but also about myself as a researcher. In that I relate to Ellis's words "I learned as much from what I felt as from what I observed" (2004, 10).

Another major actor, I learned, in the networks of human and more-than-human entanglements of Melrakkaslétta is light, and the lack of it. Birds and mammals are affected by the continuous summer daylight and winter darkness of the high north (Blix 2016) where the midnight sun and northern lights alike draw visitors (Saarinen and Varnajot 2019). However, in that the way humans experience and observe light is dependent on, for example, the way the surfaces and surroundings absorb, deflect and reflect it (Edensor 2017), the natural features of Melrakkaslétta become relevant actors.

Melrakkaslétta is a flatland, covered with low vegetation, meaning that there is hardly a natural feature obstructing its rays of light. The surrounding North Atlantic Ocean furthermore reflects and bathes the peninsula in light. This together with Melrakkaslétta's northern position just below the Arctic Circle results in its peculiar shimmering light-blue daylight, the various kinds of orange during summer nights and the deep blue-black darkness during most of its winters. Remembering how I as a child had played outdoors long into Melrakkaslétta's spring and summer nights and how my friends and I would wander together, back and forth, during winter afternoons as none of us dared to walk home alone in the dark, I could relate to the many narratives on Melrakkaslétta's light and

darkness. It was however first during the interviews and the following analysis that I realised how active a part the arctic summer light and winter darkness play in the networks of human and more-than-human coexistence in Melrakkaslétta. The encompassing brightness is what the summer residents long for prior to arrival and what the frequent guests describe as one of the features repeatedly surprising them during visits, and the winter darkness is what keeps many of the summer stayers from becoming winter guests.

What Was It All For?

Despite my intention to strive for the co-creation of knowledge, looking back I must admit that while setting the research agenda and its methodology I still had myself placed right in the middle of things. Although respecting the importance of the principle that researchers "listen to the stones without forcing our will on them" (Gan et al. 2017, G11), I was still unsure how I should grasp the more-than-human aspects of Melrakkaslétta. The examples above are a few of the many pieces to the puzzle I collected along the way towards grasping the core of co-creation. As the researcher I *was* in the middle of things, but my role was never that of knowing-it-all but to co-listen to my respondents *and* the more-than-human world of Melrakkaslétta. My part, as the researcher, was that of combining the information selected through interviews and conversations and my felt experiences from observation, dwelling and walking in Melrakkaslétta. Hence, my respondents, human and more-than-human, together with myself, contributed to the knowledge created through the research. Some aspects I did need to experience to understand what I was told, and other aspects I was able to relate to because of my connection to the lands, the living and the non-living beings of the area.

Coming into the project I felt it could become a challenge to argue for the relevance of such a singular case study, making me unsure if I might need to compare Melrakkaslétta to other places. Yet, the further I got, the more convinced I became that a comparison, for the sake of just that, would leave me demarcating and aiming the research towards factors fitting for comparison, as to "set up my project for macroanalysis" (Ellis 2004, 10). My months of reading have shown me how scarce knowledge there is on the context of tourism in non-touristy rural areas. Therefore, I decided to conduct this research to the best of my ability and then strive for being able to argue for its relevance.

Far from being indifferent towards Melrakkaslétta, I initially felt the urge to conduct good research that might serve as a voice of the humans and the more-than-human of this marginal place. In hindsight, I seem to have come out of the deep, dark foggy lands of academic literature, wanting to conduct good research, period. Not only did I briefly lose sight of Melrakkaslétta, but the very definition of good research is moreover a fluffy notion, or as formulated by Law and Mol, "Philosophy has a rich tradition of painstakingly seeking to establish standards for 'the good'" (2002, 84), and yet, the definitional task of that 'goodness' remains uncertain.

Despite the emphasis described above on my strong urge to conduct 'real' academic research, this journey has offered an opportunity to learn through research practice the blurred line between the conceptual and the applied. That is, conducting research based on academic thought does not exclude its agenda and outcome from having applicability. This became clear when, staying true to the research design of the co-creation of knowledge, in the fall of 2022 I went to Melrakkaslétta for the real exam: to present the research, report its findings back to the locals and have an open discussion on its premises and outcomes. After an approving reception and fruitful discussion, the real prospect of the research became clear through the words of a local: "Great thing you are doing this. It might wake us up to act on our tourism development ourselves". Should one dare to hope that the very performing of the research might play a small part in enabling the residents and "setting free what lives" (Veijola et al. 2014, 8)—that seems like the best kind of 'goodness' there is.

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Revealing Place Mobility by Walking and Map Analysing

Elva Björg Einarsdóttir

Revealing Place Mobility by Walking and Map Analysis

I am fascinated by lines in landscape: the visible ones, and the lines I can feel on my skin, the weather lines or the aura of history and folklore. This fascination is something I developed whilst walking and researching the landscapes of the county of Western-Barðastrandarsýsla (hereafter V-Barð) in Iceland, following lines, or making them with my feet or eyes, or even hands, walking them, sensing and viewing them. Being born and bred in this place it was not until I walked these landscapes that I noticed the lines in the landscape. The lines were one of the things which I discovered walking and processing the walk afterwards, for example, by drawing my line of walking on an old map of the place. Later, when I had gone deeper into the analysis of maps and was crossing my own embodied knowledge of walking with the multi-dimensional knowledge of maps (Aldred and Lucas 2018), I recognized how the old routes could be seen as indicators

E. B. Einarsdóttir (✉)
Department of Geography and Tourism, University of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland
e-mail: elvab@hi.is; elvabjorgeinarsdottir@gmail.com

for the development of V-Barð as a place. Furthermore, I found my way along these old routes and walked into their rhythm, revealing layers and threads of the landscape and mobility of the past. In this chapter, I discuss these findings and ask: *How does walking old routes, studying place names, and analysing maps reveal the changing mobility of a place?*

Here, I discuss the mobility of V-Barð through old and new routes and roads. After introducing the methodology of the chapter, I discuss how the mobility of V-Barð is represented through routes and roads from a different time, which develop from being like a net laid over the landscape to a progressive line sliding through it: We can call them lines of mobility through which the place V-Barð is maintained. I then go deeper into the old routes themselves and discuss how navigating them becomes a skill, taking past mobilities of the place into consideration in light of the effort of the human body and history in the form of place names.

Methodological Approach

The methodology of the chapter is three-dimensional, consisting in seeing the landscape through the pedestrian act of walking (Vergunst 2012); through history using place names; and through interrelations of maps with the landscape, the reader and the remake of them (Aldred and Lucas 2018). The methodology is a mixture of different sources concerning knowing one's way around in the world, addressing the question of how space is made familiar and how the human body reacts to landscape (ibid.).

Walking

Walking is a key to the landscape for me as a researcher, whereby I not only look at the landscape with my experienced researcher's entwined body and mind but do so with the sensation of the bodily feeling of walking, as Lund (2005) and Edensor (2010) argue. Walking is a holistic experience. It has to do with the body, sensations, experience, memory, ideas and connection to non-humans; it is an interaction with the environment (Edensor 2010). According to Springgay and Truman, walking is "a way of inhabiting place through the lived experience of the moment [...] a way of becoming responsive to place; it activates modes of participation that are situated and relational" (2019, 4). Walking the old routes of V-Barð did exactly that. It connected me to the landscape in a way that I had

not experienced before. The idea was to walk into past mobilities, their rhythms and sensations and, in a way, share them with the bodies that had walked there before me—many of them relatives and people I had heard about in my upbringing. Archaeologists Aldred and Lucas describe this well when they write: "walking a beaten path […] reveals the shared 'space' not only between past and present […] but also between different bodies" (2018, 25). By these means, old routes can reveal rhythms of the moving human body where the affordances of the body differ according to terrain and landscapes, as Edensor (2010) argues. Although long gone, I like to call this type of shared space an enduring mobility which oozes from the footsteps of long-gone bodies.

During the research, I walked two-thirds of the old routes of V-Barð following oral and written resources, old maps, cairns and visible traces in the landscape. Walking the past routes of V-Barð revealed a different place than when travelling by car. It opened up past realities and created new ones. The bodily intimacy afforded by the method gave a special feeling of rhythm, connections, knowing-one's-way by learning to 'read' the.

Vergunst (2012) explores how the politics of landscapes can be revealed by walking ethnography, where the pedestrian body feels the rhythms and affordance of landscapes, and the horizon and whole perspective of the surroundings moves with him (Vergunst 2012; Lund and Willson 2010). Walking as a research method gives new perspectives and insights into a place: a sense of rhythm, navigation, time, development, layers and lines. Walking is significant for that kind of knowledge and uncovers things that could not be revealed otherwise.

Place Name Archives

Place names are key to understanding more-than-human connections. With place names, humans try to organize their surroundings. Humans and their surroundings are intertwined and it is impossible to talk about the one without the other, as Keith Basso (1996) argues. The landscape has infected humans; their history is in the landscape and it influences their thinking. In that way, it is possible to read the history of places through place names, at times they are the only reminders left of humans in the landscape. Place names in V-Barð tell where it was good to harvest, where the best fishing grounds were, where not to go and where it was safe to go, where accidents happened and what people believed in. Place

names are artefacts of everyday life in the agricultural and fishing society of V-Barð.

Place names are primary data that are connected to places, usually old oral sources that have moved between generations, but new generations have also contributed to and named places. Since the turn of the twentieth century[1] the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies (SÁM) has systematically collected place names from local people in Iceland and made them accessible. Thus, it is possible to access name archives from most farms in Iceland, arranged by counties and districts (SÁM 2018). In my research I used the archives from Barðaströnd, which is a part of V-Barð, and related places in V-Barð and compared them to maps of the area and to the landscape that I walked. In that way, I could often easily see how the landscape was continually 'shaped', i.e., how humans were a part of the landscape. In other places the landscape 'lit up' with meaning when the place names were added.

There are about eighty files of place names from the area from 1931 to 2010, some handwritten but most of them typed. There are up to four files about the same farm and other files combine some farms even though they had different owners. Many of the files are just lists of place names with numbers that match an index at the end of the document. Occasionally, there is further explanation about the story behind the name or the place it was used for. The younger place name files were based on or compared to the older ones. These files often had good references about where the places were to be found in the landscape. Some of them also narrate a story which tells about why the place got its name, for example, if the name of the place was because of something that happened there. "Reading" the landscape through the place names deepened my approach to it and made the landscape alive in a way that was new to me.

Maps

Aldred and Lucas (2018) write about the use of maps for research. They emphasize maps being looked at as media through which we can, for instance, see the "patterning and materiality of the landscape by noting

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[1] The oldest place name archives at SÁM are dated in 1910, written by Brynjólfur Bjarnason. By then there were already some archives from Brynjúlfur Jónsson (1838–1914) available but not all dated. The archives of Brynjólfur Bjarnason are thus the oldest dated place name archives in Iceland (Stofnun Árna Magnússonar 2010).

continuity and change (e.g. through map regression or a comparison of historic and modern maps)" (29–30). They use the old archaeological metaphor of the landscape as palimpsest (Crawford 1922; Hoskins 1984) to demonstrate the relationship between maps and landscape. In this way, they show how landscape can be seen as "both a *meaningful* text which can be read, but also as a *material* text which has been written and re-written multiple times" (Aldred and Lucas 20–21). This, they stress, brings forth the understanding of the landscape "as a contemporaneous assemblage; less a static record of a once-dynamic landscape, and more of a polychronic ensemble that nods to the past and to the future through the present" (ibid., 22). Maps are tools in relation to their makers, readers and landscape, and they are constantly transformed through their use (Aldred and Lucas 2018). It is this interrelation of landscape and maps and their diverse perspectives that make them meaningful as research tools. Maps are mediators of the moving body and the landscape (ibid.) and along with contemporary maps; I use them to elucidate the changing mobility of V-Barð through the ages.

In the research, I looked at maps of Iceland and especially of the Westfjords and V-Barð from diverse sources; the website islandskort.is, at the National Library in Iceland; maps at The Royal Library in Denmark; maps from the National Land Survey of Iceland; and a map from the National Archives in Iceland (Gunnlaugsson 1844). The contemporary maps I obtained from the National Land Survey of Iceland, Google Maps and the Icelandic Road and Coastal Administration. With regard to old maps, I especially searched for maps with routes on them and found that routes appear on maps quite early. I further studied 38 maps that include V-Barð from the period 1743 to 1948. The maps show up to 36 routes between regions and farms in V-Barð, most of which are known today or still noticeable in the landscape, for example, through way-marking cairns, drains and ramping through rough terrain. I searched for old routes, where they were and if they had a name or if the route was only drawn on the map without a name. What I found was that from early on many of the routes had names which still remain and they have been known routes between settlements since the earliest maps were made.

This induced me to go further and analyse the maps with references to historical concurrence, looking into how the old routes and modern roads came to be as they are today, and how they represent the development of the place. This knowledge was hidden in the old routes and maps and revealed by walking the old routes, drawing the line of wayfaring on a

map afterwards and analysing the maps in the research process. Let us now look in more detail into the analysis of the maps.

Nets and Lines

Nets are formed out of many lines crossing and coming together in a meaningful connection. This is how I see the past routes of V-Barð. When walking them it surprised me how many they were. Having lived in V-Barð as a child and during a part of my grown-up life, I was used to travelling the automobile road which superseded the old ones from the middle of the twentieth century and continued as a variably stable grey line through the community. It thus came as a surprise to me that the old routes were everywhere: in between, under, beneath, above and to the side of the modern travelled road, and in places that were out of sight from the main road. In Fig. 9.1, old and new routes have been drawn on a map of V-Barð, where the old routes are red and the modern ones are blue in two thickness ratio. The map shows how the old routes lie between settlements, often in many directions from each place depending upon where one was headed. To me, when both walking them and looking at them on a map, they formed something like a net over the landscape. It is not a standardized mesh-size or grid-like net as the grids of longitude and latitude, but keeps pace with the landscape, organically. The map also shows how the mobility of V-Barð has changed from this netlike formation to a progressing line sliding through the area more in relation to the standardized mesh laid over Euclidean space. It is a progressing line in the sense of being straighter and lesser differentiating than the net that characterizes the past routes. Here, Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) rhizome comes into mind, where the old routes are like a rhizome formed through entanglement of human mobility and the landscape, whilst the modern roads are organized in a hierarchical tree-like crown, with smaller branches stretching out from the thick stock of the main road.

The map brings forth the landscape which characterizes V-Barð, a mountainous area with a high plateau, steep mountainsides and limited lowlands. The settlement in some places can be described as *mini-cosmoses* which earlier were sustainable unities of small, inhabited areas relying on agriculture and fishery for their maintenance. In some places, a church completed these cosmoses in their way of being self-sufficient.

The old routes connect the landscapes, the ways of travel between and within distributed settlements. Thus, there is often only one route
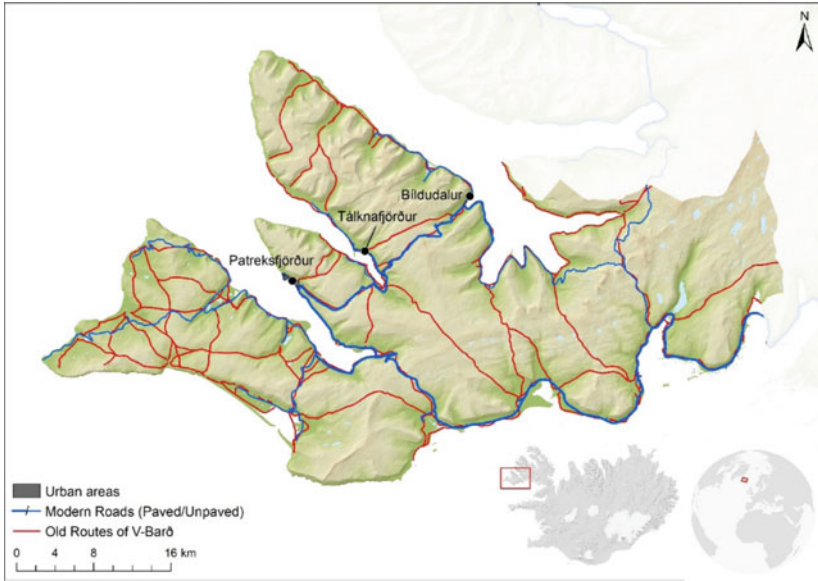
Fig. 9.1   Old routes of V-Barð (red) form a net over the landscape whilst modern roads (blue in two thickness ratio) are like a progressing line sliding through it. Thus, the old routes display a kind of rhizomatic interconnectedness whilst the new ones are hierarchically distributed like a tree-crown with smaller branches coming from the thick stock of the main road. The drawing is based on maps from Landmælingar Íslands (2023) (Map by Michaël Virgil Bishop) (Color figure online)

between places in such landscapes. But where fjords and shallow waters cut the seashore, or mountains and cliffs divide the landscape into districts and communities, shortcuts over mountains and fjords are common, although they are not necessarily marked on the map, and make up other alternatives in wayfaring, where the rhythms of the changing tides and weather are in charge.

Discovering the old routes changed the way I saw and understood mobility in V-Barð. It was a fundamental change that opened up the place for me in a new way. Being used to driving the asphalt and gravelled roads, the different rhythm of walking the old routes made all the difference and helped me see how the place had changed, not only in relation to the way of travel, but also in regard to settlement. Today, the population

has gathered in small villages served by the main well-established road, whilst the countryside suffers from reduced population, one cause of that being poor road connections. The old routes indicate more distributed settlement with different destinations and temporalities. Each presenting the times when they were travelled routes and changed their surroundings with road construction and waymarker constructions, just like the modern road does today.

But why did and do people move? Why this change in rhythms and destinations? Here, I want to draw attention to the westernmost point of V-Barð and indeed of Iceland itself, the Útvíkur bays, their names referring to them as the Outer Most Bays of the county. Some say it is the westernmost point of Europe, which indeed is the case if you do not count the Azores Islands in the ocean west of Portugal. Jóhannesson and Lund write that "destinations are not fixed or with valid meaning, rather they are products of various connections. They are mobile and fluid and in constant shaping" (2021, 50). In the case of Útvíkur bays (Fig. 9.2), the change in terms of old routes and modern roads to meaningful destinations is explicit and has been dramatic in the last eighty years. Útvíkur bays lie near rich fishing grounds and fishing booths were established in several places in earlier times, offering good conditions for landing boats. Fish were one of the main sources of food and trade goods. Seasonal fishing attracted people and for many it was mandatory work to go fishing for their employer. The old routes to the fishing booths and between places in the Útvíkur area are conspicuous on the map. They were well-travelled routes that came from far away, from other counties as well as within V-Barð.

It is interesting to perceive these connections and relate them to history, although some routes do not make sense if one is not familiar with the landscape and perhaps one has to walk there to understand them fully. There are two old routes reaching from the farms Látrar and Breiðavík, to the great bird cliff Látrabjarg, the Cliffs of Látrar. Actually, the parts of the bird cliff are named after the farms that used to apply them although the whole of the cliffs now bear the name of Látrar farm, Látrabjarg. Thus, the part of the cliffs the route from Breiðavík farm reaches to is named Breiðavíkurbjarg, the Cliffs of Breiðavík, and then there are other names for other parts of the cliffs referring to its owner, i.e., Bæjarbjarg, the Cliffs of Bær and Keflavíkurbjarg, the Cliffs of Keflavík. The routes reaching from Látrar and Breiðavík to the cliffs are well established with waymarker cairns. They were used by those who went bird catching
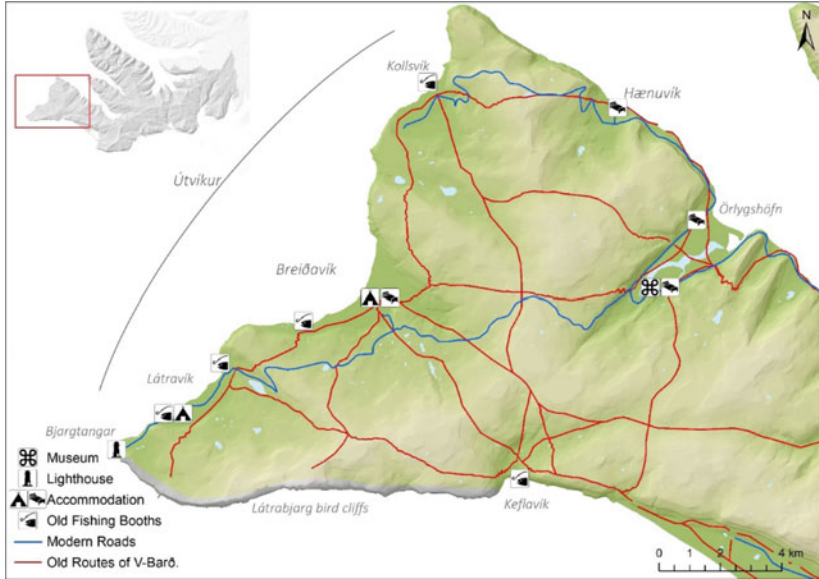
Fig. 9.2 The old routes of the westernmost point of V-Barð, based on maps from Landmælingar Íslands (2023). Past mobility routes are marked in red, the modern roads in blue. Notice the two red lines reaching from Breiðavík and Látravík to the cliff Látrabjarg. These are routes for bird hunting and egg collecting (Map by Michaël Virgil Bishop) (Color figure online)

and egg collecting from these farms. It was essential for the wellbeing of humans to get the eggs and birds from the cliffs, and therefore, the tracks are there as a reminder of past times, of past mobility that is still essential even though it has changed. At first sight, these routes seem to have lost their purpose, but walking there you can see that a part of one of them is still in use, because people still collect eggs from these cliffs for their own use and also selling them e.g., in neighbouring villages and in Reykjavík.

It is notable how the modern road, the blue line, proceeds through the landscape (Fig. 9.2), still reaching the main places, the farms, hotels, museums, campsites and all the way to the lighthouse at Látrabjarg cliff (Bjargtangar, Cliffs Point). Today, it is a well-travelled road, with up to four hundred cars on busy days over the summertime. Travellers want to go to the westernmost point of Iceland and look at the magnificent

bird cliff. They are also 'hunting' for the puffin and other birds with their cameras (Haraway 1984). The emphasis in travelling has changed, there are new destinations and the previous ones have lesser weight and are even forgotten or have gained another purpose.

The evolution of the lines reflects the development and changing mobilities of V-Barð itself through social changes and time, one of the greatest transitions being the modification from a farmer and fisherman society to modern society in the late nineteenth century, with urbanization and the establishment of villages. Before then subsistence farming and fishery characterized the area, and settlement was dispersed with main centres around churches or official governmental places as the churches often were. The development accelerated with Iceland's belated industrial revolution in the beginning of the twentieth century, with increased production and trade. A modern market society arose and with it came the need for more mobile people and goods.

In V-Barð drastic changes took shape when three villages were started forming in Bíldudalur, Patreksfjörður and Tálknafjörður on the grounds of urbanization and trade in the nineteenth century and till the midst of the twentieth centuries, and most of the fishery moved to the villages. The countryside was still populated, but mechanization in farming decreased the need for workers in the mid-twentieth century and that development accelerated throughout the century. Flatey island in Breiðafjörður fjord south of V-Barð had been an important trading post for the area of Barðaströnd (as well as other places around the great fjord) because seafaring was often an easier way to travel in Barðaströnd than travelling the mountains to the nearest village in the north or west. The trade in Barðaströnd moved from Flatey island to these villages in the 1960s when roads were built over the mountains and transportation changed. The arrival of cars and different wayfaring and transportation had encouraged the establishment of roads. This changed the mobility of V-Barð, straightening out its lines of mobility in such a way that now there was a simple line progressing through the landscape with driveways to farms and other destinations.

But the development does not stop here. It is an ongoing placing as Lund and Willson (2010) speak of in describing places as mobile and becoming but never fixed or still. Recently, V-Barð was connected to the north of the Westfjords all year round with the Dýrafjarðargöng tunnel and a reconstructed road over the toughest mountains, Dynjandisheiði mountain road. The change has already converted the mobility of people

from the north, from Ísafjörður and other towns, driving through V-Barð further south to the capital, Reykjavík. The mobility also goes the other way: Locals in V-Barð now seek service and commerce in Ísafjörður more often than they used to do before the tunnel opened. The new connection to the north gives a feeling for the Westfjords as a united area for the first time in centuries.

Navigating Landscape

The old routes of V-Barð are rather well established with waymarker cairns, drains and clearings through rocky areas. In the early ages, road construction was mandatory work for men in neighbouring areas from the age of 20 to 60 (Þjóðskjalasafn 2015). For example, there was a need to reconstruct cairns and clear the route of stones that had fallen on it. Not having been attended to for over 60 years, the routes are presently in quite good shape: the trail is often clear, and the cairns help in navigating the stony world that these heath routes often are. It is mostly in the gravelled and vegetational areas that the routes have vanished or are difficult to find, and in early summer old snow patches from the winter can lead astray (Fig. 9.3).

In traditional archaeological understanding, cairns and old routes are the materialized mobility of humans which has gone still. It is something that has been on the move but now has stopped (Aldred 2021). To demonstrate this, consider a piece of pottery that I once found on Fossheiði mountain route. It dated from the mid-sixteenth century and had fallen to the ground to be absorbed. Many centuries later it was revealed when the erosion of the weather brought it to the surface again. This understanding of mobility is appealing and becomes embodied and mobile in the understanding of Tilley's (1994) walking body, as Aldred (2021) argues. I feel this understanding whilst walking the old routes of V-Barð, sensing them in a human-centric way, through descending, ascending, terrain, view, orientation and so on (Tilley 1994); sensing how the route is exposed or demonstrably concomitant with the movement of the body. Cairns are navigation tools for humans on the move, walking or riding. Their position is in relation to the movement of the body and its position or point of view. Cairns are something you learn to 'read' when walking the old routes of V-Barð, when you understand that they were put there in your favour, for guiding the way. Although they were put there a long time ago and the key to their 'language', or to them

Fig. 9.3 Fossheiði mountain road is an old well-established route between settlements in V-Barð. Its name and 'line' appear on the oldest maps of V-Barð. Here a group of people walk the well-marked route in the stony landscape with the waymarker cairns to guide them if the route becomes indistinct (Photo by Elva Björg Einarsdóttir)

as a 'symbol',[2] has been lost, they can still be found through wayfaring, the act that they were meant for all along. Thus revealing the connection or situation of the human body to the more-than-human, the being-with and knowing-one's-way through space.

When following the routes and the cairns, you develop a skill for reading the landscape. You get the hang of it, knowing where the next step is, where the route proceeds, because you have brought how the landscape works into your body. Or, better put, you start to sense how the human body enacts the landscape and therefore, where the route would have been built, what would ease the trip for wayfarers on foot or riding. Navigation becomes a part of your vision when looking for the next logical step on an old route. You put yourself into the footsteps of the old wayfarers or road constructers, both literally and ideally speaking. You

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[2] E.g., where the route continues regarding to the position of the cairns, that you should not look for it up on the hill where the cairns are but down below; what many cairns at the same place mean; or what the position of a protrusive stone signifies.

look ahead and think where you would go next if you were making this route. When you have got the hang of it you almost always get the next step right. The same insight goes for seeking old and destroyed cairns that make the way; in the beginning it can be hard to try to find them in the stony surroundings, but an experienced eye will spot each and every one of them even though you only find their foundation stones (not visible from a distance) when you get there. This is a competence that navigating walkers gradually develop on their walk.

The walking body gets used to a certain rhythm accompanying a specific place. How the body reacts to the environment and what effects the environment has on the body varies but can become rhythmic and foreseeable, as Edensor (2010) stresses. The body, though, is not force to "dance" the same dance at the same place or to perform the same choreography (Seamon 1980) as the place might offer or "suggest", but the rhythms will have an effect on the walker (Edensor 2010). Walking the old routes of V-Barð gives a sense of rhythm and a sense of how the place was in the past, when these routes were beaten tracks. In my mind, the rhythm of the old routes put me into what I like to call an enduring mobility of the past. I felt as if walking into a rhythm that had already been there and was exposed, in a way, by me acting up on it, although I was doing it for a different purpose, in a different time and through different connections than the ones that went there before me.

In his book *The Archaeology of Movement* (2021), Aldred engages with old and new mobilities and demonstrates that walking an old route following wayfaring cairns reveals different temporalities of movements. It is a matter of a flow or a rhythm that "aligns different temporalities together" (Aldred 2021, 177); a kind of flow that never ends and is possible to revisit (Aldred 2021). Building on the immanence of José Gil's body-space (Gil 2006) Aldred claims that "[j]ust as walking along a trackway touches underfoot along the gathering path, and in passing the waymarker cairns; these are shared contacts with the people and other bodies that also moved along the same route in the past" (Aldred 2021, 178). The cairns are, he continues, a "shared connection, a repetition, and rhythm" (ibid.). Even when walking a built-over old route which you have travelled hundreds of times before by car, tracing the old route under the new one provides a new rhythm, a rhythm of landscape, of human effort and intention, of everyday life: a new place and yet another layer or thread woven into the landscape.

My walking in V-Barð brought me a sense of layers of the place that were unveiled by my walking in rhythm with the landscape (Edensor 2010). By reading the place names a certain atmosphere or an aura was revealed. Walking without knowing much about a place gives a sense of freedom and discovering of a new place. You give the landscape your meaning without other "interferences" than what you bring yourself to the place. This was my approach to the landscapes of V-Barð before I discovered the place names files. I totally welcome this approach but also appreciate and acknowledge the perspective the place names gave me.

By reading into the archives of place names, I added a new layer of knowledge as well as a sense for the mobilities of the landscape. Moreover, I saw places which for me had only been "undefined landscape" that before had no meaning to me except to cross on my way to my destination. Now I would add a story, some knowledge of the landscape which came from the archives and had the effect of stopping the flow of endless, mobile landscape and bringing a meaning to it. The flow or rhythm, or the lines of the landscape, changed from being without a meaning to becoming worth stopping for and finding out and sensing the events or incidents that had happened there. Casey (1996) writes about places taking on their occupant's reflection and as they do so they "happen", they are an event which makes the landscape pop up with meaning. This event will provoke feelings and thoughts within people that visit the place in the future if they know about the story that the name of the place refers to. In this way, Legat (2016) talks about place names as *hooks* that stories are attached to. But even without the story the name of the place itself awakens some thoughts about it, or even mindsets, combining it to agriculture or wayfaring in the way people can refer to and understand. Place names of V-Barð tell where and when it is safe to travel; where to get what kind of fish; where there are good grazing and resting places for the domestic animals; who did what and where; what was necessary, e.g., where to find water; what people were proud of; and what people believed in (Fig. 9.4).

Some places in the landscape have no story attached to them but are overflowing with aura because of their name. *Útburðarlækur* (Brook of unwanted children) is an example of a place like that. It is connected to the horrible old custom of killing new-born unwanted babies by putting them outside to die. The place name sticks, it is understood, and felt. The aura of place names like this is powerful and makes time collapse in such a way that the centuries between the past and the present stand side

Fig. 9.4 The waymarker cairns take over from the place names when underway on an old route (Einarsdóttir, forthcoming). Only a few place names remain to guide the wayfaring or tell if something has happened in a particular location. Here Lækjarskarð, Lækur's Pass (middle of photo) on the route to Brjánslækur (Lækur in short) (Photo by Elva Björg Einarsdóttir)

by side, or no longer matter (Aldred 2010). You are there and relive or connect to the event. But this only happens if you know the place name; I have walked the same landscapes without this knowledge and enjoyed drinking from this brook.

Thus, when taking place names into account, the place can become totally new. The landscape gains depth, the place lights up with the meaning of the lines and of the choreography of everyday lived life and events from the past. It adds another layer or a new thread that is woven into the landscape, of the kind which functions like a pop-up-book and encloses a place like an aura. 'Place names are like human-made lines in the landscape, often "straight" and out of rhythm with the chaotic lines of the landscape and time' (Einarsdóttir, forthcoming). Place names can

freeze places so that the place loses its character of being mobile and never still (Lund and Willson 2010), although the place will always be "affected" by the one that observes it. Place names are fractions of the past, which is reflected through them and reveals a deeper meaning and another place than the one without them.

CONCLUSION

Walking the old routes of V-Barð made me realize a different mobility of the place than I was used to when driving the modern roads. I was reminded of different rhythms, flows and temporalities of past livelihood, destinations and wayfaring. And I saw how the old routes were good indicators for that mobility. The method of map analysis, walking and place name reading helped in bringing forth this changing mobility of V-Barð. This meant going back and forth, beginning walking, then drawing my line of wayfaring on a map, reading the place name files, walking again, analysing maps and looking at them through the lenses of historical concurrences. Crossing the embodied knowledge of walking with the empirical knowledge of place names and maps lit up the environment, connected landscapes and places in a different way, created special atmospheres and revealed layers of past mobilities.

My walking made me realize how common the old routes were in the landscapes of V-Barð. Analysing the maps amplified that reality and brought forth how the old routes were like a rhizomic net over the Euclidean space (Deleuze and Guattari 1980). This is a different appearance of mobility than the one that the roads in V-Barð present today where they slide through the landscape as a progressive line or a hierarchical tree-like crown, based on the thick stock of the main road. This notion of mobility is supported by the way of travel, today by car or walking the past routes. Destinations are fluent and can tell about the mobility of a place (Jóhannesson and Lund 2021). The maps show the development that has accrued in the community and is entangled with more-than-human encounters, e.g., with the establishment of the villages, changes in the basic industries, improved transportation and marginalization of the area. And it is still changing because with connection to the north of the Westfjords with tunnels. The old and new routes show how the mobility of the place is changing all the time, and how indeed routes and roads are good examples of mobility.

Walking the old routes of V-Barð I was faced with the enduring mobility of the place. My body was moving and sensing its surroundings, finding its way along the old routes guided by waymarkers; constantly learning, picking up signs and symbols of the process of travel in the landscape, for example, in the form of waymarkers that had been placed there for guidance of the human body. I got the feeling that I had in a way walked into a preserved world of past mobility although it was also new. Every step brought me closer to an understanding of how the landscape and the travel would proceed. I felt with the landscape, it was a walking-with (Rantala et al. 2020) where the landscape is a companion on the walk (Einarsdóttir and Lund, forthcoming). A rhythm revealed itself and I was a part of it. And it was not only the landscape I was a part of, but the travel of long-gone wayfarers, different temporalities of different times, intention, outfit and performance. The walking body reacted to the long-built and enduring mobility of the past.

The materialization of the old mobility, the routes and waymarker cairns make it possible to follow in the footsteps of previous wayfarers. But as you do so you enact upon it; you make your own line of mobility, your own places and even place names. It is a different wayfaring to those who went there before, but then they were probably also diverse. It is fascinating how the layers of the landscape pile up or are woven together and the place names give a meaning that otherwise would have been unnoticed because there might be nothing that indicates an incident that happened there but the place name itself. The place names are yet another layer or a thread in the landscape and capable of contributing to the making of places. Navigating old routes and reading place names is a way of bringing forth the mobility of V-Barð. It is different to analysing maps, but it gets you deeper into the landscape and the different temporalities of the old routes.

Bringing forth the mobility of V-Barð through old routes and modern roads has been an ethnography of walking based in more holistic knowledge. Ethnography unpacks an embodied knowledge crossed and appended with multi-dimensional knowledge of maps and empirical knowledge of place names and the history of V-Barð. Just looking at the different types of routes and roads tells a story, walking them and studying them connects to the landscapes, its rhythm and layers. In this way, it is possible to explore V-Barð through old and new lines of movement, revealing its changing mobility in different and meaningful ways.

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The Route into Nature: The Landscape of Mobility

Sigrún Birgisdóttir

Nature on the Move

Nature is the main attraction of the Icelandic tourism sector. The country's diverse nature and extreme landscapes attract tourists who want to move across the vast spaces of a sparsely populated country, visiting one gem after another to collect unique experiences. Mobility is central to the rapidly growing experience-oriented tourism that has emerged in Iceland since 2010. The tourists must be transported between sites for attaining their experiences and consequently the roads become essential to the expanding tourism sector—driving being the primary mode of travel. A blooming car rental business makes sure that a good majority of over two million annual visitors are able to rent their own car and drive from one place to another. 60% actually opt to drive independently in rented cars to visit numerous sites that evoke their interest. The island is not small, and visitors tend to drive great distances to reach destinations—averaging up to 300 km per day or 2150 km per visit during the summer

S. Birgisdóttir (✉)
Faculty of Icelandic and Comparative Cultural Studies, University of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland
e-mail: sibi@hi.is

months (Guðmundsson 2018). It follows that a significant amount of time is spent on the roads and in most cases car renting tourists end up spending more time on the road than actually on site enjoying the marvellous sights they have picked as destinations. However, interestingly, little focus has been placed on this part of the travel experiences tourists have whilst in Iceland. It is as if the time between sites is somehow dead or constitutes a pause in the experience of the traveller. What matters is the site. The rest is just driving.

The extensive road network in Iceland passes through dramatic landscapes. The road itself gives access to the abundance of diverse natural attractions and urban settlements. Roads pass through space—but also through time (Lund and Jóhannesson 2014), opening vistas of areas that have been left out of modern development as well as going through deserted landscapes and wastelands that for centuries remained untravelled or that have been sources of mystery, superstition and fear to the local mind. The roads also tell stories of settlement and hope in agricultural and industrial development. They map earlier farming in the lower highlands where vegetation may now be gone and they mark the areas of industry and fishing, some of which still flourish whereas other have faded out or are mostly abandoned.

Whilst the road network connects different areas of the country together, it is more than a pragmatic network linking different places. The roads give meaning and context to how the landscape is understood and the way it has formed material culture (Cresswell 2001, 2006; Hvattum et al. 2016; Urry 2007). The roads themselves in fact are an important linkage between nature and culture. The roadscape dominates modes of interacting with the environment and thereby shapes the understanding of landscape through movement, which also determines how the land is seen and experienced. The movement and the serial views it generates are formative for narratives of relations of the natural and built environment, and movement along the road translates to a sensory experience of the terrain. But roadbuilding also transforms the landscape, physically altering the environment and shaping the terrain the roads run through. Thus roads enable and frame different relations with the environment, whether due to the motion of travelling along the route, manipulation of the terrain or by bringing traffic to new areas that then become open to new development. Those new developments then bring about transformation of the social or natural context that in turn leads to new interventions and new urban processes.

The ubiquitous nature may be what attracts visitors to the country. It is however the predefined location or destination marketed as a primary place of tourists' cultural exchange that, as a rule, receives most attention in the development of the tourism sector, not the engagement with the landscape passed to get there (Áfangastaðaáætlun DMP á Suðurlandi, 2019). Whilst roads and roadside scenery have elsewhere been created specifically to be seen from a moving car constituting a carefully constructed world beyond the windshield, in Iceland roads largely appear as the blind spot of Icelandic tourism. There are only a few examples of the route being emphasised as a tourist experience in itself, as in the newly conceived Arctic Coast Way, but here the route fundamentally traces a journey along existing roads with indications of where might be interesting views to see. These roads lack the comprehensive envisioning of the route or parkway as presented by the likes of MacKaye in the early decades of the twentieth century (Bonnemaison and Macy 2011), roads that were strategically designed in order to project a vision of the rural, create economic prosperity in the countryside or reconcile the experience of the wilderness with social ideas. This raises questions regarding the role and place of the road and mobility for the growing tourism sector. How are relations with the landscape formed? Is the experience of nature primarily constructed through preconceived notions of the destination, the designed tourist pit stop, and if so, how does that destination provide interaction with the landscape before and beyond it?

This chapter discusses two roads in Þingvellir National Park as examples of how roads transform the physical environment and form new relations to space. The journey to Þingvellir National Park and the waterfall of Gullfoss and Geysir hot spring has been coined as the Golden Circle and is the most popular tourist route in South Iceland. The route covers about 300 km and attracts the majority of the approximately two million visitors coming to Iceland yearly. The chapter argues that roads are instrumental in shaping the environment and the relation to landscape, yet they appear as a blind spot when comes to the creating of a comprehensive cultural and physical landscape. Even if the roads are central to a mobility-based tourism in Iceland, they are marginal in regard to how attractions in the landscape are conceived. In relation to the two roads discussed, it is argued that they appear as autonomous elements of infrastructures in the landscape. It is this autonomy of the modern state road that Harvey and Knox have criticised (2012), in which the manifestation of infrastructural projects is born out of the external expertise of engineering as

opposed to roads that contribute to the multifarious dialogue with the environment (Picon, 1992).

The roads discussed in this chapter are either relegated to the past, despite their critical and cultural value, or are made to appear as if from the past. Thus the element of the road itself seems disjointed from its context and falls short of being realised as an instrument that comprehensively activates engagement with the cultural and physical context.

With Roads Come New Spaces and Landscapes

The modern Icelandic road system is generated through the advent and enormous growth of motorised transport in the twentieth century. Through time societies have placed different importance and value on the design and physical construction of roads. The absolute dominance of the road in the modern period however is unique: modernity is the era of the road. The study of roads in shaping the larger environment and our understanding of it has attracted diverse research across the fields of cultural history, architecture, urbanism, geography and related disciplines (Appleyard et al. 1964; Cresswell 2001, 2006; Louter 2006; Merriman 2007; Urry 2007; Whisnant 2006; Christof and Zeller 2007). Two seminal volumes published in 1971 and 1972 were of critical importance in terms of shifting views of how to read and understand the urban or man-made environment. Both of these books argue that understanding the emerging urban sprawl or formless urban development that was proliferating at the time and defied modernist principles, made it necessary to shift views from the doctrine of form and order of the urban to the dynamics of movement. Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour analysed the urbanism of Las Vegas and presented a groundbreaking critical analysis of the emerging condition of urban sprawl in *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972). The study centred around the analysis of the main street of Las Vegas at a time when the US main street was a far cry from what urbanists and architects considered as worthy of investigation at the time of late modernism. But the study of the local vernacular and of the sprawling development of casinos, motels, gas stations, fast-food restaurants, signage and scattering of shops and cafes demonstrated how the road and the speed of motorised traffic articulated spatial order and urban development. It became clear from the study that Las Vegas was not understood by walking alone unlike the familiar historical urban centre;

cultural values were shifting and instead the local vernacular was generated in relation to the speed and movement of the car. The book is a key reference of a new spatial order and how urbanism emerged when unrestrained by prevailing modernist planning principles of the times. Reyner Banham, an engineer and architectural historian, deciphers the urbanism of the amorphous city of Los Angeles as landscapes defined as different sets of ecologies; the beach, the flatlands, the foothills and the freeway, in his seminal work *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (Banham 1971). Banham explores the phenomenon of the megalopolis that defied any reference to the historical city at the time, by way of movement by car through the city referring to the freeway as a particular element constituting the city's fabric, referring to it as *Autopia*. The understanding of car travel as a new episteme is reflected in Banham's remark that "like earlier generations of English intellectuals who taught themselves Italian in order to read Dante in the original, I had to learn to drive in order to read Los Angeles in the original" (Banham 1971, 5). The book unravels the seemingly disintegrated urban form as a comprehensible reading when viewed from the idea of moving fluently through its diffused urban texture.

These early post-modern readings of the emerging urban condition emphasise mobility as a principal element in understanding our relation to the built environment. This seemingly random and amorphous transformation of the urban particularly in the United States originated in changing cultural values and the increased use of the private car. Both books take mobility further and argue that movement becomes a catalyst or generator of new urban processes with the scattering and dispersal of various interventions in the landscape like motels, gas stations and malls. This urban world may not appear as constituting the city when regarded in a traditional manner, as in the nodal centre made of rigid geometries of urban planning but is a world reflecting new urbanisation processes that contribute to the making of an extended urban terrain without a centre or an edge. In this urban landscape, movement ceases to occupy the secondary role that the Athens Charter from 1933 had reserved for it, a charter produced as a result of the fourth International Congress of Modern Architecture focusing on urbanism and planning. Instead, movement becomes the protagonist of the emerging urban condition; a new urban condition that is not a compact city but a territory, a new landscape.

ROADBUILDING AND A ROUGH TERRAIN

Until the twentieth century Iceland was a country without roads. With the extreme landscape and the northerly latitude Iceland has always been a sparsely populated country and the lack of transportation plagued Iceland since the early settlement period. Routes were marked by cairns or conical stone structures across the heathlands guiding people in poor weather, and wayfinding depended on the skill to read the elements and landscape to navigate the rough terrain, as discussed elsewhere in this volume (Chapter 9). Journeys on land were primarily made on horseback, if not by foot, and horse carriages only became more common in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In terms of roads, Iceland was pre-industrial until the early years of the twentieth century.

The modern road system in Iceland amounts to nothing less than a dramatic transformation and reinvention of landscape. The modern road system was not a modernisation of a pre-existing network of routes from one part of the country to another like happened in many other western countries. Rather, the modern roads broke new land and created new trajectories across the countryside. Largely inaccessible terrains and areas that presented major hurdles to people who needed to get from one place to another because of glaciers or uncrossable rivers now appear entirely harmless, and even to some extent placid formations of nature to be viewed through windscreens rather than battled and overcome. It is a transformation that engenders an altered mode of interaction with nature.

The modern construction of Icelandic national identity goes hand in hand with the road system: road and bridge building, overcoming obstacles and taming nature are all conspicuous features of how Icelanders see themselves. The collective victory over nature embodied in a system of roads on which everyone can move effortlessly has replaced the individual heroism necessary to move through an often unfriendly landscape and survive extreme weather conditions. Road construction was in its infancy in the last decades of the nineteenth century. National roads were a new category of roads stipulated in the Roads Act of 1894 and during the period of home rule in 1904–1918 road and bridge building increased greatly. By the end of the home rule, roads were estimated to be five hundred kilometres long. The longest road section was about 100 km, running from Reykjavík eastwards to Hvolsvöllur. With the dawn of the age of horse-drawn carriages, road construction was primarily considered for them as cars were few; the age of the automobile is considered to

have only begun in 1913 with a slow increase in the number of cars in the years following. These roads were the primary transport routes as no railways were laid. There were ideas to build a railway from Reykjavík eastwards to the river Þjórsá, not least to facilitate the transport of agricultural products to the Reykjavík region, but the scale of the project proved too costly to be undertaken for a small nation. It would take most of the twentieth century for the road system to connect to the various regions and only in 1974 was a ring road encircling the island finally completed, a feat achieved on the 1100-year anniversary of settlement. This heralded a moment of pride and was celebrated as an engineering victory with the bridging across the rough terrain of glacial rivers in the south-east region.

A Paradox of Roads at Þingvellir Past and Present

Currently, the Icelandic Road and Coastal Administration is responsible for 13,000 km of roads nationwide. These roads were designed and originally built to service regional transport and the growing agricultural and fisheries sector. Roads are a common infrastructure providing services to a vast range of needs and users, all comingling along this principal vascular system. The continued degrowth of historical agricultural farmlands across the country has seen drastic transformation to the historical countryside. Whilst the population of farmlands decreases, the geography of the countryside has been altered with new farming technologies, new industries and production processes, infrastructure and recreational landscapes for tourists and urbanites, and now the roads are increasingly occupied by visitors arriving from afar to experience the natural landscape. In this light, the road also provides different meanings at different times in history serving different needs and uses.

Whilst tourists co-use the common utility roads, one particular earlier road was conceived and built with the primary objective of facilitating the exploration of landscape and enjoyment of the sights. This was an early road built for carriages to enable guests to travel and view the dramatic and spectacular landscapes of the historical area of Þingvellir and onward to the Geysir hot spring area. This road is known as the King's Road (Kóngsvegurinn in Icelandic) and was built in 1907 for the occasion of King of Denmark Frederik VIII visiting Iceland. He was not the first king to travel this route, as his predecessor King Christian IX travelled to Þingvellir in 1874 to deliver Icelanders a constitution during festivities

celebrating 1000 years of settlement. With the 'golden waterfall' (Gull-foss) in Hvítá glacial river at the edge of the uninhabited highlands and the Geysir hot spring hurling boiling water dozens of meters in the air, these places were renowned in Iceland and further afield with explorers coming to Iceland for a few centuries in order to see its magnificent nature, but no place in Iceland is as interwoven with the history of the nation as Þingvellir (Lund and Loftsdóttir 2016). Þingvellir (meaning literally assembly plains) were where a national assembly, Alþingi, was founded in the year 930 and open air assemblies took place annually until the late eighteenth century when Alþingi was moved to Reykjavík. It is a site of immense wonder and natural beauty; a rift valley that traditionally has been considered to mark the boundary between the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates, surrounded by mountain ranges and the largest natural lake in Iceland. It is a site of great historical, cultural and geological significance (Helgadóttir 2011).

For the visit of Frederik VIII, an entourage of 200 people were due to undertake a week-long journey across the southern region to experience the spectacular sites *en route*. With no road network to speak of, the parliament of Iceland launched a road building project allowing for horses and carriages to transport the king as far as Geysir. The whole tour continued to Gullfoss and Þjórsá before returning back to Reykjavík, but the main road building was the leg from Þingvellir to Geysir. Along this route were rivers to forge, and bridges were built over the rivers of Brúará and Tungufljót. The project on the whole is considered to be the largest construction project implemented in Iceland in relation to the annual national budget (14%) until the twenty-first century. The Kings's Road was of great significance, as prior to this only a simple path reached Þingvellir. At a time when the majority of Icelanders still lived in vernacular turf buildings with thick earth walls and grass roofs, road building was an unfamiliar task. The enormous extent of the project and the technical challenge was unprecedented and required expertise. Iceland's first educated engineer managed the project, and further training was received from abroad, from Norwegians who had the engineering experience and skills to harness the rough terrain. It would be considered a simple gravel road today, but it crossed a challenging topography including lava fields and was built with hand tools, pick-axes and shovels. The road was used well into the middle of the twentieth century and the first cars arriving in the country drove along this route to Þingvellir and onward to Geysir, but with time it fell into neglect when modern roads came to replace it

(Sigurðsson 1978). Thus it originated as a road for a king, then became a road for cars, turning into a path for horse riding and leisure. The remains that can still be seen and have not been wiped out due to new roadbuilding and the consequent earthworks are overgrown and hard to find.

Since 1907 traffic to Þingvellir has only increased, and the road network expanded accordingly. The site was declared a National Park in 1928, two years prior to the 1930 millennial celebration of the first national assembly. With increased travel and car use the park, which is only about 40 km from Reykjavík, became increasingly popular amongst Icelanders and foreigners alike. The tour companies vie for tourists for bus tours along the route as the Golden Circle is still the most sought-after tour available. With increased numbers of visitors it was deemed necessary to widen and reconstruct a part of the road of Gjábakki in 2018 along the Þingvellir lake. The project posed an issue with how to enlarge a road in a national park. The lava fields and fauna are fragile, and for its unique ecology and historical significance the site had been declared a UNESCO heritage site in 2004. Due to it being a national park no foreign material could be introduced into the area, posing a challenge for the construction. Led by landscape architects and environmentalists, the turf and topsoil adjoining the road was removed prior to construction, and kept whilst roadbuilding was underway, keeping intact the entangled ecosystem of seeds, plants, moss, insects and soil (Aðalgeirsdóttir et al. 2008). On completion of the road building, the whole ground cover was relocated on the banks of the roads, providing the most resilient method of enabling local habitat to restore itself following large-scale earthworks. This was also done to fulfil the intent to make the road look as if it had been there forever and in harmony with the surrounding landscape, unlike most other cases of roadbuilding where foreign seeds are used to sow into the ecological wounds of road cutting after the construction work is finished. With the restitution of the top soil, a fertile ground for care played out for the environment. Thus, now the Þingvellir boasts Gjábakkavegur as one of the most progressive experiments for roadwork landscaping in Iceland in way of care for nature and ecology.

With a more-than human approach to design, the new road traversing the park embraces ecological reclamation. Yet, despite the care for the inevitable rupture and the effort put into maintaining the rhizomatic network of habitat, the road has no relation to another layer of entanglement in the soil, the layer of the forgotten King's Road lying beneath

the road of Gjábakki. The King's Road remains largely lost due to neglect with only a few remains that are not hidden from view. The road was built to go through Almannagjá in Þingvellir along the path of Gjábakki on to Laugarvatn, across the hills onwards to Geysir and Gullfoss avoiding the lowland marshes where the national road passes today. All the counties of Iceland partook in this enormous venture with the provision of manual labour, funding and the supply of goods as well as lending horses and carriages for the travels of the king's entourage. Although the road was built to carry the royals in a horse-drawn carriage, the king chose to ride a horse. It is somehow incongruous when the tourist numbers have reached a figure that supersedes six times the population of Iceland that the first tourist road in Iceland has virtually been lost, and that such an enormous project was based on a misconception of need and purpose with the king riding across the landscape instead of sitting in a carriage.

These roads are paradoxical. One which was the first tourist road in Iceland and a great engineering and transport feat of its time is forgotten, whilst the other, catering for the escalating rise culminating in over two million tourists yearly, is meant to look as if it causes no disruption to the biosystem, both within a national park which according to its regulation has as its aim to protect the landscape, the cultural as well as its natural environment (Reglugerð um Þjóðgarðinn á Þingvöllum 2005). No signage or reference is made to the King's Road in the park, to its location or significance to the history of the site, even despite more recent discoveries of the forgotten road being made—incidentally the discovery of a segment of the old road was made whilst roadbuilding of a new road was underway and resulted with the old road being covered up again (Viðgerð á Þingvöllum afhjúpar Konungsveg (2014). In the policy statement of the national park, a reference is made to the preservation of the cultural landscape but only the remains and ruins adhering to the assembly gathering of earlier times are mentioned (Stefnumótun 2019). These mundane material structures register histories and expectations of state presence and state neglect. The blanking of the historical structure, embedded in social practice and historical references, masks how the road is in its multifarious way fundamental in the making of the modern landscape. Both these roads are detached from the context, emerging from an engineering practice of autonomy as discussed by Harvey and Knox (2012).

The landscape of Þingvellir has been altered and transformed since the time of settlement. Thus, there is an anomaly in relegating elements

of historically instrumental man-made landscape to the past and concurrently aiming for making traces of current intervention disappear. Denis E. Cosgrove writes about landscapes as a cultural concept and a way of seeing. A landscape way of seeing is about our relation to the world and the productive human relations. The system of production and exchange is a phenomenon of central historical importance in making sense of our own world. "The unifying principle of a landscape derives from the active engagement of a human subject with the material object" (Cosgrove 1998, 13). Landscapes are mediated through human experience, not just the physical construction of the world but a way of seeing the world.

Routes, Landscape and Destinations—And Being in the Landscape

The ecological care with which Gjábakkavegur is constructed is laudable and exemplary for new approaches to road-making. It also, however, tacitly emphasises another perspective—namely that the movement of tourists from one place to another is a necessary evil, environmentally suspect and, in terms of the travel experience itself, insignificant. But inevitably, roads transform the environment and generate new landscapes. This attention to the road cut and design in the landscape has replaced a former way of building roads when heavy equipment was used to push and shove the ground to form the earth banks necessary. The road cut was often excessive and due to lack of harvesting of seeds of indigenous plants; foreign seeds were used for sowing and healing the scars. Only recently has emphasis been placed on minimising interruptive earthworks with heavy machinery but recent research has still concluded that the visual impact of roads in Iceland is greater than in neighbouring countries (Orion and Storð 2006). Now, a greater emphasis is placed by the Icelandic Road and Coastal Administration (IRCA) on how roads appear in the landscape and of how they are designed to sit in the topography—the IRCA being responsible for planning, designing, construction, maintenance and services of the majority of roads in Iceland. A primary concern in road building is the economy and safety of the roads but in recent years the question of how they are perceived in the landscape has become more important with the intent to minimise how the road cuts jar with the landscape.

Thus in current practice greater emphasis is paid to the aesthetic experience of roads in the landscape. However, it is not moving along the

road that is considered of importance, but rather the experience of seeing the road objectively in the landscape. This is somewhat unlike the road-building in Norway, which is often referred to by the IRCA, where more extensive aesthetic guidelines emphasise a multi-layered approach, including how materials are used in relation to site and the experience of movement and sight lines viewed when in motion (Elvebakk 2016).

Despite this apparent disjuncture between movement and location, there is a long history of designing travel routes for the appreciation of nature. Earlier in the twentieth century several roads in different countries were built as places themselves with avenues for scenic explorations. In the United States professionals across the disciplines of landscape architecture and civil engineering presented parkways as a means to bridge the rupture between country and city, enabling journeys taken by car across the countryside for the enjoyment of experiencing views of nature (Appleyard et al. 1964). These roads made the natural environment accessible, presenting a distinct view of nature. By attracting urbanites to the countryside for leisurely drives the parkways also rendered the scenery a consumable landscape. Observing landscapes through the windshield became an important part of the tourism industry (Mauch and Zeller 2008). A prominent project is The Blue Ridge Parkway, where the relationship between nature and culture was carefully structured, managed and maintained, constructed in 1934 spanning 750 km in the southeastern Appalachians. The parkway introduces drivers to breathtaking views interlinking roadscape with countryside, hiking trails and visitor centres (Bonnemaison and Macy 2011). As a project decidedly orchestrated to increase car tourism and connect with an area that could benefit economically, this early project accepted the triad of relationship of cars, roads and landscapes.

The parkways were popular in the northeast of the United States but scenic roads were also built in Europe. Directly inspired by the US parkways was the Deutsche Alpenstrasse, an alpine road built in the 1930s, now extending 450 kilometres. The Alpenstrasse traces earlier paths passing mountain villages and castles, a route that had become popular amongst young royals during the romantic period of late nineteenth century. Later projects in Europe include the Norwegian Scenic Routes (Larsen 2012), with a selection of eighteen stretches of roads dispersed over the entire country that run through mountainous landscapes in diverse natural settings, a project by the Norwegian Public Roads Administration (NPRA) that has been ongoing for thirty years.

The aim of the project is to encourage tourists to drive to distant regions in order to increase tourism for the economic viability of those communities. It is a project that has placed the role of contemporary Norwegian architecture at the centre, acknowledging how we design and frame our environment and relations and thus it has also become a project for exhibiting contemporary architecture, infrastructure and landscape (Berre and Lysholm 2010). Along the eighteen routes the look-out platforms, lay-bys, servicing facilities and other rest stops are designed after having been commissioned or are results of architectural and design competitions. The project was instigated by the Norwegian parliament asking the NPRA how roads and landscapes could be used to strengthen Norwegian tourism (Berre and Lysholm 2010). The project is unique in integrating the design of services in the rural landscape, making a comprehensive whole of the journey and the rest stops. It is equally known for the installations and the architecture punctuating the route as for the panoramic landscapes it is directed at. Whilst the attraction of the nature is at its centre, it is also a strategic and political project for realising a wider social and economic aim (Ellefsen 2015).

Even if the above examples of designed routes in the landscape from the United States, the Alps and Norway all centre around the triad of car, road and landscapes, they frame different relationships with the landscape beyond, whether in terms of economic relations by bridging different regions, references to politics and history or by how designed interventions frame nature, the viewer and designed installations and landscapes. On approaching the different predefined sites of interest along the Golden Circle by car, it is the area of car parks and buses that meets the travellers and must be navigated to approach the designated lookout point for taking in the desired vistas. The proliferation of car parks and viewing platforms with the auxiliary perfunctory basic services also signify relations, all interventions emit a meaning and say something about how places are valued or controlled, of how connections are made or not.

Unlike the Norwegian Scenic Routes where the road administration manages both the road and the interval and viewing platforms, in Iceland the IRCA manages the roads and rest stops but the landowners or stakeholders at different sites manage the individual 'destination' or viewing loci which can lead to a disjointed condition lacking coherence. Whilst car parks dominate the arrival at a 'destination', followed with the necessity to navigate cars and crowds with a throng of people queuing to approach

the panoramic and framed viewing position on the platforms, the inter-relationship of the landscape of transit and specific locations of interest remain controversial: the landscape of transit is a necessary evil, the place of vista is a celebrated locus.

The Road: An Interwoven Entanglement

The Icelandic Road and Coastal Administration makes an analogy of the road network to a fluid system that services the various parts it reaches: "The road system is sometimes compared to the vascular system of the human body, which maintains its function by ensuring normal blood flow throughout the various parts of the body. In the same way, a solid road system and good transport are prerequisite for human life and businesses to grow and prosper in urban and rural areas" (Vegakerfið, n.d.). Yet the vascular road system is not only a means of transportation for tourists providing an essential link between points of origin to its destination areas. Merriman presents the motorway as a topological and relational space that creates new relations and geographies, constantly forming and emerging through the flow of bodies, vehicles and materials (Merriman 2007). Cresswell takes this further, defining mobility as an entangle-ment of movement, representation and practice (Cresswell 2001). Thus, the route becomes an entanglement of relations with the road being a complex interweaving of social, political and aesthetic concerns. The route can be an aesthetic orchestration and a political tool, but also a meeting place and arena for different social practices.

In one way or another tourism centres around destinations and the uniqueness that attracts people to them. However, destinations are not a fixed entity bound to a specific geographical location but grow out of a series of relations. Jóhannesson and Lund (2021) reject the conundrum of perceiving the destination as a bounded place in a physical location and instead describe places as dynamic and constantly evolving in a mobile world where new relationships are forming and are being framed by different actors. Places as well as destinations are never fixed but evolve in connection with an array of agencies where an entangled web of relations cannot be extracted from a particular preconceived idea of a fixed desti-nation. Whilst authorities and the tourism sector often heavily depend on the marketing, planning and design of the singular destination for scenic qualities and vistas, this chapter has argued for an expanded view of the

understanding of route and destination, to include examining the landscape from the point of view of mobility and of designing mobility that builds relations with the landscape. Whilst focusing primarily on destination as an objective and independent entity in the landscape, a relation with the landscape more akin to the romantic western aesthetic landscape tradition is pursued, where the primary focus is only on the view, and the observer is located outside the observed landscape (Larsen 2012).

Pasgaard, Hemmersam and Nielsen instead argue for allowing for a design process that cultivates a more heterogeneous assemblage of attractions and a more comprehensive consideration of the environment when designing for tourism. They argue for a more embodied landscape gaze going beyond nature as represented by practices emphasising primarily the visual, relating instead to the multifaceted aspects of the environment based on the understanding of landscapes and the potential for multiple readings and experiences (Pasgaard et al. 2021). The road is an eminently social and cultural phenomenon crossing disciplines and boundaries, a kind of palimpsest of forces, and may be considered the single most important factor in generating the landscape. Customarily interventions in the landscape have been defined by the different scales of operation; architecture has been conceived in relation to the site or a given location; urbanism and landscape architecture are defined by context; and infrastructure and ecology understood at the scale of territory. In contrast to this focus on the scale of the task, it is apt to refer to Sheppard's words on the multitudinal dynamics at play in any singular site or location: "as we accept the notion that we have entered an Anthropocene era, one in which no region of the globe is left untouched, whether directly or indirectly, by humankind's impact, every site must be understood as the palimpsest of forces" (Sheppard 2013, 179).

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The Satellite at the End of the World: Infrastructural Encounters in North Greenland

Mette Simonsen Abildgaard

Introduction

Qaanaaq in North Greenland is the second-northernmost permanent settlement in the world. In this chapter, I look at how processes of place-making produce a Qaanaaq that is marginal on different scales, often expressed in proclamations such as my opening sentence. I am particularly interested in the production of marginality in relation to what I call 'infrastructural encounters', understood as the mutual co-shaping of local everyday practices and infrastructural systems, as they unfold in and with Qaanaaq.

I tell the story of how infrastructural encounters are shaping Qaanaaq by considering some of the town's key infrastructural sites of telecommunication. Although less clearly linked to formal infrastructures of telecommunication, I begin by considering the town's only official and consistent

M. S. Abildgaard (✉)
Department of Culture and Learning, Aalborg University, Copenhagen, Denmark
e-mail: msab@ikl.aau.dk

place of lodging: Hotel Qaanaaq, owned and operated by a local elderly couple and their children and grandchildren, as it creates a fundamental process of 'becoming-central-through-marginality' by hosting a steady stream of scientists, adventurers, celebrities and royals visiting *Ultima Thule*[1]—and leaving again. The hotel also serves as an opportunity to describe and reflect on what it means to do research in Qaanaaq. I then shift attention to the town's satellite ground station, which is both an instrument of marginality and a promise of links to elsewhere, and thereafter Qaanaaq's (most often) vacant telecommunication station, sometimes inhabited by telecommunication technicians but now in the process of being sold. Finally, I consider an immaterial place that is less geographically bound to the town but plays a no less important part in the making of Qaanaaq, namely the speech figure of 'down south' that points to the world below Qaanaaq, and the infrastructural absences it invokes.

My story of infrastructures in the production of marginality takes its point of departure with Qaanaaq, but it is based on fieldwork at different sites in Greenland—interviews in Nuuk at Tusass, Greenland's national postal and telecommunications company, in the winter of 2021, and in Qaanaaq and the Pituffik Space Base in the summer of 2022. In Qaanaaq, I stayed for about three weeks, participating in and observing life in town, spending time with and interviewing locals as well as representatives from the various functions in town; the school, the municipality, the police and the health care centre as well the visiting technicians who worked on upgrading the town's telecommunication station. Jobs and names of interviewees are pseudonymized, but, due to the town's small scale, it is difficult to fully obscure the identity of those in key functions (as will be illustrated by Hotel Qaanaaq later).

My understanding of how infrastructures co-shape Qaanaaq in this chapter is centred around the concept of 'infrastructural encounters', which I introduce to solve the difficult analytical task of addressing how infrastructures "are things, but also the relationship between things"

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[1] The topology of Qaanaaq is confusing as Thule, whose etymology I will discuss later, is sometimes used in reference to the entire Avernasuaq region of North-West Greenland, sometimes in reference to Qaanaaq, and sometimes in reference to the nearby American air base formerly of that name. Here, I only use the term Thule as a present-day place name in reference to the air base, and the Greenlandic term Avernasuaq in reference to the region.

(Larkin 2013, 319). For instance, infrastructures are both large-scale technical systems and the practices related to these systems. With the concept 'sociotechnical imaginaries', defined as "collectively imagined forms of social life and social order reflected in the design and fulfilment of nation-specific scientific and/or technological projects" (2009, 20), Jasanoff and Kim made a significant link between infrastructure and imaginaries. However, the concept also framed infrastructure within a large-scale system of social structures that made it difficult to locate where, by whom and how infrastructural imaginaries are produced, an approach which risks severing the analytical link to the things and the relations that infrastructures are made up of. Rather than viewing infrastructure through the lens of social order, I, therefore, take a situated phenomenological approach, emphasizing through 'infrastructural encounters' that technical systems are co-produced in situated practices, emotions and dreams. This calls for careful attention to infrastructures as they are encountered from a first-person perspective at particular sites and on numerous scales beyond the national. I am inspired by Tsing's concept of 'friction' as a place or time "where the rubber meets the road" in global connections, a road metaphor of creating "pathways that make motion easier and more efficient, but in doing so they limit where we go" (Tsing 2011, 6). Infrastructural encounters conceptualize those sites and moments where the everyday is made faster or is slowed down through infrastructure, enabled or immobilized, transforming both historical trajectories and present-day practices. In this, I pay particular attention to the way infrastructural encounters often express the powerful presence of that which is *not* present, what Bille, Hastrup and Sørensen refer to as "the presence of absence" (Bille et al. 2010, 4).

In the following, I consider a number of infrastructural encounters as they take place around four central socio-material telecommunication 'sites' in Qaanaaq, the largest town in Avanersuaq, North-West Greenland: a hotel, a telecommunication station, a ground satellite and the figure 'down south'. I discuss how these encounters supplement and contest each other in the ongoing making of Qaanaaq. But first, I will address a few elements of the convoluted relationship between Qaanaaq and 'the margins' through the town's history and the ways it has been told.

Histories of Qaanaaq

Situated close to the North Pole, 1600 kilometres north of Greenland's capital Nuuk and thus far from Greenland's populous 'open water' cities,[2] Qaanaaq easily lends itself to stories of extreme marginality. European historiography of polar expeditions in Avanersuaq offer a particular marginal position for Qaanaaq: the recently discovered, isolated place. In this version, the story goes that the Scot Captain John Ross was the first to report on the existence of humans in North-West Greenland in recent centuries, encountering what he called Arctic Highlanders on a quest to find the Northwest Passage in 1818 (Hastrup 2017). But until Polar explorer Robert Peary's repeated expeditions to Avanersuaq in the late nineteenth century, European connections with those living north, beyond the vast Melville Bay, were scarce and intermittent, with centuries of isolation where the Western world's knowledge of a people living in North-West Greenland diminished or was forgotten (Fig. 11.1).

Far closer than the Greenlandic capital is Ellesmere Island, Canada, at its narrowest point situated just 40 kilometres across the Baffin Bay, a fact accentuated by multiple recent spectacular efforts to ski, walk, or, as was the case during my visit, swim between the two (see Great Arctic Swim 2022). In this way, Qaanaaq has always been thoroughly connected, as the bay has always offered opportunities for dogsled and kayak travel to and from North America. Many of Qaanaaq's inhabitants are Inughuit, a minority indigenous group (referred to by Ross and Peary as Arctic Highlanders, also previously called Polar Eskimos [Hastrup 2015]) with a separate culture and language from Greenland's majority Kalaallisut-speaking West Greenlandic Inuit population (Kalaallisut is Greenland's official language, usually what is meant when referring to 'Greenlandic'). The Inughuit of modern-day Qaanaaq are descendants of the Thule people who spread to North Greenland, and later further to the rest of Greenland, from the North American Arctic around the thirteenth century AD (Friesen and Arnold 2008). In contrast to histories of nineteenth-century expeditions to the area, archaeologists thus produce an entirely different version of Avernasuaq as "the gateway to Greenland" (Arneborg and Gulløv 1998), an area with abundant resources that has attracted human settlement from the earliest Paleo-Inuit peoples and

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[2] In the Danish 1950s and 1960s infrastructural planning, these were defined as Nuuk, Sisimiut, Paamiut and Maniitsoq, all situated further south on Greenland's west coast.
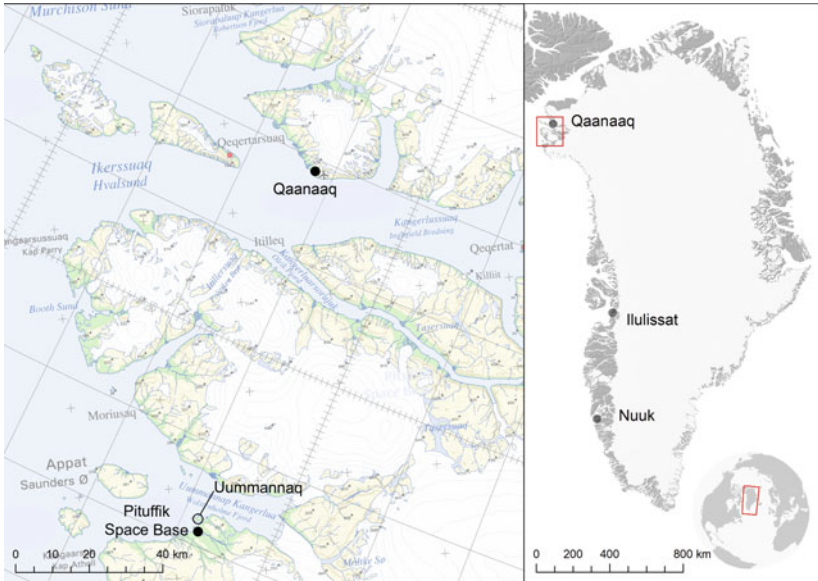
Fig. 11.1 Map of Qaanaaq and its immediate surroundings (left)/Map of Greenland with Qaanaaq, its municipal head office in Ilulissat, and capital Nuuk marked (right). Data: Arctic DEM; Grønlands Topografiske Kortværk; Natural Earth Data; QGrenland (Map by Michaël Virgil Bishop)

therefore holds the "key to the cultural history of the island" (Grønnow and Sørensen 2004).

In this, and many other respects, spatio-infrastructural categories like centre and periphery, connection and disconnection attach themselves uneasily to Qaanaaq. This instability is folded into Qaanaaq at its founding in 1953, as the town is the product of an unusual displacement. Most of Qaanaaq's population of around 650 people have lived in or descend from Uummannaq's[3] inhabitants, a settlement situated approximately 130 kilometres south of present-day Qaanaaq. To the area's hunters and the Danish colonial administration, Uummannaq had grown to be an important site with an abundance of wildlife such as the rare blue arctic fox,

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[3] Meaning heart-shaped, named after its characteristic nearby mountain, also known as Dundas.

as well as the thriving Thule trading station established by Greenlandic/
Danish explorers Knud Rasmussen and Peter Freuchen in 1909 (Flora
et al. 2018). However, this order changed during the American mili-
tarization of Greenland under World War II, where new aspects of the
site were drawn out. Uummannaq's neighbouring flat terrain Pituffik
lent itself uniquely well to an airstrip, and while marginal in a Green-
landic or Danish perspective, in a global perspective the site suddenly
became strategically positioned midway between Moscow and New York
(Steenfos and Taagholt 2012). This was expressed strongly by the Amer-
ican consulate in Greenland in 1947: "We need Thule […]. Look at Thule
on the map. It makes Alaska look sick. It is one of the very few places in
Greenland where it is possible to construct a large airfield. It is also acces-
sible to large ships" (DUPI 1997, 68 quoted in Pram Gad 2017a, 158)
(Fig. 11.2).

Fig. 11.2 Hypothetical plane route from USA to Russia crossing straight
through the Thule Air Base, now Pituffik Space Base. Data: Natural Earth Data;
Opendatasoft (Map by Michaël Virgil Bishop)

From 1943, Uummannaq, therefore, became neighbour to a weather station, which would later become the Thule Air Base, now Pituffik Space Base, a central Cold War military site for aviation and radar, with ballistic and weather monitoring. While Uummannaq and the air base coexisted for years, with the expansion of the base perimeter in 1953 the Danish administration forcibly relocated Uummannaq's population 130 km north with four days' notice, citing an American request to establish surface-to-air missiles close to the settlement, as well as the base's increasing disturbance to the surrounding hunting grounds (Hastrup 2017; Nielsen 2004) and promising, among other benefits, better quality housing. In 1957, Uummannaq was partially burned down by Danish authorities, making a return impossible (Nielsen 2004).

Ongoing tension and efforts to ameliorate the forced move and its consequences have shaped Qaanaaq's infrastructure in fundamental ways, for instance the establishment of Qaanaaq airport in 2001 to avoid the previous "undignified" (Pram Gad 2017b, my translation) transit conditions where locals had to travel through the American military base to leave their town. In a similar vein is the American renaming in 2023 of the Thule Air Base to Pituffik Space Base, a name that highlights the Greenlandic place name for the area the base sits on, rather than the etymologically Greek and Latin term 'Thule', discussed below, which is more closely associated with historically Western naming practices for the area. Qaanaaq's telecommunication infrastructures, however, have been most heavily shaped by the Danish modernization efforts in Greenland after World War II, as planned in a series of renowned reports from the 1950s and 1960s (e.g. Grønlandsudvalget 1964). These predominantly involved a 'concentration strategy' that added a significant temporal aspect to Qaanaaq's early telecommunication infrastructure, or the absence thereof, as Danish administrators sought to quickly "modernize" a vast territory, therefore focusing infrastructural development in the few year-long 'open water' cities along Greenland's South-West coast. In the context of Greenland's national telecommunication infrastructures, the concentration strategy thus produced Qaanaaq as infrastructurally marginal in a multitude of ways; that which is most costly and time-consuming, less important, less financially viable and most difficult to reach.

Today, the postal and telecommunications company Tusass is preparing to establish flat rate internet in Qaanaaq by upgrading the town's ground

satellite station. Currently, the sole access to telephony, radio, television and internet is through a 175 Mbit/s satellite connection shared with the Pituffik Space Base, the nearby settlements Savissivik, Siorapaluk and Qeqertat, as well as with the Nerlerit Inaat Airport in East Greenland. Another potential frame of marginality for Qaanaaq thus arises from its position within Greenland's telecommunication infrastructures. The telecommunication network in Greenland consists of three zones: the cable zone, the radio chain zone and lastly the satellite zone, with each step away from the cable zone implying decreased speed and affordability, as well as access to different types of subscriptions (Abildgaard et al. 2022). Differences are most apparent between the 'cable towns' (connection to internet through fiber-optic cable) further down Greenland's west coast and the less populated north and east, imbalances which date back to the same concentration strategy mentioned above and Danish efforts to quickly modernize Greenland in the mid-twentieth century when infrastructural development and growth was focused on the south-west coast. The roll-out of flat rate internet in the satellite zone in the thinly populated North and East Greenland is therefore marketed by Tusass as an exercise in democratization, an effort to even out the infrastructural imbalances that still characterize Greenland.

The Hotel

My focus here is primarily on infrastructures of telecommunication, but we begin at an infrastructure not typically considered part of the flow of information, the site that is also the first access point for most short-term visitors to Qaanaaq: its hotel. The hotel and its flows of people and information shape Qaanaaq in fundamental ways, and, as the starting point for much research in town, including my own, it is an opportunity to discuss the role of research in Qaanaaq as well as my own positionality and approach as a(nother) researcher in Qaanaaq.

Hotel Qaanaaq is housed in an orange-red wooden house that was built in the 1970s. When the hotel was built, the host couple had already housed visitors for a long time, cooked meals and baked bread out of their own house. The hotel was thus, in a way, just a formalization of the couple's established roles as town hosts, cooks, bakers and coordinators of visitors' stays in their own house as well as homes around Qaanaaq. Today, the host couple function as an informal tourist information resource for

both the actual tourists and for visiting researchers, journalists and film-makers as well as visiting tradespeople, officials or other workers (Pram Gad 2017b).

The strong interest in Qaanaaq and its surroundings is made material in the long hallway connecting the hotel's rooms (Fig. 11.3). Its walls are lined top to bottom with both faded and vibrant posters, objects, photos and postcards from Hotel Qaanaaq's global lineup of former inhabitants, including photographs of the host couple posing with visiting royalty and other celebrities.

Viewed through its hotel, a curious bifurcating process in Qaanaaq appears: On the one hand, the hotel acts as an engine for a process of 'becoming-central-through-marginality'. On a national scale, the town might be on the outskirts of populated Greenland, or Qaanaaq might on a global scale be the second-northernmost town in the world, but it is a lively hub for research and adventurous projects that take off towards the North Pole (another central point of passage for particular mobilities), delve into the surrounding shifting ice conditions, seal population, local hunting traditions, trauma after the displacement from Uummannaq and numerous other projects. To illustrate, at least three other research projects and three separate filming projects drew people to Qaanaaq during my three-week stay alone. This intense interest has led to a semi-professionalization of locals as actors, translators, aides, subjects and informants, activities that can be profitable side-jobs.

On the other hand, Qaanaaq's process of becoming-central-through-marginality cements the town's extreme marginal status as *Ultima Thule*—the Greek and Latin term for the island farthest north, or a place beyond the known world, named in the fourth century BC by Pytheas, who travelled further north than any other Greek before him and found a land where the sun never set in the summer (Hastrup 2015).[4] As it emerges through its visitors, Qaanaaq becomes central in relation to its traditional hunting practices, opportunities for polar expeditions and climatic measurements, but this is not necessarily the kind of becoming-central all its inhabitants seek. While some forms of becoming-central offer hope and opportunity, some lock locals in assistive roles as translators, research assistants or 'traditional Inuit hunters'. Adding to this is the complication that little research from Qaanaaq is translated into

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[4] Scholars agree that Pytheas was never near Greenland, but discuss whether he in fact had visited Iceland, Norway or the Shetland Islands (Skriver Tillisch 2005).

Fig. 11.3 The hallway at Hotel Qaanaaq (Photo by Mette Simonsen Abildgaard)

Kalaallisut, not to speak of the local Inuktun language, and thus it does not circulate in Qaanaaq—in book-form at the school or as oral tales of local knowledge and pride. Becoming-central can thus be an extractive process, most pointedly exemplified by the concerns voiced by my translator 'Jakob', who does extensive volunteer work with Qaanaaq's youth. He remarked on the paradoxical lack of locally circulating stories about Qaanaaq's past and present when considering the amount of research and journalistic attention afforded to the area. Jakob particularly questioned the practices of researchers such as French anthropologist Jean Malaurie, who has worked and travelled extensively in North Greenland throughout his long career, and who has written powerfully about the Inughuit. Still, Malaurie's written works, perhaps most problematically the book *Lettre à un Inuit de 2022* (2015) or in the English translation *Letter to an Inuk in 2022* (2017), in which he urges the young generation in Greenland to preserve their cultural knowledge and develop a healthy relation between future and past sustainable living, has never been translated into any Greenlandic language.

If we consider Hotel Qaanaaq to be an infrastructural site that supports the circulation of humans and knowledge into and out of Qaanaaq, for locals it creates a particular kind of 'encounter' with visitors. I want to highlight this, as it has significant consequences for the kind of study this is: That Qaanaaq is a small town where a lot of research and film crews pass through, with resulting research fatigue but also established practices around paid participation in these projects. These professionalized practices around interacting with visitors made an awkward exercise out of my anthropological efforts to participate in the town's everyday life and its rhythms, especially considering that such opportunities were hard to come by without forcing my presence on inhabitants in a town without formal cafes or restaurants, and few official public meeting places. Before arriving, I posted on Qaanaaq's Facebook page about the study and hung posters about who I was during my stay, hung out at the only official store, the town's supermarket and participated in town events such as frequent bingo evenings in Qaanaaq's women's house. The primary openings that emerged, however, were through the town's institutions: the hotel, the school, the municipality, the police, the health care centre and the telecommunication station. At the public institutions, I could initiate conversations about life in Qaanaaq without barging in and found explicit interest in the town's infrastructure. The stories in the following sections are therefore primarily based on how Qaanaaq is produced and sustained

from the perspectives of those working to teach, administrate, build, treat illnesses, advise and uphold order in town. They form partial perspectives, to be sure, but they also supplement and allow for other stories than the existing anthropological studies of Avernasuaq, which often emphasize the area's hunters, their culture and its practices (De Vos 2013; Flora and Andersen 2017, 2018; Flora et al. 2018; Hastrup 2015, 2016, 2017) leaving the specificities of the modern welfare state and its infrastructures out of focus (Pram Gad 2016).

Returning to my conceptualization of Hotel Qaanaaq as a site that supports the circulation of humans and knowledge into—and particularly out of—Qaanaaq, we will therefore pursue this vein and consider, in the following, two other infrastructural sites that do the same, albeit with other means: Qaanaaq's telecommunication station and ground satellite station. However, while the hotel and the ongoing process of 'becoming-central-through-marginality' has been part of Qaanaaq for decades, the station and satellite are changing, and so we will consider what role each changing site plays in the ongoing shaping of Qaanaaq.

The Ground Satellite Station

The town of Qaanaaq is lodged between a sloping mountainside to the east and the sea to the west, facing the Baffin Bay. Its satellite station is placed on elevated territory towards the mountain, at the town's periphery. From a distance, the station's plate-formed satellite antennae give Qaanaaq the appearance of being crowned by two white round ears. To withstand snow and wind, the antennae have very deep anchors which are dug into the permafrost, and then secured with dirt and gravel on top (Fig. 11.4).

One 'ear' is the town's existing satellite dish, the other is a new model under installation which promises to provide a faster and more stable connection through its link with a Hispasat satellite, following a new deal with a Spanish satellite communications operator. After some delay, the new satellite dish is scheduled for inauguration in 2023.

The new dish is part of an ongoing upgrade to Greenland's satellite areas, specifically focusing on providing enough data to offer flat rate subscriptions, in contrast to the current limited-data subscription where customers must pay extra if they exceed the available subscriptions of 10, 20 or 50 GB per month. It is important to emphasize that this upcoming shift to flat rate was talked about with interest and delight

Fig. 11.4 Qaanaaq seen from its eastern road that leads to a football field and the town cemetery. Towards the top, the white satellite dishes are visible against the sky (Photo by Mette Simonsen Abildgaard)

by most people I met in Qaanaaq. The town's residents are planning to subscribe to every streaming service, download films, their kids will be able to play online games (although this was also a cause for concern), and the school anticipates it will improve the students' English. The current wait for a flat rate upgrade is mostly a joyful and hopeful encounter with a telecommunication infrastructure that has rarely prioritized Qaanaaq.

However, the initiative to upgrade the satellite areas also draws attention towards pervasive differences in the infrastructure. It was presented by Tusass chief wholesale officer Drechsel in a Greenlandic newspaper in 2020 under the headline "Tele: Now we will spoil the satellite customers".[5]

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[5] In this and other quotes, the text has been translated from Danish by the author.

> With large investments in sea cables and radio chains, we have in the last years secured a better internet experience for about 92 percent of the population. In the coming years, we will focus more on the eight percent of our customers who live in the satellite areas. […] Tele-Post is responsible for telecommunication in the whole country, and we therefore see it as our obligation to do what we can for the satellite customers, despite the fact that it cannot financially break even. (Rasmussen 2020)

The article, especially its headline, elicited strong responses from Tusass' satellite customers, with a reader tersely commenting: "Spoiled? – we will still pay much more for worse service than the rest of the country. Is that to be spoiled?" (Rasmussen 2020), before going on to point out that while other essential services like power, water and telephone rates are the same across Greenland, inexplicably, internet access is much more costly for some.

While Tusass thus imagines the transition to flat rate as a long-overdue enrolment of Qaanaaq and other 'satellite areas' into a digitally level online Greenlandic community, this slow-motion upgrade is so far overdue and out of sync with developments elsewhere that it exacerbates differences to locals, even within Qaanaaq's municipality Avannaata, whose centre of power is positioned over a thousand kilometres south, in Ilulissat. Accordingly, this imaginary of democratizing accessible internet is met with local disinterest or melancholy as inhabitants of Qaanaaq manage an everyday characterized by frequent infrastructural disturbance, delay, interruption and breakdown.

In the context of Greenland's national telecommunication infrastructures, Qaanaaq is thus produced, as I mentioned earlier, as infrastructurally marginal in a multitude of ways; as most costly and time-consuming, less important, less financially viable and most difficult to reach. This marginality is linked to the mid-twentieth century concentration strategy, but it is also, crucially, produced in current national pricing structures, infrastructural zones and prioritization, and it also takes place as a range of mundane infrastructural encounters. When I went by Qaanaaq's elementary school on a quiet Monday afternoon to meet up with the principal, I came across two women seated together at a desk in front of the principal's office, a younger woman and an older woman with short greying hair. When I explained that I was interested in Qaanaaq's internet, the older woman told me that I had come at just the right time—she was in town from Ilulissat, where Qaanaaq's central municipal

administration is placed, to teach the younger woman, a school administrator, how to use a new financial IT system. The system was two years old, and she had been taught in Ilulissat by "some skilled people from Nuuk", Greenland's capital. But the system, which ran well in Ilulissat and Nuuk, requires that users are logged on to the school's online system. The two women were therefore stuck in their training session in front of a frozen screen, because the internet connection in Qaanaaq—at least on that day—had too little capacity and too much latency to allow the consistent online access needed to use the financial system.

In conversation with other staff at the school, similar issues came up. Standards for internet access and connection speeds are established elsewhere, marginalizing internet users in Qaanaaq in a range of situations. When the school staff are asked by the municipality or a government office to fill out a questionnaire, and the expected time to do it is listed as fifteen minutes, "it can be something you have to do over three days, two hours here and there. And consequently, some employees don't finish it".[6] The problem, a staff member noted, is that Nuuk is 1600 kilometres away. In case of an issue, you can call IT support in Nuuk, who will tell you to press this, that and then this button—but when the first step takes twelve minutes in Qaanaaq, troubleshooting gets out of joint.

In an extreme example of this disjuncture, I was approached in the street by a local entrepreneur on one of my final days of fieldwork in Qaanaaq, because he wanted to make sure I understood the full scope of the digital problems facing private companies in town before I left. In order to fill out and send in digital information related to for instance taxes, using forms that are obligatory for businesses across Greenland, he would get up in the middle of the night when the internet is quickest and least used, otherwise he could spend his whole workday waiting for pages to load and files to send.

In anthropologist Melissa Gregg's affective analysis of online connectivity and its promises in rural Australia, she identifies how the "barrage of projections celebrating the benefits of broadband summons a form of defence akin to melancholy where the place one lives becomes the very factor preventing access to a vision of happiness" (2010, 162). To paraphrase Gregg, a "rural melancholia" is inherent in many of Qaanaaq's infrastructural encounters with the internet, an awareness that

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[6] Similar issues at schools in the satellite zone in East Greenland is described in Rygaard (2017).

software, games, routines, equipment and online platforms are built for and assume a different infrastructure than Qaanaaq's. In other words, the town, through its telecommunication infrastructures, becomes a place that marginalizes those who live there.

The Telecommunication Station

Until now, I have focused on infrastructural sites of telecommunication primarily as places which offer experiences on a spectrum between connection and disconnection, but it is important to note that the way telecommunication infrastructures shape Qaanaaq is not only about linking to elsewhere, it is also about local absences, presences and representation. Who here can help with telecommunication issues, give advice and offer news about what is coming?

Today, Qaanaaq's telecommunication station, which is situated just below the satellite dishes, provides lodging for Tusass' visiting technicians and engineers who are working on the satellite ground station and a new station building that houses its accompanying equipment. Previously, the telecommunication station used to house a shop that sold and could advise on the purchase of telephony goods, phones, chargers and subscriptions. Today, this service is offered partly by the kiosk of the town's only store and supermarket Pilersuisoq, a local branch of Greenland's largest supermarket chain, whose offerings in small or remote settlements are subsidized. The store receives a shipment by boat twice a year, once in spring after the sea-ice has thawed, and once in fall before the sea freezes over. In my conversations with locals about the current situation, they pointed out that Pilersuisoq carries a much smaller selection of items than the telecommunication store used to, and while the supermarket kiosk sells prepaid phone cards, the staff cannot sell subscriptions or guide customers who need help. This requires an internet connection or a phone call to Tusass in Nuuk.

A few years ago, Qaanaaq had a resident telecommunication technician, but he moved to Ilulissat and is only in town if there is a larger issue. Otherwise the town's electrician can be contacted and remote-controlled via phone from Nuuk to handle the simpler network issues. However, throughout my stay, two Tusass telecommunication technicians were in town to install equipment in the ground station's new building, in anticipation of the new satellite, a task that kept them in Qaanaaq for a month without much to do because, due to earlier delays, construction on the

building they would be installing the equipment in was not finished. The two technicians were therefore stuck together in the former telecommunication station's small apartment, spending their days preparing meals and watching Danish daytime television, away from their families in Nuuk and Denmark, and were kind enough to share their stories and strategies on how to cope with long periods being stuck at a site. One afternoon I ran into the two technicians at the register at Pilersuisoq, and as we walked through the register together, I overheard the supermarket cashier saying something to them in Kalaallisut. Later, one of the technicians recounted to me that the cashier had remarked that it was so lovely to have them there; for Tusass to have people in town again. The technician considered that people probably missed the manned telecommunication station.

This mixed encounter encapsulates some of the tension related to the increasing remote control of infrastructures in places like Qaanaaq. Qaanaaq is in the satellite zone in telecommunication industry parlance because that is the infrastructure Qaanaaq depends on, but the figure of the satellite also describes how much of Qaanaaq's infrastructure increasingly is not just planned (this was always the case), but also how it is built and maintained. There is too little work for the telecommunication station or for that matter the small electrical plant to have local staff. In fact, when work on the satellite is finalized, the telecommunication station housing the living quarters will be sold off, as Tusass does not expect to need it often to house staff once the new system is in place (Fig. 11.5). Instead, they can stay at the hotel during visits. And so, the town becomes dependent on brief visits from technicians and other skilled labour—or on the internet, with its design around standards from elsewhere. The dependence on expertise from elsewhere in this way works to exacerbate data differences, while also eliminating one form of representation in infrastructural decision-making—company or industry insiders who love and might speak for Qaanaaq, or simply translate the way their industry works and thinks back to Qaanaaq. I knew from fieldwork at Tusass in Nuuk that the head office was baffled by the lack of complaints from towns and settlements in the satellite areas reporting issues on the mobile or landline phone network, as it meant that they would not always know the scope of a problem and, accordingly, they would not prioritize sending someone to fix it. But without representation in Qaanaaq, Tusass' logic about how to prioritize repair work was not always known in town, although one person I interviewed, 'Anette', mentioned it as a guilty conscience—that she knew she was supposed to call in case of an issue, although she did not always get around to do it.

Fig. 11.5 Sign in Greenlandic and Danish on the door to Qaanaaq's telecommunication station: "Message. The store is closed indefinitely. Customer service can be reached at telephone number 808080". Note that before it underwent a rebranding in 2022, Tusass was known as Tele-Post (Photo by Mette Simonsen Abildgaard)

In such a situation, even an anthropological researcher from Denmark becomes a form of industry insider: Several times during interviews, I found myself explaining what the ongoing work at the telecommunication station was about, which often made me the bearer of bad news, as the satellite update at the time of my visit had been delayed for at least half a year. This news was sometimes met with disappointment but most often the remark that it would be fine; they were used to delays in Qaanaaq—and after all, they had nature.

Phantom Pains of 'Down South'

Bille et al. (2010) discuss a paradox that they refer to as "the presence of absence"—the fact that phenomena may hold a powerful presence in people's lives precisely because of their absences. If we return to the term rural melancholia, within the frame of an anthropology of absences we might think of this melancholia as one emotional response to a number of infrastructural absences and their potent and paradoxical presences in Qaanaaq. In this way, absences play a key role in the way material sites such as the hotel, telecommunication station and satellite dishes shape everyday life, but as I emphasize in the following, *immaterial* sites and figures are also central in the making of Qaanaaq. I consider one such figure and its role as a place-making agent in Qaanaaq—'down south'.

During the first week of my fieldwork in Qaanaaq, in my ignorance, I was surprised at the number of people in town who had relatives or friends living in South Greenland, as a constant companion in conversations about life in Qaanaaq are references to how things are 'down south'. Having only previously lived in and done fieldwork in Greenland's West coast cities Nuuk and Sisimiut, I took this expression to signify a curious local interest in conditions in towns like Qaqortoq or Nanortalik at Greenland's southern tip.

In time, however, I realized that 'down south' relative to Qaanaaq is a broad and influential figure that can be invoked to point towards everywhere and anything below Qaanaaq and its immediate settlements Savissivik, Siorapaluk and Qeqertat.[7] 'Down south' in this way functions as a potent reversal of Qaanaaq's marginality. *Ultima Thule* strikes back, and from its position as 'the farthest north' regards an entire world below

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[7] The speech figure is also mentioned in Hastrup (2015, 30) and Pram Gad (2017a, 162).

77° north as a Southern globe that easily lends itself to stories of extreme southern-ness, far away from Qaanaaq.

In the context of infrastructure, 'down south', despite not being physically present in Qaanaaq, nevertheless powerfully shapes Qaanaaq as a form of "phantom pain" (Bille et al. 2010) pointing to the potentials and materialities that are absent in Qaanaaq but are (or are imagined as) present everywhere else. The figure of 'down south' exists as a geographically unbounded place in an entrepreneur's utterances that "they are sitting there with some lightning-fast internet down south" or the school administrator's more specific reference to long waiting times on the phone when calling family living elsewhere on Greenland's West coast, "all the way down south". But 'down south' is also invoked in the school staff's explicit calling out of 'southern' places that have that which is absent from Qaanaaq: "And then they complain in Ilulissat about a teeny-tiny disturbance – when their connection is 100 times better than ours!".

I mentioned earlier the way pricing and subscription systems produce a form of marginality—in the context of an anthropology of absences, we may also say that in Qaanaaq, they accentuate an elsewhere whose standards are superior. During my 2022 fieldwork in Qaanaaq, a prominent box on Tusass' homepage encouraged internet customers to "see which speeds they can get". But when entering an address in Qaanaaq, you are met with the message that flat rate is not provided at your address, instead encouraging you to purchase a mobile subscription with data (see Fig. 11.6).

Finally, a material elsewhere that escapes the 'southern' preposition due to its geographical closeness to Qaanaaq is the Pituffik Space Base, although I include it as it is a curious place situated both inside (geographically) and outside (administratively) Avernasuaq. Qaanaaq residents have a unique arrangement with the base through which they can get an access card to the base as "civilians without relevant business" (Pram Gad 2017b, 223). However, contact between Qaanaaq and the base is limited to an estimated 60–70 yearly visits from about 15 hunters who use the base to resupply (Pram Gad 2017b). This is in stark contrast of course to the days before the forced move from Uummannaq in 1953, when locals freely moved between all settlements in the North. Older Qaanaaq residents also describe more contact in their youth, when they would be able to travel easily to the base and buy American goods and fresh produce, an opportunity that dwindled after the construction of Qaanaaq's airport,

Fig. 11.6 Screenshot from Tusass' web-page when requesting flat rate in Qaanaaq (*Source* Tusass.gl)
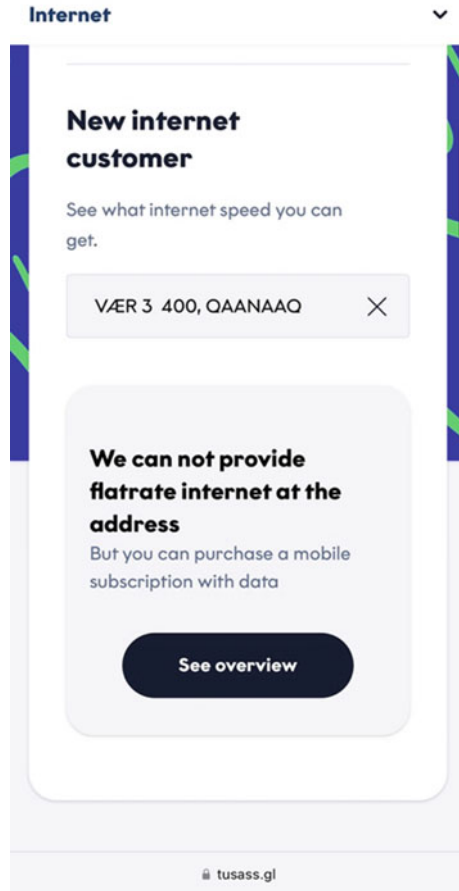
which means that Qaanaaq's inhabitants no longer travel through the base to get to and from the south.

The air base very forcefully invokes the loss related to the 'presence of absence' in Qaanaaq: it has weekly supplies of fresh produce from the United States, cheap liquor and links to an unavailable recent past. It is also thought by some Qaanaaq residents to have an incomparable telecommunication infrastructure, presumably based on large investments by the American military. Coming back to Qaanaaq after staying at the

base, I interviewed 'Thomas', a local who mentioned a possible submarine internet cable to the Pituffik Space Base. I replied that there was no cable to the best of my knowledge, but that I was only shown the Tusass infrastructure, not the military installations. I added that Danish and Greenlandic staff at the base complained that the satellite-based connection for civilians was spotty, slow and expensive, exactly as I had heard in Qaanaaq. Thomas was surprised, but then pondered that they probably had installed something over there that we don't know about. After all, they had "done that before". This was an understandable line of thought considering earlier secrets and lies related to the base, for instance, the discovery in 1995 of a secret 1957 agreement with Denmark allowing the United States to station nuclear weapons at the base (Dragsdahl 2005), not to mention the Cold War 'research station' Camp Century built into the ice sheet near the Thule Air Base. In reality, the latter was a cover for Project Ice Worm, involving plans for a missile tunnel system in the Greenlandic ice sheet, powered by a small portable nuclear reactor, clean-up from which has been an ongoing dispute between Denmark and Greenland (Nielsen 2020).

The base in this way is a complex neighbour, on the one hand closed off and secretive, but on the other with a geographical closeness and hope-inducing potential to entirely upend Qaanaaq's place in the telecommunication-infrastructural system. Because, as Thomas speculated, if the base has or gets a submarine cable, Qaanaaq will surely get one too, right? After all, they are only about 100 kilometres apart.

Perhaps more than most ways of thinking about place-making, my interest here in 'infrastructural encounters' accentuates absences because it inherently deals with the relationship between situated experience and the larger infrastructural system. In other words, when we position a site as part of an infrastructural system, we establish links to elsewhere that call for a number of comparisons through which similarities, presences and absences appear.

Conclusion

Through the concept of infrastructural encounters, I have followed the co-shaping of Qaanaaq through infrastructure. My approach has taken a phenomenological perspective, emphasizing the way infrastructures are co-produced through situated first-person infrastructural practices, emotions and imaginaries. Following four 'sites' in and outside

Qaanaaq—the hotel, the satellite ground station, the telecommunication station and 'down south', including the Pituffik Space Base (formerly the Thule Air Base)—we see how infrastructural practices and imaginaries in Qaanaaq shape the town, not just through its connections to the outside world, but also through their impact on local presences, absences and representation.

Hotel Qaanaaq acts as a hub for adventurers, researchers, journalists and filmmakers. It is both a site of centrality and marginality, as the intense interest in the town results in the semi-professionalization of locals as actors, translators and research assistants, but also reinforces their extreme marginal status as *Ultima Thule*. The Hotel also raises questions about the extractive nature of becoming-central, as little of the research and media attention afforded to Avernasuaq is translated into local languages and circulated within the community.

The installation of a new satellite dish as part of an upgrade to the town's infrastructure has generated excitement and hope in Qaanaaq, but also raises awareness of the unequal distribution of telecommunication services across Greenland. This inequality stems from the concentration strategy of Danish modernization plans after World War II, which prioritized development in a few cities along the West coast, and led to the marginalization of Qaanaaq in various ways, including cost, infrastructure and importance. However, this marginalization is most evident in people's mundane encounters with the internet, such as the difficulty of accessing online systems, filling out questionnaires and doing online work during the night to avoid congestion.

Qaanaaq's telecommunication station, once a hub for telephonic services, has been reduced to a place for technicians and engineers to stay during their visits. The town's dependence on technicians from elsewhere has led to a lack of representation in infrastructural decision-making, exacerbating data differences and erasing a form of representation in the process. The situation highlights the tension between the remote control of infrastructures and the need for local representation.

The figure of 'down south', although physically absent from the town, holds a powerful presence in the form of 'phantom pain'—often for that which never was in Qaanaaq—emphasizing the potentials and materialities that are absent in Qaanaaq but are present elsewhere. The pricing and subscription system also contribute to this marginality by emphasizing the differences in standards between Qaanaaq and the 'south'. The Pituffik Space Base, although close geographically, is a difficult presence

that invokes both a sense of loss and hope with its links to a recent past and its potentially superior telecommunication infrastructure.

Throughout the stories told in this chapter, a number of im/material satellites come into play. To address what becomes a triple articulation of the satellite in Qaanaaq, I point towards 'the satellite at the end of the world' in the chapter's title, by which I reference *Thule*'s European legacy as the place farthest north, as well as the technology that underpins the town's telecommunication infrastructure as a 'satellite town', which promises closer connections to elsewhere. Thirdly, the figure of the satellite illuminates the remote control that characterizes everyday life in Qaanaaq and exacerbates data differences because Qaanaaq is also on the margins within Greenland, from the perspective of Greenland's capital Nuuk or Qaanaaq's municipality centre in Illulisat.

In conclusion, this chapter sheds light on the interplay between infrastructure and the shaping of places through the lens of infrastructural encounters. The four sites of analysis in Qaanaaq, the hotel, the satellite ground station, the telecommunication station and 'down south', highlight how infrastructures not only connect the town to the world outside, but shape the way people in Qaanaaq experience and understand their world. This underscores the need for a careful examination of the concrete infrastructural practices and imaginaries at specific sites and on various scales, where the everyday is made faster or is slowed down, enabled or complicated, as these encounters play a crucial role in shaping life 'on the margins'.

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Rush Hour in a National Park—Mobile Encounters in a Peripheral Tourism Landscape

Minna Nousiainen, Outi Rantala, and Seija Tuulentie

It is a beautiful sunny winter's day at Riisitunturi national park—exactly like in those thousands of images posted recently on social media. We are here to get acquainted with what we have been reading about on the news: the sudden popularity of the small national park due to its snowy, almost magical landscape. It is the winter holiday week in southern parts of Finland, and we expect to meet with many people.

We decide to take a little trail that seems to be popular. The officially unmaintained snowshoeing trail is well-trampled down and the snow is easy to walk in almost any kind of boots—and even with a designer

M. Nousiainen (✉) · O. Rantala · S. Tuulentie
University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland
e-mail: minna.nousiainen@ulapland.fi

O. Rantala
University of Turku, Turku, Finland

S. Tuulentie
Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke), Helsinki, Finland

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handbag (as we saw later, on our way back). We walk between the trees towards the top of the fell in a narrow line stepping aside every now and then to give space for those coming down. The trail feels crowded, and we can hear the ripple of conversations that seem to carry like sound on water along the fell. All tourists, we assume. Walkers, dogs, snowshoes, skis, sleds and a lot of mobile phones capturing the perfect spot in the landscape for a selfie, trying to create images of being with magnificent crown-snow loaded trees, surrounded only by wilderness. The trees disappear when we approach the top of the fell, so we can see further away into the landscape more clearly. Fellow visitors are like small moving dots scattered around the top. Once we reach the top, we try to look for a quiet corner to have a hot cup of tea and admire the wide-open landscape on the edge of the wilderness. Someone's drone is buzzing over our heads. From further away, where the sound is not heard, the trek of black figures across the white terrain resembles a crowd of pilgrims. This is it then—the rush hour at Riisitunturi national park that has hit the headlines lately (Fig. 12.1).

The field notes from a sunny winter day at Riisitunturi national park set the scene for our observations of mobile encounters in a tourism landscape. We have come to explore the mobility practices that shape the peripheral rural landscape in a place that would be typically described as marginal, immobile and static, but as such inviting to enjoy the peace and quiet of nature around. The Nordic tradition of freedom to roam—*allemansrätten* or *everyone's rights*—forms a basis for enjoying the Finnish landscape. It allows locals and visitors alike to enjoy the recreational use of nature regardless of the land ownership as long as it does not cause damage or disturbance to the landowners, the use of land, nature itself and others enjoying the right to free roaming.

Different kinds of activities related to moving in nature, e.g., berry picking, walking, skiing and fishing, have always been an important part of the Finnish way of life and cultural heritage. The tradition has been passed on from generation to generation by spending time together in outdoor activities and simply by setting an example of how to move in nature and interact with the landscape. The do's and don'ts of everyone's rights have been accompanied by local customs and understanding of what is considered appropriate, bringing forth also the idea of moral considerations related to landscape practices (see Granås forthcoming). The understanding of appropriateness, however, is shifting as the world around us changes. Increased awareness of the impacts of climate change,

Fig. 12.1   Rush hour at Riisitunturi national park (Photo by Seija Tuulentie)

the diversifying community of recreationists along with renewed interest in nature-based tourism mean that we should re-evaluate the accustomed ways of being with the landscape. At the same time, interest in the potential of the landscape for various purposes makes the seemingly marginal places in the periphery a focus for many. Hence, the entangled morality of landscape practices is influenced both by changes in the landscapes and the social and cultural diversification of the practitioners (Flemsæter et al. 2015).

Contemporary times are often described as an era of mobilities, where everything—people, things, ideas and commodities—are in constant movement either physically or digitally. The implications of these mobilities are reflected in the ways we are organising and structuring social life through various mobility practices; building connections and networks between places, within a place as well as across space and time. This mobility turn (Sheller and Urry 2006) also emphasises the interdependencies of different types of mobilities that vary in scale, from global

to local and mundane to extraordinary. Rather than seeing movement as something that occurs only between locations or in connection with a particular activity, the world is seen as relational, in motion and constituted by movement (Ingold 2011). It becomes embodied in various encounters with not only mobility practices, places, humans and non-humans but also with values shaped by these connections and mobilities across space and time. The relationality of mobilities reflects also our understanding of place as a "throwntogetherness" (Massey 2005); an intersection of movements, networks, routines and performances that keep the landscape in constant process of becoming.

Tourism can be seen as an example of one of the major elements stretching the interdependent mobilities from local to global and vice versa (Mavrič and Urry 2009). Diversifying touristic mobility practices, as well as local ways of moving in the landscape, disrupt the idea of rural places as marginal and rather encourage us to look beyond the apparent immobility by paying attention to complexity of mobilities related to local everyday practices (Milbourne and Kitchen 2014). The change in mobility practices brings along changes in landscapes, such as easy access to marginal landscapes, or well-maintained tracks to picturesque spots in the wilderness, which then again are linked to the skills needed to move along in the landscape, the moral ideas related to how to "deserve" the landscape—and the ideas of what constitutes a marginal landscape (Flemsæter et al. 2015).

In this chapter, we focus on shifting place mobilities under the framework of everyone's rights and explore the ways in which it turns into moral aspects of landscape practices and questions of ownership. We approach the concept of mobilities from the perspective of relational ontology and investigate how the different types of interconnected local and global mobilities transform into becoming in a landscape. Here, we apply Ingold's (2000, 2011) ideas about landscape as a process of temporalities, various movements and mobilities that are continually unfolding and changing. Thus, the landscape is never static, never the same, although often associated with these words. Instead, the landscape can be described as in a continuous state of "becoming" (Ren and Jóhannesson 2017; West et al. 2020). Accordingly, in the chapter we describe the plurality of ways locals encounter tourism in the landscape of Posio—a plurality that arises from embodied movements, continually unfolding processes and diverse overlapping relations among visitors, tourists, locals, park managers and diverse non-human actors in the landscape. In what

follows, we seek to demonstrate how the seemingly marginalised local mobility practices and local ownership in the landscape are affected by the intertwined encounters of other mobility practices.

Riisitunturi as a Marginal Place

Riisitunturi national park is situated in a small peripheral municipality, Posio, in south-east Lapland, Finland (Fig. 12.2), where it covers an area of 76 km². The state-owned park was established in 1982 especially for nature conservation and scientific explorations but is now utilised mainly for touristic purposes. From a natural-scientific point of view, the value of Riisitunturi national park is related especially to its sloping bogs and it was established because of them. The abundant precipitation and thin soil enable bog vegetation to grow even on steep slopes of the Riisitunturi fell. The fell's western slopes are covered by hanging bogs which are also some of the world's steepest bogs (Metsähallitus 2023a). Another important feature is the snow-packing on the spruce trees, a mixture of ice, hoarfrost and snow attached to trees in winter that increases with altitude and also damages the trees (Jalkanen and Konopka 1998). Thus, humid climatic conditions and relatively high altitude in Riisitunturi create the snow-covered trees that are nowadays the attraction as they create a photogenic white forest with human-like features.

Posio municipality is one of the peripheral, rural regions in the north facing the challenge of declining population and lack of services. Consequently, it portrays the image of a place neglected, forgotten and frozen in time—that is, a marginal place. According to the demographic forecasts for the period 2019–2040 (Statistics Finland, 2019), Posio is one of the places facing the biggest depopulation in Finland with a forecasted decrease from 3,154 in 2019 to 2,147 in 2040 (−31.9%) At the same time, the population is not only declining but also ageing. The Posio welfare plan for the elderly population 2021–2025 anticipates that the share of people over 65 years old will reach 57.5% of the population in 2030 (Posio municipality n.d.).

In the last couple of years, the landscape and image of Posio have, however, changed. Posio has become a meeting point facilitating many kinds of encounters combining life in a remote rural village, scarce resources, creative industries as well as social media hotspots forming queues on the paths in the popular national park. However, as a contrast to the tourism and recreation landscape, a very different landscape opens
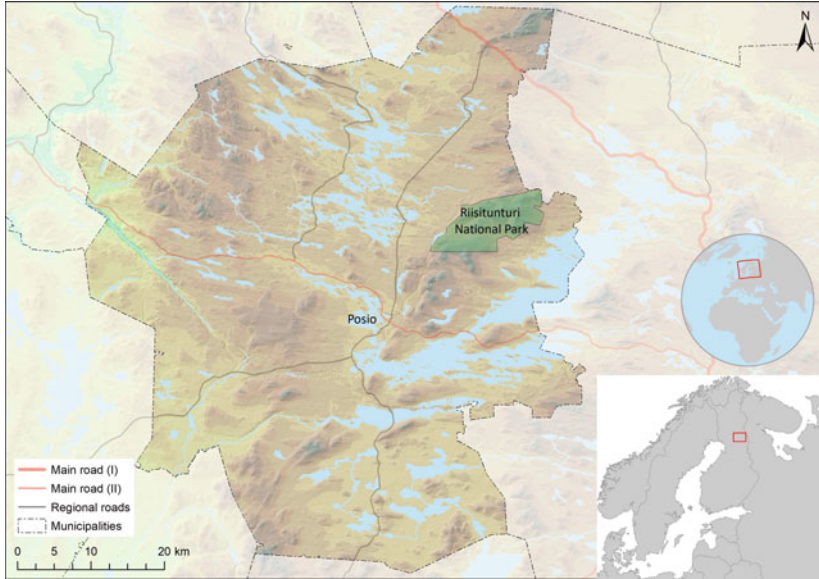
Fig. 12.2 The location of Posio municipality and Riisitunturi national park in south-east Lapland. Data: National Land Survey of Finland and Finnish Environment Institute (Map by Michaël Virgil Bishop)

up in the opposite corner of the municipality, where the area is used for a wind farm and as Finland's largest snowmobile free ride area. This more industrial land use is also supported by the municipality.

Riisitunturi national park, which according to the park manager was mostly frequented by the local people over the course of its 40 years of existence, has started to gain more attention quite rapidly. As demonstrated by the visitor numbers of the national parks, the COVID-19 global pandemic enhanced the growing interest in nature and nature-based activities among domestic visitors, but this only partially explains the growth at Riisitunturi. In addition, one of the major reasons for the growth has been linked with the pictures of crown-snow laden trees that seem to have become an iconic symbol of Riisitunturi national park on social media. It seems that "it is simply impossible to take a bad photo of them", as an employee from the municipality says. Parallel to this, the

number of visitors in Riisitunturi increased by 53% from year 2019 to 2020 (Metsähallitus 2023b).

The national park has become a major element in the marketing of Posio municipality both in terms of promoting it as a place of residence and as a place to visit, placing tourism mobilities at the centre of attention. Due to the buzz on social media, Posio suddenly emerged from the margins into the limelight and Riisitunturi began to attract new types of visitors, including those not accustomed to roam in nature. A feeling of wilderness within easy reach of the parking place is part of Riisitunturi's attractiveness. The need to create new types of trails and products for the national park has been recognised by the park management and the municipality in order to better serve the visitors and enhance tourism mobilities in the region. The narrow road leading to the national park has been improved and the parking area enlarged to better serve the increasing traffic. There is a little coffee hut at the starting point providing not only food and drinks, but also rental fatbikes and snowshoes for visitors. The change in the number and type of visitors has been noticed by the regional national park managers—there has been an increasing demand to develop one-day round trips and other shorter day trips with clear markings of scenic hotspots for a wider public. As a result, the most popular trails mainly attract tourists, while the locals seem to move to less crowded trails. This leads us to the question how the traditional local mobility and land use practices of hunting, fishing, reindeer herding, forestry and harvesting berries as well as other recreational practices might have changed.

Our chapter draws from ethnographic field work conducted in Riisitunturi national park and Posio municipality. We first visited the area in February 2022 in order to get acquainted with the region and its different stakeholders, activities and landscapes. During the visit, we also met with representatives of the municipality and the national park to gain more insights into the ongoing developments in the region. Since then, we have interviewed members of the local community representing different livelihoods and land use practices, followed the public discussion about the region and its developments as well as investigated representations of Riisitunturi national park on social media. The following analysis emphasises different narratives regarding mobilities in the landscape. The role of landscape in tourism is inarguable, yet extremely complex. By definition, tourism takes place in a tourism landscape. At the same time, the landscape is not a separate, isolated space for tourism activities, but a meeting

place of different kinds of mobilities and land use practices combining local and global as well as human and more-than-human worlds (Urry 2004; Ingold 2000; Massey 1991). Thus, the following discussion is organised according to three main narratives emerging from our ethnographic research: *destinization of a marginal tourism landscape, ageing in the landscape,* and *landscape ownership*.

Destinization of a Marginal Tourism Landscape

Posio has been marketed as a dream destination for nature lovers with its many lakes, ponds and fells. Yet, the commercialisation of activities is not uncomplicated, especially on privately owned lands. "It is difficult to commodify nature-things, since you need permission from the landowner and so forth", says an employee of the municipality describing the tension that occasionally takes place in Posio. He describes the launch of a social media campaign in 2020 related to visiting all the forested hills of the municipality and in doing so, encouraging people, especially locals, to get acquainted with the nearby places utilising everyone's rights. The social media campaign is an example of destinising (see Granås 2018) proximate nature or one's usual setting into proximity tourism (Díaz Soria and Llurdés Coit 2013). It illustrates how destinations are produced as well as consumed through "a meticulous process of staging, framing, and photographing views and panoramas" (Jóhannesson and Ren forthcoming, see also Urry 1990). The process of becoming a destination or *destinisation* as conceptualised by Granås (2014, 2018) takes place both through formal management practices and commercial tourism use, but also through the touristic gaze and performances conducted by the locals. The campaign gained publicity both in the local newspaper and in the different social media channels of the municipality. This campaign was welcomed by the landowners although there has been resistance on their part to more formal or commercial use of the land and existing paths, e.g., as biking routes or for husky safaris.

Images of the region and its forested hills started to spread on the social media channels of the municipality at the same time, with visitors' photos of the by now famous winter landscape of Riisitunturi national park and its snowy trees and hills. Other examples of public attention include famous journalist Ilkka Malmberg's series of articles about a piece of land in Posio. The articles were published in the largest subscription newspaper in Finland, *Helsingin Sanomat*, followed by a

book called *Hectare* (*Hehtaari* in Finnish, 2012). Internationally, the landscape became known through a nature film released in 2018, *Ailo's Journey*, about the reindeer Ailo wandering in the landscape of Posio. These various gazes and performances were entangled with the landscape of Riisitunturi, becoming part of how the landscape was perceived, negotiated and produced (Granås 2018). Unlike other forested hills in the region, Riisitunturi fell began to get crowded, attracting more and more visitors from a nearby ski resort as well as visitors passing through on their way further north. The newly found wider public interest in national parks, enhanced by the global pandemic along with the attention on social media, was a boost for tourism in the landscape of Posio.

According to the park manager, the national park users were traditionally local people visiting the park for recreational purposes—going to a certain spot, having a coffee break and then coming back. The need to build actual routes, especially short round routes, originated from the attempt to manage the already high number of visitors to another nearby national park by offering them more options. However, rather than restricting the tourist flows, the sudden limelight on social media only spread the flows also to Riisitunturi. Currently, good quality tracks, which should fit a wide user group from hikers to skiers, bikers and snowshoers, are required and park management tries to balance between the carrying capacity and conservation of nature, while at the same time finding reasonable ways to deal with the requests and needs arising from the public.

These examples show how the process of becoming a destination occurs through local and global events and movements that involve both human and non-human influences. By identifying encounters, events and movements entangled in the destinising process, we can observe the contingent and emergent characteristics of tourism, describe their complex environmental relations and identify who are involved and what is at stake when tourism surfaces in a peripheral place (Granås 2018, 50). The role of social media and visitors in the process of producing a destination is significant, but becomes closely entangled with the local actors, practices and developments.

The increasing demand for good quality and easy access raises confusing feelings among the local people. As one of them describes, it is annoying when people claim that there are "failures in the product or services", suggesting that the landscape itself has become a product. The

commodification of landscape enacts Posio as a playground—as peripheral, marginal wilderness, relating it to historical colonial endeavours on other continents (Granås 2018). Furthermore, framing Riisitunturi as an accessible place in wilderness through the impressive posts on social media creates certain expectations among visitors and enhances the production of the region as a destination. It also leads to encounters of normative opinions. Another local interviewee points out how he appreciates slower visits and wants to focus on producing tourism services based on this mentality, but there are many people with different goals "who just visit Riisitunturi national park to take a picture for social media". He gives an example of Asian tourist who wished to have a quick visit to the landscape in an outfit that first and foremost looked good in the photo but was not practical for −35 degrees Celsius. In the Norwegian context Flemsæter, Setten and Brown (2015) have pointed out how speed and rhythms seem to be deeply entangled with the moralities of what 'counts' as an appropriate way to engage with nature. The locals emphasise this further, by telling how they are astonished how those who come just for a quick visit do not bother to take their garbage away with them but leave even toilet paper in the landscape from a few hours' visit.

Yet, as mentioned by one of the interviewees, it may be difficult to voice dissenting opinions about the impacts of tourism for the region as the public opinion embraces the potential it holds for local development in the periphery. Thus, moral landscape practices are strongly influenced by the landscapes with which the practices are associated (Flemsæter et al. 2015), meaning that since the Riisitunturi landscape is becoming perceived as a place to be consumed easily, the moral understanding of what is appropriate in the landscape also changes. Furthermore, the process of becoming a destination and the mobile encounters in the landscape are often discrete by nature; these processes and encounters illustrate how tourism development can be neither accidental nor inevitable, but possible and contingent (Granås 2018, 55). In the context of Posio region, the iconic photos spreading on social media present the place as a wilderness-like periphery, yet accessible. It creates a certain kind of place expectation for visitors that encourage tourism entrepreneurs, municipality and other stakeholders including the park management to develop practices meeting these expectations. However, at the same time, the spot in the limelight maintains the image of the region as a peripheral place to visit leaving also other local narratives and their role in place making in the margins.

The examples from Posio region demonstrate well the interplay between formal and informal management in the destinisation of a tourism landscape. For example, social media is good in producing iconic landscapes, but the formal management in the park also aims to take into account the potential scenery when planning routes. The difference here is that park management pays attention to the carrying capacity and conservation of nature, whereas social media users are often not aware of the rules and regulations in the park, but act based on assumed everyone's rights. Hence, expectations and suggestions for the landscape vary depending on the perspective from which it is looked at.

Ageing in the Landscape

The declining population and especially the ageing of the population are reflected in the mobility practices of the local people. Some of the interviewees see this also as a shift in the landscape; a shift from mobilities of muscle power to motorised vehicles for traditional land activities in nature, such as fishing, hunting and reindeer herding. Also, the number of active fishermen and locals collecting berries for commercial use has decreased as the population has aged, which has been a similar trend in whole Finland for some time (Pouta et al. 2006). Commercial berry picking is nowadays practiced mostly by foreign pickers, which occasionally sparks heated discussion among locals. Critics claim that commercially organised berry picking makes it difficult for inhabitants to fully use natural resources (Peltola et al. 2014). There are no legally binding rules or regulations concerning commercial berry picking with everyone's rights, for example, on private lands or in areas near local housing. The commonly accepted distance from housing is based on the code of conduct and the traditions in considering what is appropriate behaviour and what is not are strong. Local people are aware of the arrival of commercial pickers and make sure to pick berries for their own needs before their arrival.

Although the local people we interviewed still collect berries, fish and hunt for themselves, there is an impression that the local people in general tend to move less in the landscape due to ageing and busier lifestyles. This change may lead to another shift in the landscape—from traditional local mobility practices into tourism mobilities that manifest in diverse ways, such as movement by snowmobiles, snowshoeing, skiing, biking and hiking, just for the sake of enjoying nature and the landscape. These

shifts are underlined when representing the landscape with iconic pictures related to enjoying nature that can result in simplification of the place (Granås 2018), and further deepen the controversies between local and touristic mobilities in the landscape.

However, the effects of increased tourism mobilities, such as well-maintained routes in the national park, also benefit the local people since those routes are more accessible. This may reflect in the mobility practices of ageing locals changing from the more purposive roaming in nature closer to the recreational outdoor practices applied especially by the visitors. Thus, the relationship in the landscape changes, not only due to the interplay of local and global, human and more-than-human encounters, but also due to personal histories and changes in one's embodied capabilities. Flemsæter, Setten and Brown (2015) have pointed out that tensions related to everyone's rights often relate to the normativities that link to knowledge, skills and socialisation of moving in landscape. Thus, even though the local ways of using the landscape may in the future, or partly already, seemingly resemble touristic ways of moving in the landscape, there is a form of knowing and skilled "handling" of the landscape (Ingold 2011) that is still based on long-term embodied engagement with this specific landscape.

History and family traditions are present in the local mobility practices that have been passed on from generation to generation. For example, berry picking can be seen as transgenerational narrative and history, in which the practice of picking berries often in certain locations is transferred from one generation to the next by picking berries together. These lands are often seen as areas with immemorial enjoyment rights, and they are shared within families (Länsman 2004). Repeated visits to familiar places can be seen as a local mobility practice interweaving their own family traditions into the landscape that becomes part of one's personal biography.

With regard to fishing, catching brown trout is an interesting example of how the traditional local nature use practices of elderly locals are in collision with the regulations and general discussion on sustainability of fisheries and emergence of catch and release in fishing. Brown trout is such a small trout that fishing is not allowed by the law. However, one interviewee describes the dominant local attitude by saying that brown trout forms a local stock and even the smallest ones are mature and not going to grow to the measures of legal catch. He continues fishing for brown trout and describes the activity as something really traditional and

genuine practiced especially by older people, and something that cannot be harnessed for touristic nature use. With tourists, he fishes mostly for pikes. The interviewee describes how the fluctuation of brown trout stocks has followed societal and environmental changes: people who until the 1990's caught brown trout are no longer able to continue with the activity and the stocks recovered for a while. Nowadays, the stocks have declined again especially due to the humus coming from forest ditches.

Landscape Ownership

Destinisation of the landscape as well as ageing in the landscape are closely linked with the third narrative regarding landscape ownership. There are various types of ownership that emerge in relation to the tourism landscape of Posio. The formal, legal forms of ownership and management are intertwined with informal ownership, reflecting the complexities related to moral practices in the landscape.

National parks in Finland are managed by Parks and Wildlife Finland, which is a unit of a state-owned enterprise Metsähallitus that provides environmental services for private individuals and major companies (Metsähallitus 2023c). The primary purpose of national parks is to ensure the diversity of Finnish nature. At the same time, touristic and recreational use of national parks is increasingly important. In principle, everyone's rights apply also in national parks, but there may be additional restrictions that should always be given priority. The interviewee from Metsähallitus says that balancing between these two purposes and the diversifying group of recreationists creates a challenge to their management. People see a picture of a specific place in Riisitunturi on social media and want to go there but simply "do not think about the fact that everyone's rights do not apply exclusively in that area, that they should find out a little more about the regulations, what can be done and what cannot be done". Hence, skills and knowledge related to engaging with nature as well as to everyone's rights have become major considerations for the park management (Flemsæter et al. 2015). The question of informal power and morality is also faced when planning new routes. Sometimes visitors discover a gem in the landscape and post pictures of it on social media. Information about the scenic spot spreads quickly and people start to request directions to it. Nature around the location may, however, be very fragile, requiring protection. The question here becomes about whether to build routes to keep visitors on a guided path or to try and prevent

people from finding the place at all. The effects of social media in Riisi-tunturi and its surroundings provide an example of how unintentionally occurring practices can disrupt the existing order in the landscape (Setten and Brown 2009, 192). In doing so, it also brings up controversies about who is entitled to make claims over the landscape and how these claims are positioned in relation to others.

Relationships with and understandings of nature are formed through various mobilities in the landscape for different purposes (Lund 2005; Setten and Brown 2009). As such they are shaping the perceptions and experience of landscape ownership including moral evaluations of the acceptable codes of conduct connected to particular landscapes. Owner-ship by local people can be seen as informal ownership that is based on long-standing traditions formed through practices of living on the land, moving in the landscape and perceiving the possibilities in the landscape. However, as described by one of the local interviewees, it is contested by the increased amounts of recreationists that "in a way conquer the possibilities of the local people" in relation to places. Although every-one's rights enable anyone to roam in nature for recreational purposes regardless of land ownership, the local codes of conduct may appear more significant than the formal ownership. Occasionally, they collide with everyone's rights in situations that disrupt the harmonic co-existence in the landscape. In Posio region, this exemplifies in residents' claims that the foreign berry pickers use the backyards at the centre of the village instead of wilderness areas as they should, or when denying the use of private land for commercial dog sledding as a matter of principle rather than protection of nature. The new practices and the increasing number of new practitioners in the landscape also result in locals needing to confront their own practices and identities that are being assigned as marginal because the landscape is often seen as an empty wilderness. This dismisses the local traditions and histories embedded in the landscape (Setten and Brown 2009; Bursta et al. 2023).

Local ownership also becomes contested between local stakeholders, for example, in issues such as wind power construction. Wind power plants benefit economically the municipality and the landowners but may conflict with other interests regarding the use of landscape. A big power plant is planned in the neighbouring municipality, Kuusamo, and both the local reindeer herders as well as the local tourism association in Posio made an appeal to the Supreme Administrative Court as the

wind turbines would disturb the reindeer pastures and scenery from Riisi-tunturi. However, only the reindeer herders' appeal was considered as tourism was not seen as a relevant party in question (KHO 2022, 12). This example illustrates the ways in which landscape can also be seen as a contested site of physical and symbolic powers and as expressions of subsequent polity (Setten and Brown 2009; Olwig 2019) leaving some voices in the margins, while emphasising others.

A local reindeer herder gives another example illustrating the owner-ship of the landscape by reindeer that leads to tensions with second-home owners: "The phase of construction of a second home is most awful, when the land is on gravel. A reindeer goes there to avoid the mosquitoes (räkkä), and there is nothing to eat. Falls asleep on the construction site, wakes up and leaves droppings there, so the constructor will not be happy. And the reindeer does not know that it has entered a wrong area". Hence, the non-human ownership of the landscape is also often marginalised—or not heard at all, except through the local embodied traditions that are entangled with non-human agencies, or through the more formal conser-vation processes and discussion that take place in the context of national park management.

Mobile Encounters in Peripheral Tourism Landscape

The three narratives emerging from our ethnographic field work, *destinization of a marginal landscape, ageing in the landscape and land-scape ownership*, are illustrations of the multiple overlapping mobility prac-tices and encounters taking place in Posio and Riisitunturi national park. The tourism landscape of the region builds on these shaping encounters that reflect both formal and informal processes in the destinization of the place (Granås 2018). At the same time, these mobility practices illustrate the encounters of digital, mundane, touristic and other land use mobil-ities involving both human and non-human actors. Thus, the narratives demonstrate that tourism landscapes are not merely a planned space on the margins of the everyday (Franklin 2008), but something that develops in interaction with various flows of events, practices and mobilities. They are difficult to manage without paying attention to the moral dimensions of the landscape ownership.

Shifting place mobilities are creating controversies between different land use practices and approaches of being with the landscape. These

controversies are also reflected in the contemporary understanding of everyone's rights, which in itself has become contested. One example of this is the confrontation between mobilities based on transgenerational narratives and embodied histories and the more recent mobilities inspired by social media and the visual appreciation of the landscape. The diversification of ways of moving in nature, comings and goings of second-home owners and visitors combined with the complexity of mobilities bring forth an idea of landscape being continuously shaped and defined by the creative use of natural environments and interaction between human and non-human. Thus, to address the controversies calls for a more caring approach and practice to tourism landscape (Jóhannesson and Ren forthcoming; West et al. 2020) that is based on holistic and inclusive wellbeing. A more holistic and inclusive approach would challenge the simplifications that often relate to marginal landscapes—such as northern landscapes that are often seen as mere resources, or voices in the margins. Instead, the skilful handling of the landscape based on long traditions and the new forms of mobilities should not be discussed as controversial, competing practices, but rather as intertwined entanglements shaping the landscape.

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Inhabiting the Landscape Through Access Rights and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Jo Vergunst

This chapter is about the kinds of inhabitation of the landscape that are made possible by outdoor access rights in Scotland, with reference to walking during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic was a particularly acute example of how political and legal structures can shape the everyday experience of movement, and in some ways also brought to light the ways in which governance is reified and made real through ordinary life. In Scotland, new outdoor access rights were introduced in 2003, and they promise a kind of democratic, nation-wide equality in non-motorised mobility. The rights were severely curtailed during the pandemic, but at the same time they were enacted locally in distinctive ways, even if people were not aware of the legal basis that underpinned the way they walked, cycled and took other forms of access.

Connecting with the themes of this book, I want to argue that during the pandemic the perceived 'margins' of the landscape were no longer the remote rural parts of the country, but instead became the previously unthought-about and sometimes unnoticed surroundings in

J. Vergunst (✉)
University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland
e-mail: j.vergunst@abdn.ac.uk

people's immediate lifeworlds. Margins came much closer to home and the forms of mobility used to access them changed. At the time of writing, we are in a phase in which hopefully the worst of the pandemic is over in most of the world. This could allow us to consider anew the processes by which margins are formed and mobilities to and through them happen.

Thinking through the concept of regimes of mobility may be helpful here. Glick Schiller and Salazar (2013) argue that people's movements across the world—between countries and on other long-distance journeys—are not, of course, free of the influence of political and governance processes, and cannot simply be understood as expressions of freedom or cosmopolitanism as globalisation scholarship has tended to do. Movement and migration are circumscribed through controls that reify both stasis and mobility, enabling some forms of movement while limiting others. As they write: 'The term "regime" calls attention to the role both of individual states and of changing international regulatory and surveillance administrations that affect individual mobility' (Glick Schiller and Salazar 2013, 189). Yet at the same time, this is imaginative work, as forms of controlled movement are part of discursive realms, idealisations and 'mythscapes' (ibid. 194) that play out across space.

Other researchers have gone on to consider regimes of mobility and their power structures in a variety of settings, often in transnational migration but also in connection with, for example, climate change (Suliman et al. 2019; Boas et al. 2022), urban traffic (Stefanelli 2021) and as we shall see the COVID-19 pandemic (Adey et al. 2021). In her study of urban commuting in Accra, Møller-Jensen (2021, 462) argues that the focus of mobilities research on migration "has to some extent empirically reinforced a normative understanding of what kind of movements [are] considered significant and noteworthy and has left the impact of smaller scale, urban mobilities ethnographically understudied". I think this is a fair argument, although perhaps the point is not to weigh up the amount of research conducted on transnationalism as opposed to that on 'smaller scale' mobilities in cities or elsewhere. Of more value is understanding how forms of regulation and surveillance constitute and are in turn constituted through scales, sites and trajectories of movement, as experienced by people themselves. This is a feature both of ethnographic research on international migration and on more local forms of mobility.

One distinctive contribution of transnational research into regimes of mobility is, as Glick Schiller and Salazar (2013) put it, to recognise the 'methodological nationalism' that has been a part of much social science

research. That refers to the tendency to invoke a country or other territory as a pre-existing bounded unit, within which movement happens, rather than being open to the ways in which boundaries are negotiated and experienced. During COVID-19, however, nation states did assert their own regimes of mobility, placing new and variable restrictions on movement between countries that started earlier and lasted longer than movement controls within their borders (Piccoli et al. 2022). Movement both externally and internally became tensioned—or even more tensioned—in that it was subject to much greater surveillance and control at the same time as people moving faced the intangible risk of the virus itself. Nonetheless, the question of how the boundaries between and within countries came to be experienced as real is as salient as governance practices of different countries. In this sense, we might explore "political action outside of formal governance spaces and processes" as Suliman et al. (2019, 298) put it in their discussion of immobilities and mobilities through the lens of the Anthropocene. (Im)mobility politics happens not only through the official processes of legislation and implementation, but through the on-the-ground actions and responses of those subject to them.

Access Rights in Scotland and the Nordic Countries

Before discussing pandemic mobilities themselves, I will sketch out the international dimension to my core case of an apparently national regime of mobility, the Scottish outdoor access rights—with the intention of overcoming what might be perceived as methodological nationalism. The Scottish rights were set out in legislation relatively recently, in 2003, soon after the establishment of a Scottish Parliament with powers devolved from the UK in 1999. They were however modelled on the Nordic practice of *allemansrätten*. This is the Swedish version of the Nordic rights that are usually translated into English as 'Everyman's rights' but could also be 'Everyone's rights' as no gender distinction is intended. In short, the Nordic rights enable people to enter and move through outfield, mountain and forest areas. La Mela (2020, 182) notes that the common view of *allemansrätten* holds it as an "age-old and stable tradition" and some scholars have continued to connect it to pre-modern Nordic legal culture and access practices. Mortazavi (1997), for example, locates the origin of the Swedish rights in the need to pass through others' land for

travel in the context of a large and sparsely populated country, which was presumably the situation in the other Nordic countries too. The existence of wide areas not used for intensive agriculture is also significant, meaning that the rights in these countries apply to forests, hill and mountain areas beyond lower lying farms. Berry and mushroom picking are also important rights within *allemansrätten*, although certain other derivatives of trees that may have value such as leaves, birch sap and resin are understood as owned by the landowner (Hamunen et al. 2019).

On the other hand, *allemansrätten* is also associated with twentieth century politics. La Mela's analysis of Finnish parliamentary records shows how, in political discourse at least, it was initially used to describe common fishing rights introduced in the Second World War and only came to be connected with wider access rights from the 1960s. In Norway meanwhile, *allemansrätten* is linked to the national ethic of *friluftsliv*—open air living—that is morally valued as a form of citizenship with a distinctive modern history as well as a traditional basis (Ween and Abram 2012). This combining of political intervention with custom opens onto how mobility is affected through both formal and informal kinds of governance, which I will argue happens in Scotland too. While the Scottish rights do not explicitly reference the Nordic rights, my ethnographic research in the late 2000s showed that *allemansrätten* had been prominent in the minds of Scottish policymakers and those lobbying for reform (Vergunst 2013). The Nordic countries offered a different approach to politicians looking for alternatives to 'Westminster' (UK government) ways of doing things in the context of the new Scottish Parliament and also provided a response to the complex system of path designations ('rights of way') and trespass laws that existed previously.

In the Nordic countries, where *allemansrätten* traditionally supported ordinary or everyday access to the land by people who dwelt in it, the rights have come to be relevant today for tourist activities and in some cases business opportunities (and hence their presence in political discourse). Much rural tourism and everyday access to 'nature' in the Nordic countries is now predicated on these rights to access land and the outdoors with relatively little hinderance, and yet this is also where tensions in the access rights have occurred. Mortazavi (1997) noted that problems from increasing tourism were being felt by some communities, including environmental damage. Camping in 'wild' areas is generally allowed, although in Iceland this has recently been restricted to official campsites because of environmental concerns (e.g. waste, fires).

Berry-picking has also become an issue in circumstances where non-local people are harvesting significant amounts of berries (Pouta 2006), or where commercial harvesting is taking place and communities feel their concerns are not being heard (Hamunen et al. 2019, Nousiainen et al. this volume). These cases show how rights of access come to the foreground during episodes of conflict or tension, moving out from the embodied and often unreflexive habits of taking access in the landscape.

The Scottish rights were instituted in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. They are amongst the most extensive national set of access rights internationally, allowing non-motorised access to the outdoors as a whole and for everyone, as long as the access taker (i.e. walkers, cyclists etc.) acts responsibly, and, having completed their activity, then leaves. In the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, which is the official guidance for access takers, land managers and land owners, outdoor space is defined as 'mountains, moorland, farmland (enclosed and unenclosed), forests, woods, rivers, lochs and reservoirs, beaches and the coastline, and open spaces in towns and cities'. This is indeed more or less anywhere 'outdoors' and exceptions are relatively limited; the main ones are the curtilage of buildings (land immediately associated with a building), land around a house sufficient for privacy or enjoyment of the property by the owner (not necessarily just limited to a garden), and land on which crops are growing. Access in specific places can be temporarily restricted for various reasons, and local laws (byelaws) limiting the rights have been used, for example, to restrict camping where there has been evidence of environmental damage resulting from it. In 2017, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park used byelaws to prohibit camping outside of designated campsites in parts of the Park that had been subject to heavy and damaging usage, using powers given to them when they were set up in legislation in 2000—one of the first pieces of legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament.

There was therefore a sense of nationalism or the creating of a nation—in part, if not fully fledged—in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. The Land Reform Act also instituted a community land ownership process in the Highlands and Islands region intended to redress the injustice of a highly concentrated pattern of land ownership. In Scotland very few people own a large proportion of the land and often, it has been argued, with insufficient regard to local communities or sustainability (Wightman 1997). The outdoor access reforms were an aspect of land reform because they

changed the nature of land ownership in Scotland, with the right to own land no longer encompassing the right to unduly restrict public access to it. While the community land ownership aspects of the Land Reform Act have arguably become more widely known, playing into the long conflict between landowners and tenants/communities especially in Highland Scotland, the outdoor access reforms operate in the landscape in rather different ways. The rights are not limited to a certain part of the country (as in crofting land reform) and also do not depend on an identification of 'community' in order to be enacted (as in the Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015, which expands the earlier reforms). They are simply asserted by being present in the land. As such, they establish a different sense of the landscape of Scotland, which does not rely on distinctions between Highland and Lowland that mirror the scope of the community land ownership parts of the 2003 Land Reform Act.

We might also draw a contrast with the degrees of remoteness implied in the Scottish Government's Urban Rural Classification used to plan and deliver services across the country (Scottish Government, 2022). This combines settlement size with driving time to an urban settlement of 10,000 people or more. The rural part of the classification goes from 'accessible small towns' that are between 3,000 and 9,999 population and within 30 minutes' drive from an urban area, down to 'very remote rural areas' with a population of less than 3,000 and a drive time of over 60 minutes to an urban area. By this reckoning, very remote rural areas cover most of the north and west of the country (the Highlands and Islands) and parts of the south that are beyond the Central Belt conurbations of Glasgow and Edinburgh. Unsurprisingly, most of the land of Scotland is rural—on the margins of accessibility from this perspective—while most of the population is urban.

Where urban–rural classification is based on a distinction between city and countryside and values accessibility to towns and cities, the outdoor access legislation posits a generalised right to be in and move through the landscape regardless of where in the country one is, and regardless of who owns the land. In some ways, this is of course a different 'regime of mobility' because with outdoor access rights we are referring to non-motorised access in and around open spaces (walking, cycling, horse riding and canoeing, for example) rather than drive times to urban areas. However, beyond the form of movement, the access rights are predicated on a democratic equality in the landscape, in which no particular kind of landscape is more or less special than any other, whether or not it is near

to an urban centre, and everyone is legally enabled to take access. The rights apply to all the outdoors, regardless of whether a place is scenic or being used in a certain way, or who owns it.

This new legal reckoning of outdoor access contrasts in some ways with the traditional or customary forms of access to the landscape in Scotland. Before the Land Reform Act, rights of way existed and were formalised in the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, which put a duty on local councils to uphold routes that had been used by the general public without 'substantial interruption' for at least 20 years. These are specific paths and tracks that are sometimes signposted and catalogued by an organisation called Scotways, the Scottish Rights of Way and Access Society. Here, access is along pre-defined paths rather than to the landscape as a whole. At the same time, walkers and other access takers in my earlier research were often quite positive about access to the open hills and mountains, especially those mountains above 3000 feet (914 metres) known as the Munros, which are 'bagged' or collected by walkers who climb to their summits (Lorimer and Lund 2003). Focusing on the highest and iconic mountains of Scotland nonetheless plays into the wider association of landscape with scenic nature and the powerful gaze of the picturesque (Olwig 2002).

As a regime of mobility, the access rights significantly affect the ways that movement through the landscape occurs, both within specific places and in terms of the mobility required to get to certain areas in which non-motorised access is sought. This has a range of effects. On the one hand, being able by law to walk and move outdoors through Scotland's landscape, from large, privately-owned estates to peri-urban areas, is a change that supports tourism, local communities and wider society in Scotland and brings economic, health and well-being benefits. Potential environmental benefits also exist through increased engagement of people and communities with the landscape. On the other hand, while owning land no longer includes the right to unduly restrict access to it, merely 'taking access' does not necessarily in itself change long standing power relations inherent in the ownership of land, such as the ability to take decisions about it and plan its future in the long term. Some land in Scotland—2.6% of the country as a whole in 2021 (Scottish Government 2022)—has in fact changed in this way too, by way of the community ownership reforms. Since the original legislation, new laws have expanded to include other kinds of community assets as well as land, as well as applying beyond

the Highlands and Islands (though in different forms). In any case, inhabitation of the landscape does not lie solely in the legal ownership of land, nor simply in the legal right to access it, even if the latter may be a precondition. It is clear, though, that 'margins' can be defined and experienced in different ways.

Inhabiting Local Landscapes in COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, new, and yet at the same time old, forms of inhabiting the landscape were performed. While access rights in Scotland were initially focused on the iconic Highland landscapes of Munros (Scotland's highest mountains) and similar scenic settings, COVID-19 lockdowns meant staying close to home. Many people took the chance to explore their local landscapes in more detail and in ways not previously considered. While most would have been unaware of the legal basis of this kind of access taking, many people seemed to develop new relationships with their local landscapes. New paths were formed simply by walking, with new habits of local exploration. Even in urban areas, regular walks became a way of not just getting exercise during lockdown, but appreciating small details of the neighbourhood that were previously unnoticed. Evidence from media, my experience and the experience of those I was in contact with through 2020 and 2021 suggests that encounters with plants and wildlife, architectural details and the discovery of new routes provided a means by which people connected more closely with the places they lived. Writing in a more or less post-pandemic period, it seems useful to reflect back and consider the relationships with landscape that were made during the enforced localisation of people's lives.

I kept some fieldnotes of our lockdown walks, without any particular purpose in mind to start with other than to keep a record and see where it led. I noted places and the occasional other activity or game played with our children, then 11 and 12. As warm weather turned into a beautiful spring in 2020, flora and fauna that caught my eye were recorded too. A few examples of my brief notes follow:

> Down to Co-op, down to Heritage Centre, along railway line to Kennerty/Millside.
> Johnston Gardens, Bucklerburn Road. Just J&D. Very warm. Neighbours talking to each other in Johnston Gardens from a few metres apart.

Down Malcolm Road to railway line, along towards Camphill and back along Lovers' Walk / river. Flowers and plants further on here than Hill of Ardbeck, comfrey and so on. Sweet Cicely. Couple of butterflies.

Down to the bridge and further up road towards Easter Anguston, played basketball with J in forest track.

What I want to draw out here are the small explorations of the urban–rural fringe that were happening. The places we walked were not completely new to us, but we often made new routes that were improvised daily, and sometimes along new paths. Indeed, there were literally new paths in the landscape, as we were not the only ones making our way through the woods and along the small rivers and burns where we live on the edge of the city of Aberdeen. Called 'desire lines' in an urban context, here they were newly marked or enlarged paths through a wood or on the edge of fields or the waterways. Cycling became more common in the pandemic in Scotland as it did elsewhere (Whyte 2022), and as well as riding ourselves we saw more bikes than we would normally when out and about. When off-road the bikes added to the path marking that was happening in the landscape.

Improvising walks in this way happened almost automatically after a while. From having a sense of destination and direction—to visit a particular wood, or an area of grass, or a shop—the walks moved to simply heading out and making choices according to whim or opportunities that seemed to arise ('let's try this way' or 'we haven't been that way for a while'). Walking in lockdown was more reminiscent of the drift, or *dérive*, in the tradition of psychogeography. Guy Debord, French writer and critic, wrote in 1958: "In a dérive one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they might find there" (Debord 2007). This almost motiveless way of walking, created as cultural critique through *avant-garde* arts movements such as Debord's Situationist International, works quite well as a way of understanding lockdown walks. Not to get anywhere in particular, they were simply a way of being outdoors for short while, drawn by whatever one found.

While the UK government COVID-19 regulations stipulated 'exercise' as a reasonable excuse for being outside, it seemed that physical exercise in a narrow sense was not the prime or even main motivation for those I met or was in touch with during lockdown. Instead walking

created the opportunity for a change of scene and mindset from what for many became very restricted domestic spaces—especially perhaps families with children, and, as I learned from students I taught, those in shared occupancy housing. Outside, random elements and chance encounters in a less structured environment became possible. I played a little with psychogeography directly in a couple of our lockdown walks. Recalling other psychogeography events I had taken part in during my research on walking and art (Vergunst 2020), I suggested we take turns in leading the walk for two minutes each. Each leader could choose the direction and any activities as we walked along, which made for a fragmented but not completely zig-zag walk as we mostly built on the direction of the last person.

Other artistic or creative responses opened up the aesthetic aspects of lockdown walks—and indeed the 'local walk' more generally—in interesting ways. Collections of small, brightly painted stones started appearing, for example, along an old railway line in my neighbourhood now used as a leisure route for walking, cycling and horse riding, and in a collection along a beach front in a nearby town in Aberdeenshire. They were sometimes painted as animals, or cartoon characters, a Scottish flag, or just with patterns. Decorations (small coloured balls, little bird houses) sometimes appeared in trees in the woods. In another coastal town, artist Robert Lawrence installed "Covid Clouds", small white cloud-shaped signs hung from trees along a path, with reflective messages for those out walking: "Time has a different meaning", "Most people are at home and yet the streets are quiet", "So, are we hoping for a kinder, cleaner, safer future?" The signs now hang in an exhibition in Aberdeen's City Art Gallery, entitled "Imagined Landscapes", a collection of contemporary mostly Scottish art with landscape and environmental themes. The opening text asks whether the visitor's own relationships with landscape were changed during COVID-19.

Wandering through local neighbourhoods in lockdown was not of course entirely novel, as people are on the move in all kinds of ways in ordinary life as well. But the aesthetic reckoning of local landscapes during lockdown is worthy of note. While it sometimes resulted in art-making by amateurs and professionals, it was also apparent in the more personal valuing of being and moving outside and the appreciation of small, usually overlooked details. This is an environmental aesthetics that connects with everyday experience, as John Dewey shows—not just looking at things, or

even recognising beauty, but an integrated "whole self" in its surroundings (Dewey 1934, 61) that Dewey argues is the basis for universal aesthetic experience.

The distinctiveness of lockdown mobilities was, of course, also in the way they were constrained by the unprecedented intervention of government in personal habits, movements and everyday lives. We can identify a tension between the aesthetic experience of engaging with local landscapes and the structures of micro-level governance in lockdown. COVID-19 rules certainly comprised a unique regime of mobility that curtailed movement in different ways at different stages of the pandemic. At its height, exercise was to be taken from the home directly, with no motorised travel to anywhere else allowed for this purpose. At other times, a restriction to the local council area (the City of Aberdeen in our case) held, with a five kilometre leeway to the boundary that led to maps being created and shared that showed the possibilities for walking. This was of course policed, with the police following a policy of moving from informal to formal intervention if required. Regulations were also internalised for many who were out and about as well, and, it seemed on occasion, amongst people who saw those of us 'drifting' around. On one bike ride, my son and I stopped at a shop in our neighbourhood and he went inside. I was approached by someone asking where we had come from, which surprised me as lockdown cycling was pretty common here, and I gestured in the direction of our street, 'just around'. The person seemed reassured and said they thought we might have come from 'town'. That would not have been against the COVID-19 regulations but perhaps had a sense of travel beyond what was necessary, where town (the fully urban core of Aberdeen) might be the source of infection and danger to this outlying suburb.

This feeling of drifting, with the constraint of surveillance by means of the police or one's fellow residents, was something of a contradiction. Slipping between the ordinary movements of everyday life and the extraordinary circumstances of disease and state intervention, boundaries between what was possible, allowed, acceptable and perhaps on a personal level, 'needed' were negotiated through walking and cycling. Noel Salazar picked up on this early in the pandemic in writing of the 'existential vs. essential mobilities' of lockdown (Salazar 2021). Essential mobility, from this perspective, entailed the state's definition of requirements for work, shopping, exercise for physical health or other outdoor activity that had a 'reasonable excuse'. Formulations of essential mobility were common in

regulations and guidelines, with the message that no other purposes for being outdoors were acceptable. Existential mobilities, for Salazar, refer to the more open-ended movements of 'becoming' in which a person's wider sense of well-being are at stake. Despite the official emphasis on essential mobility, movement for existential reasons was in some ways just as important: "For them, it simply felt good to be able to do this while they had to spend so much time confined inside the walls of their house or apartment" (Salazar 2021, 28). Where physical activities could be essential or not from a public policy perspective, they were often existential on a personal level for many practitioners.

I heard this also amongst students I teach. When asking a small class of undergraduates to talk about landscapes that were meaningful for them, some chose places they had walked frequently during lockdown two or three years previously—a rural coastal area near their home, Aberdeen beach front, a forest on the edge of Aberdeen. These were not just walks for exercise, but became a kind of solace and self-care in a holistic sense. Despite the number of times the walks were undertaken, they were not, it seemed, being 'repeated' in the narrow sense of the word. Instead, they felt more like accumulations of experience with each walk enabling something new and different to happen, layering a memory upon others. This is a theme that has often cropped up in my research with people reflecting on their walking, as they notice small changes and details of the places they move through, over days, seasons and years.

Rethinking Margins in Pedestrian Landscapes

Michel de Certeau describes pedestrian walking, or in other words, walking that is ordinary, as an enunciative practice that 'speaks' a relationship with place (De Certeau 1988). It gives expression to a way of inhabiting. Pedestrian activity from this perspective is indeed more than just a walk, a way of becoming a walker that lives in and through a landscape, whether urban or rural. Enunciation, for De Certeau, involves the appropriation of the topographical system (the city in his case) much as a speaker appropriates a language for their use. It is a spatial acting-out of the place, and it also "implies relations among differentiated positions' of the walker / speaker, other people, and the place they are in" (ibid.: 97–98). The creative and aesthetic responses that I have discussed here—both the more formally artistic and the ordinary drifts through the landscape—expressed distinctive kinds of meanings through interactions with place.

Notions of existential well-being emerged in these lockdown walks. For many, they comprised the everyday tactical response to the structures imposed by a new and indeed unprecedented regime of mobility.

We might think about how the boundaries and margins of local landscapes are enunciated in these terms. I have shared in ordinary walking practices taking place in a range of landscapes, from urban city centres such as Aberdeen, to rural settings of coast, farmland, forest and hills, and have often experienced the significance of local places whether or not they are 'iconic' examples of Scottish landscape. These kind of walked landscapes are therefore distinctively pedestrian in the double sense of the word—both experienced on foot and purposefully ordinary. Such places are inhabited by ordinary means. This is not to say that they may not also be special, beautiful, scenic and so on, but they are not exclusively so. They are also sites of everyday mobility, and ordinary aesthetics, as part of people's inhabitation of the landscape.

In the pandemic, however, access to these ordinary routes came within a regime of mobility in ways not usually, if ever, experienced before. Where before, walking was often unreflexive and unremarked upon— whether for 'essential' reasons of practicality or more existential everyday well-being—now, it seemed there was a lot at stake. The margins of the landscape were no longer the remote mountains or a quiet beach. They were a side street that had not been walked up before, or often. A woodland on the edge of town, or a route around a field. Mobilities on the margins came much closer to home. In a sense, this was an archetypal demonstration of the Scottish outdoor access rights applying to 'everywhere', enabling access not just to the supposedly high-value recreation assets of forests, mountains and coasts, but to the places around where people actually lived, and at a time of pandemic when access genuinely mattered. The ability to drift around cities, urban fringes and the countryside in the pandemic was underpinned by the access rights, whether or not the drifters and other access takers were aware of it specifically. In so doing, they gave expression to the access rights as a relationship with the landscape, at the same time as their own existential states of seeking exercise, well-being and so on.

The visible and invisible qualities of the access rights and pedestrian walking play a role here too. The rights are, for the most part, made present in language through law and the various guidance documents (e.g. leaflets) and webpages that exist. There are very few signs in the landscape itself—unlike in places such as England where specific and

limited areas of 'access land' may be entered into and left. One more visible result of the outdoor access rights is that funding has been available for access schemes like local path networks in peri-urban and rural areas. These are initiatives that give people the chance to walk more easily in their local areas, while also being attractive to visitors and tourists. Prominent way-marked route networks, information panels and maps can be found in many more areas compared to some years previously. Examples in Aberdeenshire are Tarland, Ballater and Aboyne amongst others (though Aberdeen city is arguably still lacking in this regard). There is however a tension between the open-ended nature of the access rights, which promise access to the outdoors as an entirety, and the manner in which way-marked trails guide the walker through a specific route through the landscape. They provide a certainty of route, usually arriving back at the start point, and time spent on the walk. Yet, they lose the creative quality of the drift that relies on a willingness to walk without a map or signposting.

A practical result of the outdoor access regime in Scotland has been the removal of many a 'private' sign in countryside areas. I remember one personally: when volunteering for a community group at a popular walking area, we carried out path repair work that included the removal of a large, metal sign on a post next to a path, which had been made redundant by the rights. In some ways, this makes it hard to actively notice the access rights that now exist—replacing material 'private' signs and locked gates with rights that exist in law and guidance that probably few people have read. The rights have certainly affected the landscape, but through an invisibility and the removal of hinderances rather than, in most cases, actively marking out the rights. Instead, they are most clearly and visibly enunciated by the very practice of access taking itself, by people walking, riding bicycles and so on. Marking out a path on the ground, or being seen out in the streets or along the beach, means others may follow. For De Certeau, this is the 'speech act', the communicative act, of walking.

Future Landscapes, Future Margins

Allemansrätten in the Nordic countries is, as we have seen, practiced both as a historical tradition and as current political concern (La Mela 2020). In this volume, Nousiainen et al. reflect on how tourism mobilities in Finland enact a national version of *allemansrätten* but also lead to the

valuing of local community practices in the face of the commercialisation of tourism. In Scotland, there have been conflicts too in the years since the outdoor access rights were introduced in 2003. As well as cases around blocked paths and locked gates, these have included landowners seeking to enforce privacy rights around their homes in the countryside, and sometimes on curtailing rights to camp in places where intensive and irresponsible camping (e.g. leaving camping gear behind after the trip) had been taking place. These issues highlight how access rights are not simply one-off pronouncements that are made in law and then set for all time, even in Scotland where there was a specific legislative process. Rather, they are the subject of ongoing negotiation both legally and in the landscape itself. They rely on a kind of landscape politics that is acted out in different arenas—along paths in woodlands and in local council meetings, as well as in national government and legal discourse. As such they are created through the body politic as much as through formal law, as Olwig (2002) discusses in relation to the history of landscape in northern Europe. There is, therefore, an openness to the future and future change that is important to recognise. This is the shift from the 'rights of way' approach—in which specific routes are available for use on the basis of historic practice—to a holistic landscape approach that makes no distinction between routes or value of the land, other than what is can be regarded as responsible activity by the access taker. Where a 'regimes of mobility' approach has been useful to gaining entry to understand the Scottish outdoor access rights as a legal system that impacts upon the landscape, we also need to recognise, with De Certeau, the tactical responsiveness of ordinary mobilities. Walkers, and other access takers, create their own futures through path making, new routines and, sometimes, new concepts of locality and marginality.

Given this openness to the future, we might consider whether lessons for ordinary mobilities and outdoor access can be found in our collective pandemic experience. Could walking during the COVID-19 lockdowns be a model for better planning of local mobilities, to the benefit of both residents and those who choose to travel to an area and experience a landscape there? During the enforced localisation of the pandemic, walkers responded by discovering new, close-by margins, finding existential and aesthetic value in what otherwise might have been very ordinary landscapes. For the majority of city dwellers, access to the urban and peri-urban landscape became important—these 'margins' are in many ways undervalued, not necessarily easy to access, and not widely known about

(in contrast to the scenic, remote uplands for those with private transport). If we could recognise the worth of our ordinary landscapes more clearly, perhaps the divides between city and countryside, Highland and Lowland, margin and centre, would be less pronounced.

A final lesson might be to think further about an element of the Scottish access rights that, to me, has always seemed slightly painful, though no doubt legally necessary. The rights are appended in legislation with the phrase 'and then leave'. So the access taker has extensive rights to enter and move through the outdoors landscape, but cannot stay there, even if responsible camping is usually allowed. This seems like a significant limit on what inhabitation of the land through access rights can really be. As noted, the parallel process of land reform has led to an increase in communal ownership of land in Scotland, but the access rights do cover the country as a whole. The rights are, of course, not meant to allow permanent habitation, still less undermine planning and housing laws. And yet I have tried to suggest that local accumulations of walking experience, through well-trodden routes, drifts, and nearby explorations of the margins, do constitute a kind of inhabitation in movement, not simply a passing through by people who 'then leave', as if never to return. This is a way of walking that might be encouraged through urban and rural landscapes much more widely.

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