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Don't Go! Some Agoraphobic Postulates for a Post-Travel World Derived from Ingeborg Bachmann's 'Probleme Probleme'

'Bleiben Sie! Ich bitte Sie ja, bleiben Sie.' [Stay! Please stay!] Max Frisch to Ingeborg Bachmann[1]

DRAFT

I.

This article proposes that it is vitally important that studies of travel as a cultural phenomenon not only cease taking movement for granted but embrace instead the more sustainable prospects offered by inertia. It proposes a static turn, embodied by the figure of Beatrix in Bachmann's short story 'Probleme Probleme' from her volume *Simultan* (1972), and proffers the flight of fancy, as particularly exemplified by the literary text, as a real alternative to actual flight.

It may seem perverse to choose to explore this point using the work of so motile an author as Bachmann who is as much associated with travel as her fellow Austrian, Elfriede Jelinek, is associated with immobility. Bachmann's 1964 flight into Egypt, for instance, is considered so central to understanding the author that it formed the organizing principle and denouement of Margarethe von Trotta's recent biopic *Ingeborg Bachmann – Reise in die Wüste* (2022).[2] [Journey into the Desert] However, as this article will show, von Trotta's

[1] In *Ingeborg Bachmann - Reise in die Wüste*, dir. Margarethe von Trotta (tellfilm, AMOUR FOU Vienna, Heimatfilm und AMOUR FOU Luxembourg, 2022).

[2] Von Trotta is not mistaken in granting the Egyptian trip such significance in the life of the author, for this 1964 trip alongside her 1973 journey to Poland were, as Caitríona Leahy points out, "among her most important trips," the former providing material for the novel fragment *Der Fall / Das Buch Franza* and its first-person travel narrative precursor *Wüstenbuch*. However, as Leahy also points out, there has been a tendency towards the fetishization of Bachmann's life, including in two biographical accounts by Adolf Opel who accompanied her to Egypt. These narratives run the risk of making her into "fodder", "the [object] of someone else's study, […] trapped in the texts of others." Caitriona Leahy, "Ingeborg Bachmann," in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Francisca de Haan et al. (Budapest: CEU Press, 2006) 44-48, here 46. Bachmann was also textualized in Max Frisch's *Mein Name sei Gantbein* (1964) and the readily decodable 1951 novel by another former lover Hans Weigel, *Unvollendete Symphonie.* Von Trotta sees this use of Bachmann by Frisch as an intrusion and a trap. At various

approach to Bachmann through her biographical travels ultimately treats the spaces of Bachmann's life too literally, perhaps because film itself tends to treat space indexically. This is a fundamental flaw in many authorial biopics. And yet von Trotta does grasp something, albeit crudely, of the importance of spatialities to an understanding of the Bachmann's work, while gesturing impotently at the inadequacies (and intrusions) of biographical narrative approaches such her own.[3]

Of course, as Christa Gürtler points out, Bachmann's many travels reflect the conditions of authorship in the fifties and sixties more generally which demanded significant mobility of authors: 'So bestimmen Arbeitsmöglichkeiten bei Zeitungen, Rundfunk und Aufenthaltsstipendien die wechselnden Aufenthaltsorte ebenso wie private Liebesbeziehungen und Lebensfreundschaften [...]. Dazu kommen Lesereisen und Treffen der Gruppe 47, Urlaubsreisen nach Griechenland, Spanien oder Ägypten. Wochen und Monate verbringt Ingeborg Bachmann abwechselnd in Paris, London, Wien, Ischia, Rom, Harvard, Neapel, Klagenfurt, München, Zürich, Uetikon am See, New York, Berlin und anderswo.'[4] [Job opportunities with newspapers, on the radio, residencies, as well as personal relationships and friendships require frequent travel. […] There are also various reading tours, meetings of Group 47, and holidays in Greece, Spain and Egypt. Bachmann spends weeks and months at a time in Paris, London, Vienna, Ischia, Rome, Harvard, Naples, Klagenfurt, Munich, Zürich, Uetikon am See, New York, and Berlin, amongst other places.] While conceding that physical travels were important to her career, it is equally important to note of travel as a motif within her

crucial junctures in the film, he is shown making notes about Bachmann, making her into stuff for his stories, including during her speech upon receiving the radio-play prize of the War Blind. Von Trotta, 54:48. Film-Bachmann notices his writerly interest in her rather than in her speech, remarking afterwards "Du hast dir doch die ganze Zeit Notizen gemacht." Von Trotta, 54:52. Later Bachmann pries open the drawer in which he keeps this notebook and reads and burns it, saying "Ich war sein Studienobjekt" (1:21:05 – 1:21:47).

[3] Her Ingeborg is shown writing a letter in an Egyptian café in which she promises that she will write a novel "in dem das sein wird, was mein Leben ausmacht," suggesting that the novels are the key to the author, but thereby also reducing the literary output to a series of biographical keys. Von Trotta, 55:59.

[4] Christa Gürtler, *Ingeborg Bachmann: Klagenfurt, Wien, Rom* (Berlin, Edition Eberbach, 2006) 10.

literature, as Bachmann herself does, in a much-quoted lecture on 'Der Umgang mit Namen' [On Names] – one of five Bachmann held at the University of Frankfurt in 1959-60 – that any literary map 'sich nur an wenigen Stellen mit den Karten der Geographen [deckt].'[5] [has little to do with those of geographers.] Bachmann further describes the magical space of the literary text as a place where 'die Newa an die Seine [grenzt], und über die Seine führt der Pont du Carrousel von Balzac und der Pont Mirabeau von Apollinaire, und die Steine und die Wasser sind aus Worten gemacht.' [the Neva borders the Seine which is spanned by Balzac's Pont du Carrousel and Apollinaire's Pont Mirabeau, and the stones and water consist of words.] It may at first seem like a truism to say that fictional places cannot be regarded as the same as real geographical spaces. But some of the deeper implications of this idea become clearer when Bachmann explored the space of the fictional text through the claustrophobic indoors of an agoraphobe who becomes both a figure in a text as well as the figure of texts per se.

It is important, when considering agoraphobia as a literary device, first to recognize that it is a real and incapacitating panic disorder which immobilizes in debilitating ways: Where Bachmann's career seems inextricably intertwined with movement, Elfriede Jelinek's offers a painful instance of the inverse: authorship in the face of incapacitating immobility. She famously had to deliver her 2004 Nobel Prize speech by pre-recorded video because she was unable to travel to Stockholm in person, and recalled in one high-profile interview being unable to leave her house for a year.[6]

Nevertheless, there is a tradition of treating agoraphobia not as a panic disorder but rather as a hermeneutic device with relevance beyond the realm of psychiatry. Because of its malign conjunction of spatiality and morbidity, the syndrome has been used in particular to

[5] Ingeborg Bachmann, *Werke*, vol. 4: *Essays, Reden, Vermischte Schriften, Anhang*, ed. Christine Koschel et al., (Munich: Piper, 1978) 238. Quoted in Gürtler, 10.
[6] Interview with André Müller quoted in Carolin John-Wenndorf, *Der öffentliche Autor: Über die Selbstinszenierung von Schriftstellern* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2014) 322.

understand so-called pathologies of urban modernity, a sociological attitude to the modern metropolis propounded particularly often at the time of Mitchell Gordon's *Sick Cities* of 1963 which asked if 'cities themselves [were] the disease.'[7] While other studies have sought to redeem the city, and to overturn the central trope of cities as sick, a sense of the urban as pathological prevails.[8] At first glance, Bachmann's Büchner Prize speech in *Ein Ort für Zufälle* [A Place for Coincidences] (1964-5) from precisely this mid-century period casts Berlin as a sick city, requiring 'eine Einstellung auf Krankheit'[9] [an adjustment to illness]. One of the nightmarish vignettes in the speech depicts the noise of Berlin air traffic from the perspective of a hospital ward, where the noise is so intense that the planes seem to be inside the building. But interpretation is complicated by the fact that Bachmann's comments refer to the divided city of the post-war period, and further by the fact that Bachmann is in recovery herself in Berlin after a breakdown and the end of her relationship with Max Frisch. It is here, in fact, that she begins to get well. Whatever about the city, the relationship had been toxic, as their recently published correspondence reveals. Just as the distorted spaces of the city in *Der gute Gott von Manhattan* (1958) served as a metaphor for the disordered relationship between Jan and Jennifer, Bachmann's portrait of Berlin also bears traces of the situation with Frisch. In a 1971 interview, she would identify the locus of illness much more precisely: 'Die Männer sind alle unheilbar krank.'[10] [All men are incurably sick.]

Rather than using agoraphobia here to re-diagnose an allegedly overcrowded and overbuilt modernity, or indeed Bachmann's relationship with Frisch as von Trotta's film does,

[7] Mitchell Gordon, *Sick Cities* (New York: Macmillan, 1963) 7. Of course, the genesis of this urban trope begins much earlier, dating back to Simmel's attribution of urban "Blasiertheit" [blasé attitude] to the physiological effects of the overstimulating city environment. Georg Simmel, *Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben* (1903), (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2006) 22.
[8] For example, Peter Dreier et al. recently pointed out that even now "many Americans […] believe that cities are basket cases – like sick people with so few resources that they only serve to burden society." Peter Dreier et al. *Place Matters: Metropolitics for the Twenty-first Century* (2004) 31.
[9] Ingeborg Bachmann, "Ein Ort für Zufälle," Werke, vol. 4 (Munich: Piper, 1978) 278-293, here 279.
[10] Ingeborg Bachmann, *"Wir müssen wahre Sätze finden": Gespräche und Interviews* (Munich: Piper, 1994) 71.

this article looks at the possibilities unfolded by spatial collapse in one of Bachmann's fictions. Reimagining the human world through the lens of agoraphobia seems particularly timely in a period when movement and the human intercourse that it requires demand radical re-conception in reaction to pandemics and ecological catastrophe, as well as to the wanton and redundant space-fantasies of centibillionaire Star Trek fans. Certainly, the indoors has new resonance and validity in a digital world which itself operates on illusions of space and depth, and in which travel can happen virtually, instantaneously and motionlessly, rather than only actually, penetratingly, directionally, and devastatingly. In other words, Bachmann's figure of agoraphobia allows us to resituate our ideas of being in the world away from perpetual motion and towards immobility and enclosure and entirely imagined travels.[11]

The inward turn is not a modern invention, of course. The anchoritic tradition of voluntary reclusion and self-incarceration far predates the late modern dystopolis with which we now associate agoraphobic withdrawal. However, the immured medieval ascetics in their anchorholds, unlike the modern recluse, were 'encouraged, applauded and supported by society.' [12] Not considered outliers or eccentrics, they functioned within and for their larger community as a 'reminder of the proper focus of Christian existence'.[13] Crucially, while their cell was a narrow, specific and unmoving place, it simultaneously functioned as a portal, transporting its inhabitant somewhere else, if only imaginatively or symbolically. At this point, disambiguation is necessary: if the hermit (Lat. *eremita*) was associated with the wide-open spaces of the wilderness or desert (Lat. *erēmus*), the anchorite (Lat. *anachoreta* from the Greek

[11] As this claim has political consequences too, it is interesting to note the discussion of political immobilism and movement in Henri Lefebvre's 1959 essay "Being a Communist" in which he looks at the static deadlock of the anti-communist and communist caught in a stalemate of direct opposition to one another. He describes this impasse as immobilism on both sides, contrasting the fixed obsession of each side with the other with the motile state of becoming of Socialism, which is not yet achieved but coming into being: "The 'communist' and the 'anti' thus stand face to face, philosophically and politically, frozen like two abstract qualities or two essences. Movement, becoming, transcendence and the possible then lose their meaning." Henri Lefebvre, "Being a Communist," *Key Writings*, ed. Stuart Elden et al. (New York: Continuum, 2003) 231-37, here 237.
[12] Ann K. Warren, *Anchorites and Their Patrons in Medieval England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 7.
[13] Idem.

ἀνᾰχωρητής from *χωρέω* meaning 'to withdraw' with an intensifying prefix) seemed to be his diametric opposite, someone who did not venture forth at all. The anchorite, unlike the hermit, 'was […] enclosed and stable with limited access to the outside world.'[14] However, the narrow cell of the anchorite was intended as 'a version of the desert home' of the hermit.[15] Where actual travel to the wildernesses of Egypt in the manner of the early desert fathers – or indeed Bachmann herself – was impractical, the anchorite could achieve a sort of virtual travel by collapsing his immediate sphere of movement completely, thereby accessing a sense of the measureless desolation of the Nitrian Desert where early ascetics went to practice their holy loneliness. The enclosed cell allowed motionless, safe and sustainable transport to that vast landscape. 'The primary symbol of the cell […] was that of the desert.'[16]

Just as it was was to the desert wastes that the proponents of hermitage went to battle with the devil and become closer to God, Bachmann's Egyptian desert journey is portrayed as a quest for a kind of salvation. It is a trip during which, as she famously put it in a later letter to her travel companion Adolf Opel, 'das Lachen zurückgekommen ist'[17] [she had learned to laugh again] after the break-up with Frisch. In fact, in Von Trotta's film, Bachmann explicitly compares herself to an ancient martyr brought by her suffering closer to her God.[18] However, the film cannot do justice to what the director distantly recognizes as a crucial point. While von Trotta has Opel make a cinematic reference in order to convey the importance of the desert in this film (Opel talks about Lawrence of Arabia which was released around the time of their trip),[19] the experience of intense transformation, self-abnegation and subsequent self-recovery,

[14] Warren, 8.
[15] Idem.
[16] Ibid., 8-9.
[17] Adolf Opel, *"Wo mir das Lachen zurückgekommen ist."Auf Reisen mit Ingeborg Bachmann* (Munich: Langen Müller, 2001) 214.
[18] Von Trotta, 50:59-51:08. "Manchmal liebe ich mein Elend, als sei es eine Auszeichnung, als wäre ich ein Märtyrer, der damit Gott näher kommt." [Sometimes I love my misery, as though it were a distinction, as though I were a martyr and it brought me closer to God.]
[19] Von Trotta, 40:15. Opel refers to the film again during a later camel-ride through the desert with Film-Ingeborg, proposing Omar Sharif as "der richtige Scheich" [the right Sheikh] for her. 1:02:22.

through travel to and in the desert wilderness, which Bachmann recounts in her *Wüstenbuch*, simply cannot really be represented visually. While Von Trotta attempts to do so by contrasting claustrophobic Zürich interiors with Frisch with Egyptian desert panoramas, for Bachmann herself the transformational experiences of the desert are the diametric opposite of such a super-panavision experience. The desert experience, according to Bachmann's account of it in her *Wüstenbuch* manuscript (1963-65) [Desert Book] written shortly after the trip, is precisely not one of landscape or the exteriority that film requires, but rather negates all sight and sound: 'Man erlebt nichts. Man begibt sich unter ein anderes Gesetz, in eine andere Zeit […].'[20] [You experience nothing. You are subject to a different law and a different time.] Similarly, in the ensuing novel *Das Buch* / *Der Fall Franza,* the desert is conceived as non-experience, as the negation of everything we might associate with travel:

> Die Augen und die Wüste fanden zueinander, die Wüste legte sich über die Netzhaut, lief davon, wellte sich näher heran, lag wieder im Aug, stundenlang, tagelang. Immer leerer werden die Augen [...] in der einzigen Landschaft, für die Augen gemacht sind. [...] Was suchst du in dieser Wüste, in der nichts zu hören ist?[21] [The eye and the desert found each other. The desert settled on the retina, ran away, billowed back, lay on the eye again, for hours, days. The eyes become more and more empty […] in the only landscape truly made for the eye. […] What are you looking for in the desert where nothing can be heard?]

It is precisely because of the desert's nothingness and dimensional and temporal collapse that it can offer a vast transformative negation, and this is why, by extension, the anchorite's claustrophilic cell can function as the desert's proxy, negating experience equally and

[20] Ingeborg Bachmann, *Wüstenbuch*, *Todesarten-Projekt*, vol. 1 (Munich: Piper, 1995) 243.
[21] Ingeborg Bachmann, Der Fall Franza, in *Werke,* ed. Christine Koschel et al., vol. 2. (Munich: Piper, 1978) 259.

oppositely by reducing space to a minimum and excluding the outside world, achieving the same sensory emptying by an inward motion which has precisely the same effect as its expansive counterpart.

In an extraordinary 2020 work, Annina Klappert makes an invaluable connection between sand and virtuality, arguing that sand allows us to conceptualize the virtual space in new and important ways. She sees in both sand's real physical qualities and its metaphorical potential a key to understanding virtuality, linking, for example, ideas of *Hochauflösung* (the high-resolution of the screen) with sand's *Auflösbarkeit* (its shifting dissolubility).[22] Klappert's insight into the mappability of the qualities of sand onto the digital realm helps us at first – dimly perhaps – to apprehend the relevance of desert-experiences, whether of the anchorite/hermit or Bachmann, to dilemmas of the virtual age. The mode of the anchorite who used his or her enclosure as a portal to the hermit's non-place in the desert cannot help but recall the mode of the agoraphobe of our digital era who accesses the world virtually from his or her bedroom via the non-space of the flat computer screen. Yet while the unmoving anchorite of early monasticism was 'revered in his lifetime and financially supported by those who desired to share in his holiness,'[23] modern reclusiveness (as opposed to withdrawal to the natural wilderness of, say, a Thoreauian log cabin) is not similarly revered, and, like the imagined sick city with which it has been associated, generally considered pathological. Alarmist headlines such as 'The Teens Who Won't Leave Their Rooms – How the COVID Pandemic Fuelled the Rise of 'Ghost Children,''[24] reflect a broadly held concern that an antisocial, troubling and widespread social withdrawal syndrome is affecting ever increasing numbers of young people, and is vaguely linked to the deleterious effects of too much internet. While we can accept the historical anchorite's immurement in-cell as religio-ascetic self-

[22] Annina Klappert, *Sand als metaphorisches Modell für Virtualität* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020) 31-32.
[23] Warren, 97.
[24] Tanith Carey, *The Telegraph*, 1 February 2022. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/health-fitness/mind/teens-wont-leave-rooms-pandemic-fuelled-rise-ghost-children/ accessed 9 December 2022.

disciplining, contemporary In-cels refusing to leave their Wi-Fi-ed bedrooms is considered self-indulgent disordered, pathological and – somewhat ironically, in light of the environmental destruction associated with actual movement and travel – unsustainable.[25]

It has long-since been established that in the hyper-connected age of the Internet, the rules and spaces of social engagement and being in place and time perforce have changed.[26] The World Wide Web's radical transformation of human spatiotemporalities makes this moment particularly ripe to reconsider indoorness and immobility specifically in the age of the digital and the megapolis, understood not as sickness but as a valid 'way forward', we might say, were not 'going forward' precisely against the thrust of what is being postulated here. The intention here is not to re-examine a specific incarnation of solitude, whether the lone ranger of the Wild West imaginary, the basement-ridden incel or even the agoraphobe, but rather to use agoraphobia, much as Klappert used sand, as a device that allows us to think differently about the experience of space and place, and indeed about the possibilities unleashed by rejection of the out-of-doors.

II.

In this section I want to propose that there is something particular in the nature of books that can unfold to us the possibilities of agoraphobia as a new way of thinking critically about travel, and that this has to do with the (cellular) structure of texts. It is possible that a less negatively charged version of the term would allow us more immediately to see its potential: claustrophilia, a love of enclosures, might do better justice to such an undertaking. (To coin a German antonym for *Platzangst* – *Platzliebe*? – would be more problematic.) The pioneering

[25] Bin Dong et al., "Hikikomori: A Society-Bound Syndrome of Severe Social Withdrawal," *Psychiatry and Clinical Psychopharmacology* 32.2 (2022): 167-173, here 168. The unsustainability of agoraphobia is often alleged with reference to the recluses' aging parents and their concomitantly diminishing fortunes.
[26] See, for example, Michalis Vefopoulos, "Being, Space, and Time on the Web," *Metaphilosophy* 43.4 (2021): 405-425, esp. the pithy statement on 420, "The Web 'curves' physical time and space […]."

human geographer Yi-fu Tuan used the term topophilia in a similar effort and sense, drawing on Bachelard, who had also briefly used the term topophilia in his 1957 *Poetics of Space*, and had understood that the human experience of space (in other words, intimate space, rather than some mathematical notion of pure physical extension) was primarily a question of 'the poetic imagination.'[27] Tuan, coming to the same conclusion as a geographer, argued that literary texts are fundamentally important to geography as a discipline as they alone can reveal our all-important *experience* of 'space, place, nature and environment.'[28] I reiterate these points here to demonstrate the validity of deriving new approaches to space from the fiction of Bachmann. If the spaces of literature offer the key to understanding space and our being in and movement through it, it is in literary texts and their structure that we will find urgent correctives to the motion-obsessions of our era, particularly in the work of an author as interested in spatial paradox and collapse as Bachmann, poet of 'Böhmen am Meer' [Bohemia Lies by the Sea], in which words themselves form buildings, bridges and borders, and for whom the figures *in* her texts, as she said of Undine, are figures of art itself: 'Die Undine ist keine Frau, auch kein Lebewesen, sondern, um es mit Büchner zu sagen, 'die Kunst […]'.[29] Beatrix is a similar abstraction representing enclosure in and with books.

For one thing, books themselves, both in traditional and digital forms, have a topographical similarity to enclosed spaces more generally, whether bedroom, monk's cell, study, or bunk. Bachelard notes of his reading: 'I go to live in the 'literary prints' poets offer me. The more simple the engraved house the more it fires my imagination as an inhabitant. It does not remain a mere 'representation.' Its lines have *force* and, as a shelter is it *fortifying*. It

[27] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994) xi.
[28] Yi-Fu Tuan, "Literature and Geography: Implications for Geographical Research," in *Humanistic Geography: Prospects and Problems*, ed. David Ley and Marwyn Samuels (Chicago: Maaroufa Press, 1978) 194-206, here 194.
[29] Ingeborg Bachmann, *Wir müssen wahre Sätze finden: Gespräche und Interviews*, ed. Christine Koschel and Inge von Weidenbaum (München: Piper, 1983) 46.

asks to be lived in simply with all the *security* that *simplicity* gives.'[30] This is not the first or only conception of the text as dwelling place: In her aunt's home at Gateshead Hall, a ten-year-old Jane Eyre, herself already enfolded within paper words inside Brontë's book and her surname a play on the error of *errāre* (Lat. To wander), creates a second enclosure behind a curtain, there to read her own book and, in that reading, escape to another space in flights of fancy. At the captive mercy of the cruel Reed household, appropriately enough, it is a book on flying that she chooses: Thomas Bewick's 1797 *History of British Birds*.[31] And the book does briefly take to the air, as a missile hurled at her head by her bullying cousin John Reed. When she no longer has access to reading material in the enforced enclosure of the Red Room to which she is banished, into the flat and enclosed yet deep space of the mirror she can projects fantasies of escape, just as one might now escape into the bottomless screen of a computer. Confined as punishment, unable to go anywhere, her 'fascinated glance involuntarily explored the depth it revealed.'[32]

This idea of not-going as a viable (if purely imaginative) alternative takes the position of Rekal Inc. in Philip K. Dick's 1966 *expansio ad absurdum* of a space travel obsessed age, "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale"[33] and suggests that imagining you went to Mars is infinitely preferable to actually going there in several respects. Moreover, Mr McClane, purveyor of false memories and "Ersatz interplanetary travel" at Rekal, notices something drearily predictable in the appetities of his clientele: "Programming an artificial memory of a trip to another planet—with or without the added fillip of being a secret agent—showed up on the firm's work-schedule with monotonous regularity."[34] Maybe it is reactionary to suggest that the Ersatz travel that both Rekal and the Dick novelette itself, including as literature (after

[30] Bachelard, 50. Emphasis in original.
[31] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 3rd ed. (Suffolk: Penguin Classics, 2006), 10.
[32] Ibid., 18.
[33] Philip K. Dick, "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale," *Selected Stories of Philip K. Dick* (New York: Pantheon, 2002) 328-349.
[34] Ibid., 332.

all, we the readers journey through the text with Doug, who does not go) offer is actually a consummation to be wished. But such an anti-spatial turn is perhaps particularly important for academics to embrace: we are fundamentally readers whose books can fly through the air instead of us, and increasingly purport to be environmentalists. This static turn offers at its heart a return journey to the text. Don't go! Read!

If the unique architectonics of text, which, whether consumed flatly online or in an actual book, deconstruct the antinomies of ordinary physics, offering singularities such as motionless travel, instantaneous movement, flat depths, open enclosures, timeless time, we as devotees of text need to go nowhere. Just think, to travel with Bachmann to Egypt in 1964, for example, you can remain entirely indoors, and do it now. You don't even have to go to the physical library or indeed, in the age of streaming, to a cinema to see von Trotta's Bachmann in Egypt. You can access everything, anywhere, all of the time.

III.

Indeed, we live in a more static world than we imagine: an estimated 90% of the world's population will never travel abroad.[35] Despite this, we First Worlders of the age of the combustion engine, intercontinental wide-bodied airliners and abundant fossil fuels, find ourselves in a particularly motion-ridden state: a pre-COVID 2019 study looking at the 5 years 2011-16, found that 'human mobility increased dramatically. In absolute terms, the number of estimated trips increased from about 2.3 billion […] to about 2.9 billion […] [T]his growth is much larger than the growth in world population, indicating that collectively, humanity has indeed become more transnationally mobile. In this regard, transnational mobility is developing [in similar ways to] cross-border communication, but differently from migration,

[35] Pankaj Ghemawat, "The Cosmopolitan Cooporation," *Harvard Business Review* (May 2011). https://hbr.org/2011/05/the-cosmopolitan-corporation accessed 14 July 2023.

which has not grown significantly faster than the world population.'[36] Notably, however, the same study found that while travel in some parts of the world was rising rapidly, in others (Africa and Oceania) it was not. In other words, they point out the fairly obvious fact that '[m]obility differs by levels of prosperity and country size,'[37] confirming that its concentration within certain privileged populations increases with time.

Certainly, in the Western World the nineteenth century had ushered in an age not just of intensifying actual movement at the individual level, but also of the perception of movement as a new principle. Marx and Engels, for example, in the *Communist Manifesto* had diagnosed their era as one characterized by ceaseless uncertainty and movement.[38] Much more evident in the German expression *Fortschritt* [stepping forth] than the English Latin borrowing, *progress*, the ideas of innovation and movement that became inextricably enmeshed in that period have remained so stubbornly entangled that panicked centibillionaire Elon Musk recently emailed staff to say 'Remote work is no longer acceptable.'[39] His conception of progress (and clearly also work) is largely, if not entirely, motion-based: Stay-at-home staff cannot be productive. Like the clientele of Rekal inc. in Philip K. Dick's text, Musk's fantasies are not just predicated on motion, they are of motion itself. Dick's hero Doug does not dream of women, as his wife suspects, but simply of going somewhere.[40] Similarly, for Musk, Apollo 11 was the acme of human achievement for the simple reasons that it went far.[41] He laments indeed that we have

[36] Emanuel Deutschmann et al., "Assessing Transnational Human Mobility on a Global Scale," in *Migration Research in a Digitized World: Using Innovative Technology to Tackle Methodological Challenges*, ed. Steffen Pötzschke and Sebastian Rinken (Cham: Springer, 2022) 169-192, here 182. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-01319-5_9 accessed 9 December 2022.
[37] Ibid., 184.
[38] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto," *Capital, The Communist Manifesto and Other Writings* (New York: The Modern Library, 1959) 315-355, here 324.
[39] Email quoted in Dan Milmo and Alex Hern, "Elon Musk scraps Twitter's work from home policy," *The Guardian*, 10 November 2022. https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2022/nov/10/elon-musk-scraps-twitter-work-home-staff?CMP=share_btn_link accessed 9 December 2022.
[40] "*I will go*, he said to himself." Dick, 328.
[41] "I think Apollo 11 was one of the most inspiring things in all of human history. Arguably the most inspiring thing." From Jeffrey Klueger interview with Elon Musk on 12 July 2019, published as "Elon Musk Told Us Why He Thinks We Can Land on the Moon in 'Less Than 2 Years,'" *Time*, 18 July 2019. https://time.com/5628572/elon-musk-moon-landing/ accessed 9 December 2022.

not yet gone further, except in unmanned craft, and dreams of sending people as frequent fliers back to the moon, to Mars, and to the still uninhabitable moons of Jupiter. Meanwhile, it's not entirely clear what we are going to be doing there. Musk vaguely suggests that this kind of extreme travel will reap benefits for life on earth, which he proposes is his real interest. These benefits are not to include remote work, presumably. However, he did tweet tantalizingly that 'there will be a lot of jobs on Mars.'[42] Musk has often presented the act of 'going far' as a great democratization: 'We are developing the interplanetary rocket and spaceship to allow anyone to travel to the moon, Mars & beyond, regardless of nationality.'[43] He has even suggested a system of loans for people who can't afford the journey. Where is it all going, we might ask, all this promise of movement forward and further at ever greater accelerations.

While going has been Musk's vision for a long time, presumably due to the laziness of stubborn home workers, we have as yet only achieved farness in a very limited sense. NASA's unmanned Artemis I moon mission, which after two abortive launches, finally took off on 17 November 2022, hopes eventually to return astronauts to the lunar surface for the first time since 1972. But having failed to blast off twice, it then failed to land its water probe on the lunar surface, a crucial part of the scoping mission for a sustainable moon colony, and has now returned to earth. Even if Artemis II (under the strangely incomplete motto 'we go for all and by all')[44] does launch as planned in 2024, this second crewed mission will not land on the moon either.

This vision of the future of movement as space travel (whether as mere data or in person, and however fruitless) is not just Musk's stillborn fantasy. (As though sensing the

[42] Elon Musk [@elonmusk], Tweet, 2.08 am, 17 January 2020, https://twitter.com/elonmusk/status/1217992175452995584 accessed 9 December 2022.
[43] Elon Musk [@elonmusk], Tweet, 8.55 pm, 10 June 2017, https://twitter.com/elonmusk/status/873629817895133184 accessed 9 December 2022.
[44] David Smith, "'We go for all and by all': Artemis 2 Crew Certain of Mission Success," *Guardian*, 21 May 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/science/2023/may/21/nasa-artemis-ii-crew-moon-mission accessed 14 July 2023.

futility of it himself, Musk is content to send rockets into space just to see them blow up, as happened during the launch of the Starship Super Heavy rocket over Texas in April 2023,[45] or to launch an actual car into space in perhaps the most futile and impotent act of movement ever).[46] These space travel dreams are far more widely held than we might think. A 2020 study by hospitality and tourism management scholars at the University of Surrey used the technique of narrative futuring to forecast where travel was going. Having asked study participants to write letters from 20 years hence, it noted, like Rekal Inc.'s Mr McClane, that the participants' imagined destinations were characterized by a certain dreary homogeneity. A large number 'envisioned a trip to outer space, mainly to the moon and Mars.' As one wrote: 'I decided I'd try a trip to the moon which is something I have always wanted to do.'[47] This grim collective imaginary of far-flung space-travel monotony no doubt has to do with a steady diet of *Star Wars, Star Trek* and other such onwards-and-upwards cultural imaginaries. It should come as no surprise that 'to boldly go' in its truncated form, taken from the brief of the Starship Enterprise, with no further modifiers to indicate any destination or purpose, or indeed anything beyond the act of going has become the motto of this mindset.[48]

For Paul Fussell, in his bleakly entertaining 1982 study of travel and its increasing meaningless in our age of the aptly named *terminal*, all future journeying is doomed to be mere tourism. 'I am assuming,' he writes 'that travel is now impossible, and that tourism is all we have left [because] [t]ravel implies variety of means and independence of arrangements.'[49] Any standardization of the travel experience (hotel chains, identikit airport departure lounges, the

[45] See https://www.euronews.com/next/2023/04/20/elon-musks-giant-spacex-rocket-explodes-minutes-after-launch-from-texas last accessed 14 July 2023.
[46] The car has now been in space since 2018. See https://edition.cnn.com/2023/02/06/world/spacex-elon-musk-tesla-roadster-five-years-scn/index.html last accessed 14 July 2023.
[47] Iis Tussyadiah and Graham Miller, "Imagining the Future of Travel: Technology and Sustainability Transitions," *e-Review of Tourism Research* 17.5 (2020) 674-684, here 679.
[48] The motto has been used in its original form or slightly reordered to "Go boldly!" in advertising campaigns by Philips and Yamaha, Norton antivirus, Mercury Marine speedboats, CAT footwear, and Lexus, to name a few.
[49] Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) 41.

resort) immediately renders it tourism. Only when '[p]laces are odd and call for interpretation, are [they] the venue of the traveller. Pseudo-places entice by their familiarity and call for instant recognition: 'We have arrived.''[50] The ultimate example of a pseudo-place or tourist bubble to Fussell is Switzerland (Ingeborg Bachmann's heroine will later agree;[51] and indeed von Trotta's Film-Ingeborg eventually cannot stand Zürich and begs Frisch to move with her to Rome[52]), in particular Zermatt which, he claims, 'has been constructed for the purpose of being recognized as a familiar image.'[53] He continues that 'today the tourist is readied for his ultimate encounter with placelessness by passing first through the uniform airport,' (or 'starbase' as Musk has dubbed the imaginary passenger hubs of his SpaceX project), where 'being in one [is] precisely like being in another.'[54] The streamlining of the tourist experience is, says Fussell, made possible by the establishment of certain pre-conditions, the preeminent of which is that:

> The tourist's mind must be entirely emptied so that a sort of hypnotism can occur. […]. If the tourist is granted a little awareness, it is always of the most retrograde kind, like the 30's belief […] that 'transportation,' its varieties and promise, is itself an appropriate subject of high regard. (Think of the 1939 New York World's Fair, with its assumption that variety, celerity, and novelty in means of transport are inherently interesting: 'Getting There Is Half the Fun.')[55]

IV.

[50] Ibid., 43.
[51] "Skihütten und diese ganze Genre, mit diesen Leuten vom Alpenversein, darauf konnte sie verzichten. Strohsacklager, so stellte sie sich das vor. Jodler und ungeheizte Zimmer." Ingeborg Bachmann, "Probleme, Probleme," *Simultan: Erzählungen* (Munich: Piper, 1993) 41-76, here 60.
[52] Von Trotta, 1:03:15.
[53] Idem.
[54] Idem.
[55] Ibid., 42.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism, possibly in Fussell's sense, had contributed up to 8.4% of Austrian GDP (2018).[56] The sector had been undergoing nearly uninterrupted growth,[57] and when the Austrian government launched its 'Plan-T, Masterplan für Tourismus' in 2019, it looked as though this was going to continue untrammelled, albeit with some lipservice to sustainability.[58] During lockdown, a panicked Austrian National Tourist Office, unable to imagine no tourism, launched an Ersatz-travel experience via its internet portal www.austria.info entitled '#AustrianHomeStories: Experience Austria Virtually.' Amongst its motley offerings were a colouring book, 5 films set in Austria that are available to watch online including *The Sound of Music* (1965) and *The Third Man* (1949), and favourite Austrian recipes to recreate at home. It also provided links to various places of touristic interest that could already be experienced virtually and immersively via 360-degree video like the Schönbrunn. In addition to these virtual site visits, it offered other more bizarre experiences such as listening to an Austrian stream burble ('Gebirgsbach in Seefeld') and, a little more strangely, a one-hour video of a (presumably genuine Tyrolean) open fire, as though to warm one for the chill of the self-explanatory video just beneath it, 'Sunrise on the Mountain'.[59] The perhaps self-defeating message of the ANTO was that, while 'travel plans may have been put on hold […] what we can do is explore the world with our minds [and] experience Austria's culture and nature virtually, from the comfort of your home!'[60] The language in which the project was couched is worth noting. It is the language of real lived experience, with no sense that anything other than the merest being-in-the-place is lost. You can '*feel* like a Habsburg', '*take a dip* in deep blue

[56] Richard Bauer et al., *Tourismus nach COVID-19: Gut durch die Krise kommen und neu durchstarten. Perspektiven und Strategien für eine zukunftsstarke Branche* (Vienna: Linde Verlag, 2020) 143.
[57] Ibid., 8.
[58] See *Plan-T: Masterplan für Tourismus,* https://www.bmaw.gv.at/Themen/Tourismus/plan-t.html accessed 14 July 2023.
[59] Videos by WEST4MEDIA for the Austrian National Tourist Office https://www.austria.info/en/virtual-austria/videos accessed 9 December 2022.
[60] https://www.austria.info/en/virtual-austria accessed 9 December 2022.

Lake Wörthersee', or '*hang-glide* down Nordkette mountain on your desktop computer, mobile device, or even via VR goggles'.[61] The site offers it to us wholesale.

But there was something in the air pre-COVID too because, as though sensing a static turn, a first all-virtual travel company, First Airlines, had already launched in Japan in 2018. They had begun offering 'the full experience of a flight without going anywhere' in response to other developments, including an aging travel demographic for whom movement in real time and space was more problematic. As they put it: 'We have many older customers who can't go abroad easily. Also, many people face the obstacles of being busy or having children […]. We can easily give them an experience and make the dream a reality by using virtual trips. Customers say the experience is fun […] and some of them come back more than once.'[62]

Of course, they do not just offer long-distance flights in luxury, first-class and business. The packages include daytrips to cities at the destination. They offer an excursion upon 'arrival' 'to the city of Paris or the beach [sic] of Hawaii in a virtual space where the scenery is projected on the entire room in 180 degrees'.[63] The immobile tourist has now arrived back where she started after a pseudo-journey, where in a darkened room a projector beams images of the pseudo-destination onto the walls. First Travel's virtual travel takes to heart and puts into practice the claims of Flann O'Brien's ingenious and much-maligned philosopher de Selby from *The Third Policeman*, who had infamously asserted that all travel was merely 'an illusion'.[64] His own experiment, in fact, uncannily foreshadows the projector and darkened room of First Airlines' city tours: de Selby's virtual journey from Bath to Folkestone and back, like those dioramas, also involved pictures and manipulations of the lights.[65]

[61] Ibid.
[62] James Gabriel Martin, "Japan's virtual reality airline offers the full experience of a flight without going anywhere," *Lonely Planet*, 23 February, 2018, https://www.lonelyplanet.com/news/first-airlines-japanese-virtual-reality accessed 9 December, 2022.
[63] https://firstairlines.co.jp/asakusa#features accessed 9 December 2022.
[64] Flann O'Brien, *The Third Policeman* (London: Flamingo, 1993) 52.
[65] Idem.

V.

The final third of this article, bringing the trajectory of its opening back to ground like an abortive SpaceX rocket, returns us to Ingeborg Bachmann whose 'Probleme Probleme' from her collection *Simultan* features a journey through the day of an infinitely indolent, agoraphobic or claustrophilic heroine, who puts into practice the infinite rests and 'succession of static experiences' which de Selby had proposed made up not only the essence of movement, but the essence of existence itself.[66] Like the character de Selby who moves without motion between two English towns, 'Probleme Probleme' offers us the non-journey of another paper heroine, an abstraction like Undine, enclosed not just in her room in Vienna but inert within a book. The story, ostensibly the distressing tale of a Viennese agoraphobe, reveals itself most clearly to be an essay on movement and its redundancy when read together with its immediate precursor in the five-story collection: in 'Simultan' an international simultaneous interpreter, Nadja, herself constantly on the move for work and who has been everywhere save San Francisco, drives with a lover from Rome to a hotel in the Italian costal town of Maratea for a depressingly meaningless triste. For all the movement in the text, culminating in Adorni's 1965 victory in the Giro d'Italia, which the hotel guests watch on the television, like the circular Giro, it deliberately goes nowhere.

'Probleme Probleme', inverting the first story's structure, describes in a sort of stream of consciousness narrative (or it may be merely a daydream of our generally semi-recumbent heroine) a day (or perhaps more, for what is time to the infinitely indolent) in the life of a 20-year-old Viennese woman (although, having been born on 29 February, she barely ages). Idle Beatrix, named in perverse tribute to that arch-travel writer Dante, is unemployed, and devoid

[66] Idem.

DRAFT

of interests and ambitions. On the rare occasions when she leaves her untidy room in her home on the Strozzigasse, she visits the hair salon *René's*, its name a partial anagram – too tired to complete itself – of the *ener*gy she lacks. In von Trotta's travelogue, Bachmann in Berlin after her Frisch-breakdown is imagined as such a Beatrix: she first receives Opel whom she will accompany to Egypt inside her stultifying, smoky Berlin apartment, its curtains drawn during the day, the antithesis in every way of the huge, bright and open landscapes of her desert cure.[67] But if Beatrix is the inspiration for this scene (and indeed Bachmann had encouraged such autobiographical interpretations, writing to her publisher 'Beatrix bin ich' [I am Beatrix]),[68] von Trotta has ignored the deeper figurative meaning of Beatrix and her agoraphobia.

For Beatrix there are also men, but not in the energetic sense of actual sexual contact such as Nadja or Bachmann enjoy: Beatrix has some café assignations with a married man, Erich (whose name is just a myopic squint away from Frisch's). Unlike the lover in 'Simultan', a dynamic man, a diplomat working for the United Nations, and rarely at home, Erich is grounded office staff for the appropriately painful sounding AUA, Austrian airlines. Too inert for sex with her earth-bound lover, the relationship is fairly chaste, often spent pointlessly discussing his wife, Guggi, who periodically threatens but never manages to commit suicide because he always comes home in time.[69] Beatrix doesn't mind listening to the repetitive narrative of his trapped marriage, enjoying being 'ein *Statist*' in their domestic drama,[70] both in the sense of bit player or extra, but also as stasis personified. The dynamics of this non-relationship are incorporated by Von Trotta into an early scene in her film featuring a Frisch-Bachmann non-encounter in which Bachmann misses her train to Zürich by getting the day wrong. A tormented Frisch desperately implores her by phone to come to resolve his writer's

[67] Von Trotta, 36:12.
[68] Letter from Bachmann to Piper Verlag, quoted in *Todesarten Projekt*, vol. 4, ed. Robert Pichl et al. (Frankfurt: Piper, 1995) 15.
[69] "Probleme, Probleme," 48.
[70] Idem.

block.[71] The call, which takes well over a minute of slow screen time, features Bachmann only as a slow and vague telephone voice, apologizing for not going. She is a Beatrix of immobility and lassitude. Her downfall, of course, is that she does go, the following day. If von Trotta does understand something of the dynamics Bachmann is exploring in 'Probleme Probleme', it is in the recurring, somewhat heavy-handed used of the motif of telephones. Her early, pre-recovery Ingeborg is repeatedly depicted indoors, plagued by ringing telephones: upon arriving in Egypt, still sick, she declines Opel's invitation to go for a spectacular moonlight walk, preferring instead the confinement of her hotel bedroom and bed, whereupon the telephone rings, interrupting this solitude – she lets it ring, but the sound transports her to a call from the penetrating and persistent Frisch early in their relationship when he was pursuing her.[72]

Devices of time and communication function very differently in the short story, however: it opens, or we could say begins its enclosure with the description of a bedside travel clock, a 'Reisewecker […] mit dem niemand reiste',[73] [a travel clock no one ever travelled with], our heroine and guide through this day in her life has no need of such an article as rest requires no time-keeping. She has even developed an 'angestrengt lebhaft'[74] [exaggeratedly lively] telephone voice to hide her inertia and bed-ridden laziness from the activity obsessed outside world. (This scenario, absurd variations of which were memetically depicted on social media during lockdown, is the great fear of the world's Musks, of course: The pyjama-clad zoom worker, feigning activity from her bedroom, has become a cipher for what is considered a terrible betrayal of the work ethic.)[75]

Beatrix's inert experience of Vienna as a bedroom-dweller is juxtaposed Vienna as a tourist destination. Our hero-*in* recalls with horror having been forced to experience the city as

[71] Von Trotta, 19:03-20:36
[72] Von Trotta, 18:05-18:07.
[73] Bachmann, 41.
[74] Idem.
[75] Elon Musk's insistence on sleeping at Twitter headquarters is a performative attempt to undo or reverse the bed-work of lockdown.

a tourist during a short-lived friendship with a Frenchwoman by the swift-sounding name of Jeanne who comes to Vienna as a hitchhiker. In the interval between waking in the story and going to the hairdresser, the two events which bookend the story, Beatrix recalls having had to play guide to Jeanne who wanted to go to places like the Prater or Café Sacher, which she found to be an 'entsetzliche Belastung'[76] [a terrible imposition]. While Jeanne is 'ein Monstrum […] an Aktivität' [a monster of activity], Beatrix for her part simply cannot imagine 'was es in Wien zu suchen gibt'[77] [what is so worth going to see in Vienna].

Even the short trip to René's salon in the second part of the story, whether real or imagined from her bed, is, as we might imagine for an agoraphobe, a terrible imposition. On this occasion, imposition presents itself in the form of a facialist whom Beatrix hasn't met before, and who alters the established routine of the salon visits. However, before the cataclysmic interventions of the unknown beautician, the salon excursion is described as a kind return to the bed, shutting down any sensory experiences of the outside world inside the helmet of the hair dryer. At René's, Beatrix is not really in the outside world in any experiential sense, just as the I-narrator of Bachmann's desert journey in the *Wüstenbuch* is not, as though travel outwards into the desert led only by some wormhole back inside. Von Trotta's film does this some justice: each scene in the Egyptian landscape is intercut with flashbacks to the prosaic and painful mostly indoor life at home from which Film-Ingeborg is escaping. The instantaneity by which film editing sutures disparate times and spaces together mirrors the collapse of here and there of the anchorite and agoraphobe, although this may be more a happy accident of the medium than a conscious choice.

In the enclosure of the *salon* where Beatrix can be *as alone* as if she were at home, she enjoys a solipsistic hall-of-mirrors effect produced by the combination of a hinged mirror in

[76] Bachmann, 46.
[77] Bachmann 45.

front of her and a mirror behind her head. This constellation of mirrors, offers a basic version of virtual reality, allowing her an endless depth of field while keeping her safely confined within the small space of the salon. The use of angled mirrors to create impossible images is a core element in authentic-seeming virtual experiences, from the 18th-century zograscope which made flat engravings seem three-dimensional, through the holographic optical illusions of theatre such as 'Pepper's ghost', to the incorporation of mirrors with their infinite depth of field into VR headsets to countervail the flatness of the experience. Indeed, recognizing the importance of the mirror motif, von Trotta's biopic-Ingeborg is often shown in mirrors during the film, and during her first sexual encounter with Frisch even between two mirrors, while at another juncture she shows Frisch a 1949 photo-montage image by Greta Stern, 'Dream No. 7: Who Will She Be?' depicting a woman looking in horror at repeating images of herself in a mirror.[78] While film-Ingeborg misquotes the image's title, asking instead 'Wer bin ich?', [Who am I?], thereby somehow vaguely connecting the montage of faces to herself, the film does not make any further link between these many mirrors and the questions of space, let alone the collapse of space in the virtual. But for Ingeborg's Beatrix, the salon mirror *mise-en-abyme* has a virtual effect:

> Bei René war jede Wand mit diesen wunderbaren Spiegeln bedeckt, und es gab einige dreiteilige Profilspiegel, in denen man sich von allen Seiten sehen konnte […]. [D]ie Müdigkeit fiel von ihr ab, sie verwandelte sich im Nu und trat strahlend ein in diesen Tempel. [...] [S]ie fand sich wieder und fand ihr wirkliches Zuhause.[79] [At Rene's every wall was covered in these wonderful mirrors. And there were even these three-way mirrors in which you could see yourself from all sides simultaneously. All the tiredness

[78] Von Trotta, 32:09.
[79] Bachmann, 55.

left her suddenly. She underwent an immediate transformation and walked beaming into this temple. She had found herself and her real home.]

Between the mirrors, in a state of endlessly deep reflection at the salon, she is now ripe to be transported imaginarily by the magazines she consumes to pass the time. They feature, alongside the diet of murders and 'grausige Reportage über Afrika' [terrible reports from Africa], Jackie Kennedy now Onassis photographed on board the yacht Christina. Beatrix incorporates elements from Onassis' boating life into her own salon-induced daydreaming, but improving upon the narrative, in significant ways, her dream travel provides a poignant counterpoint to the gilded cage of the actual scenario in which Jacqueline Onassis is trapped.

> [S]ie [...] stand auf Deck und ihre Haare wehten im Wind, aber sie stand allein, ohne Gäste an Bord und ohne einen Ari, der völlig überflüssig war.[80] [She stood on the deck, her hair billowing in the breeze, but she stood alone, without guests or Ari, who was completely unnecessary.]

In her enclosure under the drier helmet in the salon, which shuts off sight and sound, Beatrix, in fact, comes close to the anti-experience of the desert that Bachmann had describes in her *Wüstenbuch* and again in *Das Buch Franza* [The Book of Franza] as an unseeable landscape in which the eye fills with sand.

Questions of hair, virtual hair, come up in discussion at the salon with her hairdresser Herr Karl. It is at this point that Beatrix' attitude to travel is expressed. It is by no means a rejection of travel, but a view of travel as something purely notional. She physically exhausts herself imagining the two different wigs Herr Karl proposes, one for ski holidays and one for Mediterranean wear, each catering to the different extremes of climate. However, travelling to a ski resort, Beatrix thinks to herself, would involve the more insuperable problem of having

[80] Bachmann, 65.

'immerhin zu einer gewissen Zeit aufstehen'[81] [to get up at a specific time]. While she has often felt that Erich's airline work should have reaped more free travel dividends for them both, she also fears that these trips might wrench her untimely from her bed.

> [E]s gab sicher auch Abendflüge, aber ob man in einem Flugzeug bequem schlafen konnte, das war sehr zweifelhaft. […]Fliegen würde sie dann nicht, denn sie dachte sich die Welt mit diesen gepriesenen Gegenden fürchterlich unbequem.[82] [There were probably evening flights too, but it seemed unlikely that anyone could sleep comfortably in an airplane. […] She wouldn't fly after all, because she imagined the world with its wonderful destinations to be dreadfully uncomfortable.]

She prefers to withdraw under the helmet of her hairdryer while Herr Karl puts cotton wool in her ears, and her feet are submerged in the amniotic fluid of 'warme[s] seifige[s] Wasser[83] [warm soapy water]. It is a state of suspension like that of Philip K. Dick's non-traveler Doug Quail when he is receiving his implanted memories of travel: 'On a hygienic bed lay Douglas Quail, breathing slowly and regularly, his eyes virtually shut; he seemed dimly – but only dimly – aware of the two technicians […].'[84] Beatrix too begins to dose at the salon.

Their respective situations, Quail and Beatrix's, presage the new 'sleep tourism' which, like First Airlines' stationary flights, has met its time in the COVID era. Various hotels now offer 'sleep programmes'[85] which imagine the new traveller as someone who is prone in his or her bed and insensate. According to Malminder Gill, a sleep specialist, 'the emergence of more and more of these types of experiences is a sign that the 'narrative of staying up to get things done,' is being challenged'.[86] He has partnered with one of the many hotels getting in on the

[81] Bachmann, 60.
[82] Bachmann, 66.
[83] Bachmann, 62.
[84] Dick, 348.
[85] Tamara Hardingham-Gill, "Life but Better – Sleep: The Rise of Sleep Tourism," *CNN*, 5 October, 2022, https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/sleep-tourism-wellness/index.html accessed 9 December, 2022.
[86] Idem.

DRAFT

sleep tourism game, the Cadogan in London 'to create a special service […] called the Sleep Concierge. The service includes a sleep-inducing meditation recording, a pillow menu with options that cater to guests who may prefer to sleep on their back or side, the option of a weighted blanket, a bedtime tea developed specifically for the service, and a scented pillow mist.'[87] And for those who cannot afford this, your bed at home or anywhere can be used for the same trip.

In his 2007 *Claustrophilia: The Erotics of Enclosure in Medieval Literature*, hardly offering a postulate for today's world, you might think, Carl Howie also argues convincingly for something similar: encouraging a return to the idea of medieval enclosure, and enclosure more generally as a necessary corrective to being in an overexposed and ever more motile world.[88] Withdrawal makes a space in which our prevailing regime of pure movement (Howie calls it openness, using a Heideggerism) would no longer pertain, offering instead a private sphere, a safe place. He notes too that the structure of the text itself is one of enclosure, like the very medieval withdrawal into an anchorage which his book describes. Withdrawing from space and movement, you, reader-hermit motionlessly enter the world of the book's pages. And, as Howie argues, once you have been 'inside a book, any book, it's impossible to emerge from it absolutely intact, to be outside it in quite the same way as before'.[89] He invites us to imagine books as hermits' cells, or Beatrix might say hair salons. While Beatrix never reads more than a magazine in Ingeborg Bachmann's short story, she is such a text, and demonstrates the enclosure of the textual experience.

It is no doubt ironic that a constant traveller like Bachmann should write the quintessential agoraphilic text. Whatever about her own travels to Egypt, Sudan, New York, Paris, Rome and elsewhere, her earliest idea of travel, when she was old enough to read the

[87] Idem.
[88] Cary Howie, *Claustrophilia: The Erotics of Enclosure in Medieval Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007).
[89] Ibid., 1.

Grimms' fairy tales, she says, was a motionless one: [I]ch weiß nur, [...] daß ich gern am Bahndamm lag und meine Gedanken auf Reisen schickte in fremde Städte und Länder und an das unbekannte Meer, das irgendwo mit dem Himmel den Erdkreis schließt.'[90] [I only know that […] that I liked to lie on the railway embankment and send my thoughts forth to foreign cities and countries and the unknown ocean that somewhere meets the sky to enclose the globe.] This idyll, as she recounts it, is then brutally interrupted by the real and awful realities of war and the massive mobilisation and displacement of people it brought about. The post-war letters from Israel she received from Jack Hamesh, who had been sent as a Jewish Kindertransport to England, and with whom she had become friends with when he was stationed with the Allies in Carinthia, in which Hamesh describes his utter deracination by the war must have contrasted starkly with the happy imaginary travel she had indulged in as a child a few years before.[91] Meanwhile, we know the emphasis that Bachmann placed on the unique topographic qualities of literature as travel, forming for her an 'außerordentlich[e] Landkarte'[92] [an extraordinary map]. In that impossible paper landscape of imagined places, travel as opposed to mere tourism might still be possible, albeit a static readerly (de Selby might say hallucinatory) sort of journeying.

In this sense, Film-Bachmann pleads to Opel in the vast openness of the desert: 'Ich möchte, daß Sie mich eingraben!'[93] [I want you to bury me!] At the end of the film, on a final curative night walk in the desert, Opel and Film-Bachmann, somewhat hilariously, are barely visible: black figures against the featureless black sand under a black sky. They could be anywhere. [Fig. 1] Indoors, outdoors, nowhere, Egypt or Switzerland. This scene mirrors the

[90] Ingeborg Bachmann, *Biographisches*. In *Werke*, ed. Christine Koschel et al., vol. 4. (Munich: Piper, 1978). 301f.
[91] Ingeborg Bachmann, *Kriegstagebuch: Mit Briefen von Jack Hamesh an Ingeborg Bachmann* (Berlin: Suhrkamp 2010).
[92] Ingeborg Bachmann, *Frankfurter Vorlesungen: Probleme zeitgenössischer Dichtung,* in *Werke*, vol. 4. 182-271, here 239.
[93] Von Trotta, 35:35.

black interior in which we meet Film-Bachmann at the start, a Beatrix indoors in the darkness of an apartment, interrupted by the telephone. In that respect, the film does justice to the Beatrixian agoraphobic principles of stasis where indoors and outdoors are the same because, somewhat tritely, Film-Bachmann's journey turns out to be within. Beatrix's stasis is more profound because it is not autobiographical. She is the return to the non-Euclidean geometry of the book. A figure of thought: against movement.

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DRAFT