EU cross-border *Passagenwerk*

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For us, the solution was in the direction of the horizon. We were those who scrutinised the horizon. We looked forward, not back. To the question, 'What is thinking?' we didn't respond, 'Being' [like Heidegger] but with 'the possible'. (Henri Lefebvre, cited in Hess 1988: 54)

Thoughts from a deckchair in Wyler, Germany

Walking through the village of Wyler, the last German settlement before the border crossing into the Netherlands, one drifts past cavernous, odoriferous farmhouses, fleeting images of green fields tucked between stolidly built single-family homes, thick, tall shrubbery, and then, on the left: the hulking grey carapace of a defunct border truck stop (Figure 1.1), and passing that again: a small sandy beach pocked with two flimsy canvas deckchairs flanked by an awkward attempt at a fountain in a low-lying pool spraying mistily into the thin sunshine (see Figure 1.2). The 'beach' is attached to a newly expanded travel agency which caters largely to a Dutch clientele and forms part of its 'exotica'-inducing public relations strategy. Experiencing the juxtaposition of the ruins of border infrastructure with the travel agency's 'beach', at the forward edge of two major European states, invites the bordercrosser to *dream ...*

References to 'walking', 'drifting' and 'dreaming' are of course intimately associated with the practices of early twentieth-century artistic movements such as Dadaism and Surrealism, whose advocates attempted to counter the rationalising and instrumentalising impulses of modern capitalism with an artistic sensibility capable of foregrounding the still potent realms of memory, the unconscious and the irrational in modern social life (Biggsby 1972; Henning 1979; Bradley 1997). Such a sensibility would find expression not only in poetry, literature, painting and sculpture, but would find further inspiration in the vast, teeming spaces of the modern metropolis, whose chaotic flows, unpredictable sequences of events and opaque and shadowy interstices provided the ideal sensorium for the classical

1.1 Ruins of border truck stop, Wyler, Germany

1.2 'Beach' in front of Hagemann's travel agency, Wyler, Germany

flâneur (or *flâneuse*) (Aragon 1926). This chapter seeks to draw on the unruly energies spawned by these earlier, urban-based political and artistic *avant-gardes* in order to explore questions of time, memory and mobility within a contemporary internal European borderland, located between Germany and the Netherlands. The 'method' of modern *flânerie* will specifically allow me to connect the temporal dimension of this borderland to a recent and growing interest in the fields of social and cultural geography with practices of 'walking'.

Current attention to ambulatory practices within human geography can be productively understood as emerging within the context of a widely heralded 'affective turn' in the field (Thrift 2008). As a result of this development, the emotional, experiential and embodied dimensions of space are foregrounded not only as a new

frontier for empirical analysis but as useful in setting ambitious social-theoretical agendas aiming beyond the perceived limitations associated with traditional political-economy perspectives (Pile 2010; Jones and Evans 2012; Navaro-Yashin 2012; Sparke 2012). A lively interest in the 'geographies of walking' is further informed by concerns with the politico-aesthetic conditions for negotiating and resisting scopic regimes of modern state power, largely within the urban realm (Crary 1990; Jay 1993; Pinder 2011); as a tactic capable of rendering visible a historical, relational and 'affective geopolitics' of state sovereignty (Sidaway 2009), and as a potentially productive pathway for charting the normative valences associated with heightened 'mobilities' across the social sciences (Urry 2007; Cresswell and Merriman 2011). This chapter builds on the foregoing literature, but argues that the shadowy figure of the border *flâneur* can reveal tensions and contradictions in the workings of modern state power that cannot be captured simply by urban- or state-centric narratives of space walking. At the fringes of state territoriality, the *flâneur* becomes a bordering body, literally in-corporealising a border-crossing experience within himself. The experiential force of such a 'limit event' opens the body not only 'against' a singular border but channels it to an affective transnationalism connecting it to myriad border sites not contained by the state line proper (Kramsch and Dimitrova 2008; Kramsch 2016). It is here, in effect, that the act of border walking invokes a critical comparative lens that refuses to be subsumed under a monolingual regime of state power purportedly enforced at the border. And it is here that such an embodied border perspective could add something new to urban-centred debates, particularly as they relate to current anxieties relating to the properly *political* dimension of ambulatory mobility across time and space (Pinder 2001; Cresswell 2006).

In short, this chapter argues that by bringing the past and present into a dynamic 'constellation' while crossing the national border, the border *flâneur* actively produces the border as an emotionally charged, future-oriented *horizon*. Understood in this way, the horizon invites us to rethink our notion of political borders as merely a geographic endpoint between states, as the expression of the limits of state sovereignty or as the interface between mutually ignorant 'homogenous empty' times, as the temporality of the nation has so eloquently been described by Benedict Anderson (1983). Parrying the notion of borders defined primarily as sites for the articulation of hostile and mutually ignorant socio-spatial differences (i.e. 'Us vs. Them'), the notion of horizon mobilised in this chapter suggests a space-time of the 'possible' in the sense expressed by Henri Lefebvre in the epigraph opening this chapter: a space articulating a set of diverse and heterogeneous relations in space and time, relations which in their intricate scalarity open up the space of the state border to deeply affective connections with 'other border temporalities', as well as to 'other borders' located far from the dividing line being traversed by the individual border crosser. Importantly for our argument, the concept of horizon works within and across the grain of different regimes of state-centric visibility, and is rooted in

the premise that both within the internal borders of the European Union (EU) as well as at its outer edges the panoptic visual power of state governmentality is always partial, never fully effective in classifying and ordering the myriad elements of borderland life within its totalising gaze. This intuition, I argue, is what makes possible a politics 'of the border, stretching the borderline into an affective-political 'constellation' suturing the past and present into a future-oriented time-space capable of revealing 'hidden' connections and affinities between a multiplicity of borderland contexts in ways not permitted by two-dimensional cartography.

But now it is time to get up from our Wyler deckchairs, stretch our legs, go for a stroll, and in the process pick up some real and imagined fellow-travellers.

Re-cognising the time-space(s) of modernity with Walter Benjamin

To accompany our *flânerie* of the Wyler borderland I turn not to a Dadaist or Surrealist, however, but to the mid-twentieth-century persona of Walter Benjamin, an iconic figure of the Frankfurt School of social theory. Benjamin's work crystallises a preoccupation with time, memory, movement and space that inevitably prefigures contemporary social-theoretical debates, and indeed often serves as their inspirational wellspring (Pred 1995; Pile 2000). For Benjamin, two tendencies characterised nineteenth- and twentieth-century modernity: an acceleration of the 'ever new', coupled with its complement and shadow, the 'eternal return of the same'. The dialectical tension between these two developments produced 'phantasmagoria' (or myths), which for Benjamin were most visibly expressed through attempts to negotiate 'what has been' and the social inadequacies of the present. The production of such myths in turn set the stage for what he called 'dreamworlds', real and imagined spaces produced while society still found itself 'sleepwalking' through the transition phase between pre-modern and fully modern forms of socio-spatial organisation (Pile 2000). In the realm of architecture and aesthetics, a powerful example of such a world is *Jugendstil*, that design form often made out of modern industrial materials – steel, glass, cement – moulded to reveal pre-modern, organic shapes (Benjamin 1999b). The master example of such a dreamworld was constituted for Benjamin by the Paris Arcades, those giant, *fin-de-siècle* enclosed shopping 'streets' framed by *Jugendstil*-influenced materials: 'glass houses of the future' (Benjamin 1999a: 213).

Sites such as the nineteenth-century Paris Arcades, which by Benjamin's time had lost their functionality ('aura'), according to an older set of use values, represented key locations for modern phantasmagoria, pointing to an unfulfilled future 'outside' and beyond capitalism:

[The Surrealists were] the first to perceive the revolutionary energies that appear in the 'outmoded', in the first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earliest photos, the objects that begin to be extinct, grand pianos in the salon, the dresses of

five years ago, fashionable restaurants when the vogue has begun to ebb from them.
(Benjamin 1996: 234)

The political-aesthetic task for Benjamin consisted not in showing how the past of the Arcades influenced the present, nor how the present shed its light on the past, but to reveal in the ruins of the Arcades a historical 'truth' whose 'afterlives' were capable of producing an 'awakening' into what Benjamin called the 'now of recognisability'. Crucial for Benjamin's way of conceptualising history, this *Jetztzeit*, which in a 'lightning flash' produced by a moment of 'danger' created a 'new constellation', had a fundamentally spatial character, rather than a temporal one. Like the Arcades of Benjamin's time, the extant infrastructure of border guardhouses and customs buildings that dot the landscape of Europe's internal borders constitute the 'ruins' of *our* previous century, the traces of a pre-Schengen¹ time when movement across Europe's internal member state borders was tightly controlled. And as in the case of the Parisian shopping streets that so fascinated Benjamin, I argue that the remains of today's border infrastructure exude an 'aura' and an 'afterlife' to the degree that, though they have lost their original function as points of direct observance and control, they remain sites charged with meaning and emotional-affective power for those who live nearby, as well as for those who cross the border in carrying out their everyday lives. We thus do not necessarily need to subscribe to Benjamin's larger redemptive and 'weak messianic' project (Pile 2000) to retrieve from his work the idea that the 'ruins' of the Dutch/German border, as is similarly the case within innumerable borderland contexts across the width and breadth of the EU, are infused with just such an 'aura', caught as they are between a time of fixed border controls that is no more and a future borderless horizon yet to come.

Benjamin employed several stratagems in spatialising the temporal dimension of the modern arcade. Drawing explicitly on the politico-aesthetic traditions of Surrealism, he drew on the artistic practice of 'montage': the juxtaposition of images (preferably photographs) so as to reveal, in the very spatial adjacency of their arrangement, 'surprising' lines of force and telluric pull that could resist the violent amalgamation of linear, historical narrative. Mobilised in this way by Benjamin, montage would produce a particular 'dialectic of seeing', one which could 'freeze' history's ceaseless production of castaway rubbish while enabling the emergence of an ethical tableau in which the losers and winners of capitalist development could exist, at a 'standstill', in a relation of tenuous equality (Buck-Morss 1989). Benjamin located another spatial strategy in the practice of the dandy, or *flâneur*, who, as exemplified in Louis Aragon's *Paris Peasant*, strolled haphazardly through the capital's streets, letting the city 'happen to him' (Aragon 1926). Benjamin's *flâneur* has no goal, no objective, no purpose: he is a 'collector' of useless debris, a pure 'witness' to the world around him, and, as such, its most ethically cogent critic. From his 'isolated' perch, footloose on the street, the *flâneur* is able to witness and report firsthand on the ravages and depredations of capitalist urbanisation, as was

the case for Aragon during the 1920s 'Hausmannisation' of Paris, whereby large boulevards brutally cut up the dense, largely working-class Marais district. In this respect, the practice of Surrealist or Dadaist *flânerie* can be associated with one of the first critiques of capitalist urban modernity, albeit involving a 'poetics of space' that some subsequently conceived as being too individualist, voluntarist and quietist for the mass political mobilisation required to confront this kind of urbanisation (see especially Lefebvre 1991). As I forge a path on foot across the ruins of the Dutch/German border, I am aware of the perceived limitations projected onto the lone figure of the *flâneur*, but choose to retain his company nevertheless as a useful guide for a kind of emotionally attentive *praxis* in reading the affective topographies of this border-as-horizon. As with contemporary attempts to read, understand and remap geographies of the city by excavating its 'hidden histories and geographies', thus revealing some of 'the other cities that exist inside the city' (Ackroyd 1985; Sinclair 1997; Pinder 2001: 8), I undertake in the same spirit an exploration of 'the other borders that exist inside the border' that is Wyler.

'Wyler peasant': re-cognising the ruin

The ruin of the former German border truck stop in Wyler sits like a rotting carcass alongside a road which, not coincidentally for this walker, was formerly the *Via Romana* linking marching columns of Rome's finest to the cold, north-west barbarian peripheries (Figure 1.3).² The truck stop's mottled grey cement awning juts out over a row of barred windows whose dark interior casts foreboding shadows on rusty ramps facing the street. The entire area surrounding the truck stop is dotted with weeds and overgrown grass. An air of dereliction reigns over the whole surface of the structure, made all the more acute by being juxtaposed with the prim row of single-family detached houses situated just opposite. As I circle the building on foot, it feels like walking around a wartime ruin. And, in a flash, I am transported to the images of wartime destruction which fell upon this Dutch/German borderland during the Second World War in September 1944, when the Allies unsuccessfully attempted to force an entry from France into Germany over the Rhine by seizing bridges across the Maas, the Waal and the Lower Rhine (Korthals Altes and Zuidgeest-Perquin 1984). In subsequent months, as the war drew to a close, the nearby German city of Kleve would be flattened by Allied aerial bombardment, causing hundreds of deaths, as occurred with many German cities in the final stages of the war (see Figure 1.4) (Michels and Sliepenbeek 1964; Sebald 2003).

The Dutch city of Nijmegen would not be spared, either. As it was located so near the border, it would be mistaken for a German town by an American bomber pilot, who proceeded to destroy much of its historic centre on 22 February 1944 (Brinkhuis 1984). Hundreds died in the ensuing fire. As part of discussions over the immediate territorial post-war settlement between the Netherlands and Germany, a Dutch proposal sardonically named 'Black Tulip' proposed moving

1.3 Ruins of border truck stop, Wyler, Germany

1.4 Ruins of Kleve, Germany, 11 February 1945

the Netherlands border into Germany by several hundred kilometres, creating an ethnically cleansed buffer zone between the two countries. Despite the failure of this proposal, confusion over the exact location of the border between the two countries reigned for several months, causing its position to move erratically in the village of Wyler. The owner of the travel agency, whose business now sits on the site of the house where he grew up as a child, exclaims: 'Before the war, the border ran through [the neighbouring villages of] Beek, Bergen Dal, Groesbeek; after the war, it moved over [our village]. Overnight, my grandmother became "Dutch", then later "German" again.'³

The memory of wartime destruction and the aftermath thrown up by walking round the Wyler 'border ruin' tells another story of the border than that represented on the existing map of north-west Europe, where 'The Netherlands' and 'Germany' are shown as clearly delineated cartographical entities. It speaks to a 'hidden' dimension of the border, one defined by a shared experience of massive Allied aerial bombardment and the subsequent imposition of geopolitical manoeuvrings staged from distant state capitals – The Hague and Berlin – in which the actual lived space of borderlanders was rendered invisible. The Second World War *Raumgeist* of this borderland also brings to mind repressed memories revealing how this urbanised border was enmeshed within wider, imperial geographies of colonial power; for centuries Nijmegen served as a training ground for the Dutch colonial infantry (*KNIL*), who would depart for the global colonial theatres of Surinam and Indonesia from the banks of Nijmegen's River Waal (Hooghoff 2000; Kramsch 2006). When this Dutch/German borderland was bombed, Nijmegen continued to carry out this function, as it was still actively involved in the colonial administration of Indonesia. Like all haunted houses, the physical persistence of the Wyler truck stop thus speaks to and serves as a testament to a blocked passage between moments of wartime ruin, declining imperial power, strict national border controls and a contemporary European horizon trapped in the uncertainties, contradictions and ambiguities flowing from the unmastered colonial past. As if anticipating the emotional response to such an anxiety-producing condition, graffiti on the side of the truck stop, featuring a rose surrounded by barbed wire, screams, '*HADER ZEIT!*' ('TIME OF DOUBT!'; see Figure 1.5).

The effect of 'strangeness' produced by the difficulties of this blocked temporal passage is exemplified in the way the truck stop, some twenty years after the formal removal of internal European border controls, has developed a number of 'after-lives' for both the Dutch and German communities surrounding it. One such effect strikes me as I round the far corner of the building: a stack of freshly cut wood lines the lower part of a loading embankment at the rear of the structure (see Figure 1.6). Across the street, a *Bratwurst* vendor plies her trade. When I ask her opinion of the truck stop, she answers: 'The owner has tried to sell it twice, but can't find any buyers ... The neighbours [largely comprising Dutch transmigrants] want it to stay as it is, rather than be converted into a car dealership or hotel.' When I note the

1.5 Ruins of border truck stop, Wyler, Germany, showing graffiti

1.6 Ruins of border truck stop, Wyler, Germany

1.7 Former Dutch/German border guard hut, now Lotto shop. The bicycle path shows approximately where the actual border guard hut once stood

stack of freshly cut wood at the corner of the building, she adds: 'I once saw a wedding party take photographs over there ... historic, you know.'⁴

The truck stop ruin, in short, has developed a life of its own, and takes on an almost visibly anthropomorphic shape as it 'stares' out melancholically westward, towards the site of the former Dutch/German border guardhouse, which, since the removal of border controls in 1990, has been converted into a Lotto shop (Figure 1.7). Drifting in the direction of the truck stop's gaze, I continue my walk past a series of farmhouses, passing a sign set back from the street announcing the border with the word '*Nederland*', surrounded by a sea of blue and yellow stars. I slouch onwards to the German Lotto shop, popular among Dutch visitors. From this vantage point, standing exactly on the spot where the old Dutch/German border-guard hut used to stand, I can look back and appreciate an advertising billboard attached to the rear wall of Hagemann's travel agency, displaying a sunny beachside tourist destination, with what appear to be cacti filling up the foreground (see Figure 1.8). Palm trees against an azure sky explode from the boundary of the advertising frame, and fill up the entire wall of the building. Here, on the very spot where Germany and the Netherlands once controlled the movement of each other's citizens, this gestures to a potentially happier 'elsewhere' beyond the Dutch/German borderland proper.

This tropical island tourist paradise pictured on the outside wall of Hagemann's travel agency evokes a contrapuntal horizon at the Levantine edges of Europe. In June 2004, Belgian-born and Mexico City-based performance artist Francis Alys walked 24 km along Jerusalem's 'Green Line', originally drawn as a ceasefire line by

1.8 Advertising mural to the rear of Hagemann's travel agency (English translation: 'Holiday like in a picture book! Holiday, as I like it')

General Moshe Dayan in 1948 to mark out the separate zones of the city after the Arab–Israeli war. A publicly available video accompanying Alys's exhibit identifies him ambling across streets and markets, negotiating paths between houses and trees, across fields and stubby hills while dribbling a thin line of green paint from an open can. Exhibition patrons can choose between 11 soundtracks, each revealing a different Palestinian, Israeli or European commentator reflecting on the walk and its wider geopolitical significance. The broader meaning of the walk, made at a time when Ariel Sharon was constructing a new eight-metre-high cement 'separation wall', were further contextualised and made public by Alys in his 2007 New York exhibition, entitled 'Sometimes Doing Something Poetic Can Become Political and Sometimes Doing Something Political Can Become Poetic'. According to cultural geographer David Pinder, the green trail of paint, quickly smudged by daily traffic and eventually rendered invisible, 'evokes both the memory and the arbitrariness of the original line, reawakening a demarcation that was erased following Israeli expansion after the 1967 war' (2011: 686). Pinder remarks that 'as an artist and outsider', Alys's walk raises the question of how bodies are able to move with different degrees of freedom around this borderland, depending on their gender, ethnicity, age, class and place of origin (2011: 687). Assessing the tenor of critical reactions to Alys's performance from Arab and Jewish Israelis, one may conclude that 'The Green Line' triggered an important discussion in the region addressing the need to re-evaluate the issue of power as it conditions differential mobilities in and around the line.

Seen through a critical comparativist lens, the intertwined problematics of ambulatory mobility, memory and power at the Levantine edges of Europe speak just as eloquently to the Dutch/German border context of Wyler, where, despite the formal abolition of border controls and the supposedly 'free' movement of goods and people across internal European state boundaries, national capitals manoeuvre to reinforce their ability to scrutinise and filter movement into and out of national territory. Such a move is exemplified through recent attempts by the Dutch border police, or *Koeniglichke Marechaussee*, to erect sophisticated 'camera bridges' along 15 different cross-border passage points between the Netherlands and Germany and the Netherlands and Belgium (Koch 2012). The new border-monitoring system, codenamed '@migoboras', shorthand for 'mobile intervention for better data-gathering and security', is meant to photograph each car entering the territorial space of the Netherlands. The camera 'bridge', to be legal, needs to be situated just a few metres over the border in Dutch national territory; due to higher sensitivity over privacy and data protection in Germany, no such apparatus is allowed on the German side of the border. Data gathered via the '@migoboras' camera system is sent directly to a Dutch border-control centre, where a so-called 'producer' (*registreur*) can, at a glance, identify the type of automobile in question, its country of origin and its licence-plate number, as well as the identity of the driver and its passengers. Although under European law sensitivity remains as to how and under what conditions data gathered under '@migoboras' can be saved, under a parallel programme sardonically labelled 'amigo-boras', the Dutch *Marechaussee* have instituted a system whereby border-crossing data can be saved indefinitely, to be shared with Interpol in the case of terrorist searches or other instances that might jeopardise national interests (Koch 2012). Dutch moves to tighten the surveillance of its borders have been matched by current German attempts to claim the right to close down temporarily its land borders in case of migration pressures from outside the EU, as was the case with France and Italy in the wake of the large-scale migration flows towards those lands triggered by the 2011 Arab Spring (*Rheinische Post* 2012).

'Walking on the moon', or hiding in plain sight?

Indeed, it is by connecting, in a novel 'constellation', the ambulatory flows – migrant as well as artistic – stemming from the border space of Francis Alys's *flânerie* to my own walk in Wyler that the reconverted Dutch/German border guardhouse and truck stop acquire the aura of a shared horizon. This horizon is manifested in the fact that in both contexts – Jerusalem and Wyler – what constitutes the state border is always shadowed by a largely invisible counterpoint to the mainstream construction of the modern state: in the case of Jerusalem, the many Arab Israelis who inhabit Israeli territory, thus making a silent mockery of the Green Line; in the Dutch/German context, the many Dutch residents who live around the Wyler 'ruin' in Germany, destabilising any notion of an 'Us' 'over here' and a 'Them' 'over

1.9 Bicycle track leading across the international border into the Netherlands

there'. The *horizon effect*, linking seemingly disparate border experiences through a novel critical comparative lens, has profound implications for how we traditionally perceive and conceive of Europe's borders, as is already being demonstrated in the work of scholars of the Global South who argue for 'new geographies of theory' in urban studies that seek to 'dislocate the center[s]' of Euro-American knowledge production on cities (Robinson 2002; Roy 2009). These concerns haunt me as I continue walking in the direction of the international border between Germany and the Netherlands. The sun is out; a soft breeze caresses the grass. As there is no pavement, I amble along a new *accessoire*, a cycle track, the first sign of Dutch urban planning (see Figure 1.9).

As I step onto the soft crimson shoulder of the Dutch cycle track, I feel I might be being watched, though no 'camera bridges' are in sight, no potential *amigos* in my line of vision. Just to be on the safe side, I give a friendly wave in the direction of the Netherlands (a few cows nod back in my direction). Who has freedom of mobility to cross this line, unperturbed? And how does walking allow for a different 'sense of the border' (Green 2012) from that of the automobile, one that might allow for a different kind of aesthetic experience of the border, a different politics of the border? Critics of Alys, falling in with a long line of detractors that could easily stretch back to attacks on Benjamin and Aragon, fault the politico-aesthetic strategy of the *flâneur* as one that is hopelessly 'indulgent' by being 'merely' descriptive, unable to address the large-scale structural dimensions of modern power nor capable of thinking strategically as to the nature of social movements that could

rise to challenge that power. By drawing attention to the 'repressed' and 'hidden' tactics of the individual at street level navigating the absolute spaces of technocratic planning (see also de Certeau 1984), the philosopher-*flâneur* is charged with complicity in neoliberal individualisation (Kwon 2002; Scalway 2006) and, ultimately, political quiescence in the face of hegemonic power whose corruption and domination are enabled precisely by opacity and lack of transparency (Pinder 2011).

In partial response to these criticisms, and walking in Aragon's and Benjamin's footsteps through the Wyler borderland, I would like to close with a reflexive reading of the aesthetic as well as political promise of what we may productively call the 'space of hiddenness at/on the border-as-horizon' (see also Kramsch and Dimitrova 2008; for a historicisation of this phenomenon, Kramsch 2012). In the wake of recent writing that attempts to reappropriate 'secrecy' as a strategy for the Left (Birchall 2011; Phillips 2011), I argue that a streetwise sense of the Wyler borderland teaches us that under the panoptic anxieties of state capitals there lie within the border-as-horizon hidden but interconnected 'worlds', surprising yet deeply related singularities that 'detonate' our understanding of the border as either completely deterritorialised 'flow' or all-seeing and controlling 'line'. Significantly, such a vision of the Wyler horizon is attained not by walking as if one was in the air or 'on the moon', but as a fully corporeal and emotionally sentient observer immersed in the very material geographies of the border. Nevertheless, the question is well posed to what extent the observations of the single *flâneur* can be mobilised to inform social-scientific theorising. Sharply put, how can the insights of the *flâneur* be 'framed' socially in such a way as to provide the kind of nomothetic insights allowing the field of border studies to develop categories that can 'travel' in the service of wider theory-building?

We may begin to address this question by stating simply that nomothetic enquiry has always depended on its obverse, 'idiographic' side: the hidden, subterranean perspective 'from below' (some have called this simply 'fieldwork'). To suggest a choice between (or even an accentuation of) one epistemic approach over the other does violence to both. But in this respect I suggest there is more to our *flâneur* than meets the proverbial eye. As I hope to have shown through my own *flânerie* of the Wyler border-as-horizon, the *flâneur* is not 'just' an idiographic monad, wandering detached through space. For it is precisely through his ability to connect seemingly disparate and uncoordinated fragments – temporal fragments of the past and spatial fragments of the present – that she is in a position to construct relational sympathies, aleatory geographies of the *Jetztzeit* that awaken us into 'worlds' of multiply bordered connections, then and here, there and now. This signifies perhaps the emergence of a new form of nomothetic enquiry, one that requires a comparative way of seeing altogether different from that which the traditional social sciences have long dictated: a 'decentred' social-scientific enterprise, at once centred and de-centred, localised and de-localised, isolated and worldly. This is the ambiguous space of the *flâneur par excellence*, whose time might just be coming into its own at

the dawn of the twenty-first century. By way of the spatial practice of photographic montage and the ‘botanising on the asphalt’ of the *flâneur*, Benjamin (1999b: 19) hoped to produce a new ‘angle of vision’, one that would serve to draw a redemptive new border rescuing elements that have the capacity to ‘fan the spark of hope in the past’, to wrest historical tradition ‘anew ... from a conformism that is about to overpower it’ (Benjamin 1968: 255). From our ‘hidden’ vantage point on the Wyler border-as-horizon, out of view of those Dutch ‘bridge cameras’ and German pontificators of ‘closure’, we can only be inspired to do the same.

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Notes

- 1 ‘Schengen’ refers to the agreement which led to the creation of Europe’s borderless Schengen Area. The treaty was signed on 14 June 1985 between five of the then ten member states of the European Economic Community (EEC) near the town of Schengen in Luxembourg.
- 2 Further productive allusions to walking can be made. In June every year, hundreds of thousands of tourists flock to the next largest city on the Dutch side of the border, Nijmegen, to take part in a four-day walkathon known as the *Vierdaagse*. In recognition not only of Nijmegen’s Roman past as a military garrison town, but also as tribute to the Allied forces who died in ‘liberating’ Nijmegen during the Second World War, many active-duty soldiers from all over the world participate in this event. As can be imagined, although they maintain an active presence in this border area, German soldiers do not take part.
- 3 The interview with Mr Hagemann took place on 24 April 2009.
- 4 The interview with the Wyler Bratwurst vendor took place on 24 April 2009.

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