The
University
Of
Sheffield.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Ph.D. by Design
The University of Sheffield
School of Architecture

July 2023 Revision after VIVA

Reader's Guides

Helvetica and Adobe Garamond pro are the two main fonts that have been used in this thesis.

Helvetica is mainly used in the titles, footnotes, captions and theoretic writings that reflect on the narrative; while Garamond is used for the main body text and stories. Italic text is mainly for quotes and conversations. Bold italic is primarily for terms that have specific theoretic or philosophical definition, or have unique meaning throughout this book.

Prelude

'Prelude' was written in late 2022, seven years after I made my first PhD submission; six years after my daughter was born; two and half years after the Covid pandemic.

It is a summary. What's more, it is a reflective piece of up-grading and rethinking of my previous PhD study, through discussing a series of more up to date academic theories and literature. 'Prelude' contains two pieces. The first reviews the methods that have been used in my PhD work, with a deeper understanding of creative spatial writing that allows the potential to reveal individualised perceptions. The second piece presents reflective personal experiences and thoughts about life in London after the COVID-19 pandemic. I argued our position as Chinese immigrants and international students and the importance of giving voice to marginalised groups in the current socio-political climate. I re-evaluated the concept of nomadic subjectivity by tying with the understanding of Au-totheory. I also explained the methodology that had been used in the main body of the PhD was designed to bring personal experiences and reflections into the process of exploring the Indeterminate relationships urban space and people.

A prelude before a prologue.
A prelude after a prologue.
A prelude after chapter one, chapter two and chapter three.
A prelude after an epilogue.
A prelude has been done afterwards.

Does it matter? Is it worth doing? What is my goal? Where am I going? This prelude, in fact, is an explanation, an update, a pile of rethinking, a reflection, a conclusion and a new start.

It can be read as an individual essay which includes my latest thinking regarding our current sociological issues. It can be interpreted as an introduction to my full PhD thesis, which explains my overall concept of spatial, feminist research, as well as the main methodology that I have used though the PhD study. It can also be considered as a conclusion of my previous writing. The iterative way of exploring the relationship between space and us via hybrid methods has always been my mindset as a PhD student. Hence, coming back to the research field after working in architectural practices for a period offers me a fresh pair of eyes on seeing our city structure and ourselves differently. Of course, this essay can always be read as part of / together with all my subjective nomad stories, which gives my readers further updates.

Prelude

Noun

• An introductory or preliminary performance or event; a preface.
• (music) A short piece of music that acts as an introduction to a longer piece.

Verb

• To introduce something, as a prelude.
• To play an introduction or prelude; to give a prefatory performance.

1 Colin McIntosh, Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Fourth Edition [Cambridge University Press, 2013]

When Jane Rendell laid out the possible ways of writing in/about/for or not for space,

> *'Architectural Writing*
> *Writing Architecturally…*
> *Ficto-Criticism*
> *Critical Fiction…*
> *Creative NonFiction*
> *Uncreative Writing*
> *Conceptual Writing*
> *Sweaty Concept…*
> *Fiction Theory*
> *Fiction/theory*
> *Fiction and theory set as a pair*
> *Sliced apart*
> *Drawn together …'* [1]

The Ways We Write; The Ways I Write

She constantly stops, turning around, looking back, correcting, comparing, challenging a word, the order, the parts of speech, the punctuations. 'Because playing with the ways we do things with words can expose the power systems that set the rules for those often taken-for- granted ways that tell us how things with words are (to be) done. Words can do things, sometimes beyond language…' [2] She discusses the potential practice of writing in architecture/space one by one (from her list) and how writing can be influenced by subjects and vice versa. We know for sure, she is not offering stiff writing templates, or stating differentiations between types of literary genres. On the contrary, most likely, there is no such defined mode or fixed conclusion of how to write spatially. Also writing itself should never create separations, but a body that can carry thoughts, inspirations, history, cognition, voices and peace. [3] It is the same in design works, and creativity.

I have to say Jane Rendell's words are a relief to me. As a non-native speaker in the UK, there were many moments I found myself getting more and more paranoid about speaking or writing, or even posting a few words on the internet regarding architectural spatial thought - Is it a mature piece of theory? Have my words appropriately described my opinion? What kind of writing am I producing? Did I make any grammar mistakes…? In fact, I am, still, trying very hard to find a suit-

1 Jane Rendell, The Ways in Which We Write, *Writing Architectures Ficto-Critical Approaches, eds Hélène Frichot And Naomi Stead*.[London, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2020]

2 Ibid., p. 2.

3 Ibid.

able literary method to deliver my spatial thoughts, to express myself in another language that is a completely different language family from my native Chinese. We have to admit that for most of the architects or architectural students, writing is never the most direct communicating method to our audiences. It is not the most common thinking or drafting mode in spatial designing. As Keith Mitnick bluntly records how difficult he always feels to write space in a pure narrative mode. It looks like there are always two writing flows: one is the rigorous analysing of space itself from a geometrical and functional point of view; another is emotional instinct. It is of course necessary to write about details and materials, but such descriptions are usually relatively droning (according to his professional experiences).[1]

Helene Frichot and Naomi Stead have made interesting comparison between architects and story writers who share pretty much the same goal, 'to imagine new worlds into being. Whether situated in the past, present or future, or layered as complex spatio-temporal strata...'[2] They both, through different processes, describe and express this new world to other people, and invite them to occupy it. However, storytelling can easily be combined with criticism. It gives the opportunity to challenge 'assumptions about our contemporary social and political realities' and give us the 'situated capacity to ethically cope with what confronts us' when we are in the imaginary world stories bring us.[3] Later on, they examine how narrative/storytelling and criticism can blend together. By doing so they first introduced the 'historical emergence of ficto-criticism as a mode of expression, as a writing practice, and as an experimental methodology'.[4] In the past 40 years, this methodology has developed initially from new writing practice approaches, tests of productive literature forms that 'conveying both an intimacy and an immediacy extended from writer to reader'[5] to the reevaluation of criticism itself. The unique mode of critique is then as a collaborator that is transferring perception and affection to the reader while criticism is building up and delivering concepts.[6] '...the challenge is to combine what the reader has felt (how they have been affected, and how they affect a situation), with what they might potentially learn...'[7]

To me, the potential value that this writing practice explores in sociology and environmental humanity are highly similar to spatial design. From the first moment of being an architectural student, I was encour-

aged to break the inherent ways of how people see, think and most importantly, how people inhabit. To care and listen to our audiences - the users' needs. In my opinion, the readers/users' sense, their responses and feedbacks to a situation are very personal, which cannot be uniformed or packaged. I cannot stop thinking – how does creative writing help to reveal those unique spatial voices - no matter how small or how weak they are? I believe spatial research and spatial design complement each other, and I always have critiques on architectural design process and current architectural languages, which overemphasize the importance of formalization. (fabric, pattern, material, new tech, visual effect, etc.) But barely reflect the users' experiences / responses. Is there a way reconstruct the current architectural language? Is there a way to conjoin spatial design and spatial research, to share the hiding precious voices in both academic field and design industry?

Emma Cheatle in her essay '*As/saying architecture: a ficto-spatial essay of lying-in*'[1] tests how can architecture be rebuilt by new creative architectural history writing that between essay and fiction – the '*spatial essay*'.[2] Despite working within the field of spatial research, or working in architectural design practice, we should all have the agreements that space and places are, indeed, the carriers of personal and social activities - a room; a building; an architecture; a street; a city...indeed, is where personal and social activities are unfolding. Thus, it links and alters with time; it is full of witnesses and senses from individuals. Emma Cheatle summarizes the potential core values of '*spatial essay*', which are the understanding of the building itself and the body experiencing the building.[3] Through reviewing the factual spatial knowledge of the building, while introducing a much broader understanding from various perspectives, she remedy the lost pieces in historical writing by using the building itself as materials. On the contrary, we, via her spatial essay, recognize the building again.

In my PhD work, I spend a lot of time testing different ways of creative writing, including personal stories of living experience in various cites; talking about memories of experimental walking and observing in different places in different times; diaries of positing myself in social events that involve occupation of the public realm; recording the specific place I have inhabited and so on. As a non-native speaker, to write in English is my biggest barrier in my learning journey, as I previously state.

1 Keith Mitnick, The Architect Who Couldn't Write, *Writing Architectures Ficto-Critical Approaches, eds Hélène Frichot And Naomi Stead*.[London, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2020], p.179.

2 Helene Frichot and Naomi Stead, Waking Ideas from Their Sleep: An Introduction to Ficto- critical Writing in and of Architecture, *Writing Architectures Ficto-Critical Approaches, eds Hélène Frichot And Naomi Stead*.[London, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2020], p.11

3 Ibid., p.11

4 Ibid., p.12

5 Ibid., p.13

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., p.17

1 Emma Cheatle, As/saying architecture: a ficto-spatial essay of lying-in, Special Issue 55: Writing | Architecture, eds Eleni Bastéa and Patrick West, April 2019, *https://textjournal.scholasticahq.com/article/25427-as-saying-architecture-a-ficto-spatial-essay-of-lying-in* [Accessed 2022]

2 Ibid., p. 3.

3 Ibid.

However, sometimes the multiple backgrounds and bilingual thinking style offer me the freedom to examine creative writing practices. I keep trying to find a way to break the boundary between art and literature, a method to travel back and forwards visually and verbally. In the story '*An Unknown Plant*'[1] and '*Four Homes*',[2] I try to use different literature styles and metaphors in writing to record the process of myself, as an intruder, a nomad, reaching a 'state of equilibrium' with the space as I am situated and in which I inhabit. I embed the raw, direct and feminine feeling of my body interacting with not just objective places, but also with the complex socio-geo context after newly immigrating. After the stories have been written. I challenge and analyse the definition of identity as well as identity in space based on my understanding of both western spatial and feminism theories and ancient Chinese philosophies. If '*Four Homes*' and '*An Unknown Plant*' are more about traces and memories of my body passively adapting itself into the surrounding, the story '*Walk in Sheffield*'[3] can be seen as my first experiment of having an active conversation with the city via using my creative spatial methods.

Emma Cheatle talks about the different approaches in her '*spatial essay*'[4] methodology. One of them is 'image'. 'The image is a twin of the text, its interruption [dissection] and foundation, object and subject combined.'[5] Images, maps, creative visualisation are key methods I also used in my spatial research. And it is one of the main aims of me carrying out this PhD, which is to criticise the current architectural/urban design languages. I test various mapping styles to correspond with my stories, which include photograph of my movements (evidence of me interact-ing with public realm), creative painting, hand-sketching and produc-tive info-graphic. In my opinion, integrating literatures and maps, while letting both complement each other and reference each other, could be considered as the a unique language that used in spatial writing prac-tices for the '*spatial essay*'. At the same time, commonly used (nowadays) architecture design and delivery formats could be fundamentally revised. Introducing variable experiences of occupants is becoming urgent. Not just the occupants are defined in the commercial ownership contracts, but the users of the full city - the minorities, coloured people, women, children, the vulnerable.

1 See Book *Three*, *Legends of Urban Space*. [Author]

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Emma Cheatle, As/saying architecture: a ficto-spatial essay of lying-in, Special Issue 55: Writing | Architecture, eds Eleni Bastéa and Patrick West, April 2019, *https://textjournal.scholasticahq.com/article/25427-as-saying-architecture-a-ficto-spatial-essay-of-lying-in* [Accessed 2022]

5 Ibid., p. 3.

The Voices

'*London makes me feel unprecedentedly lonely*'[1]

#I would like to know your feelings about London

'I always hear good things about London from other people's perspective, and how much they miss this place after leaving. The museums, the a t galleries, the parks, all those remarkable places…but I am a consumer to those places. I come here, have a look, spend some money and leave.

There is no deep connection between me and the city.

I see the young couple sitting on the South Bank in the summer; I see broken beer bottles piled in the corner that smells like wee…I see the romance and chaos of this city like a movie. The feeling isn't real that I have no idea how to break the ice or how to get rid of it.

The city is massive, and I'm just a tiny tiny person inside of it.

But I spend part of my real life in here. Whenever I look back, the memories are always blurry: some fragmental moments of excitement, some enthusiasm, but most of the time is just me alone in my room. I saw myself smiling in the photo, but I just cannot remember what my true mood was.

The city is like a giant dirty milky colour bubble with all the noises inside…'[1]

1 Author translation from Hashtag top #I would like to know your feelings about London, created in Application *The Litter Red Book* 小红书, [Accessed 2022]

This is my own translation of a post with the hashtags topic above in a Chinese social media APP. I don't know the author; I can only see his/her nickname with few other posts (a photo of a pair of shoes; a photo of Hackney flea market and one the most recent post about the summer). What fascinates me is not just this beautiful anonymous piece of writing but the comments and re-posts with the same hashtag. Students, visitors/tourist and immigrants, who originally come from China and are currently in London sharing their feelings about the city. The city that we share.

I start to rethink the value of voice. In fact, I have been thinking it for quite a while, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no doubt at all that this catastrophe has changed many things fundamentally. We have lost the most basic ordinary pleasures of being a human being - the freedom to hang out with our family or friends; the privilege to enjoy public place/space anytime we want; the courage to smile and nod to your neighbour; the joy to choose what and where to eat; the right to travel; the comfort to wear whatever we like, the confidence to get close with others who come from outside a two meters radius. It has been almost three years since everything started in China. Life in some countries gradually comes back to 'normal' (relatively normal); life in some other places is still under many restrictions. I'm not here to judge or criticise which country's policy on Covid is right or wrong, but what I do see is the diversions and those 'margin' voices that have been pushed away further and further day by day, especially in this post-pandemic era. As I wrote in the first part, I constantly feel having trouble in speaking out or writing down something formally. Part of the reason is the obvious language barrier as a non-native speaker; another part of the reason maybe the oriental introverted culture influence, historically and politi-cally. Growing up in Chinese as a girl, I was often told to 'hold' myself in public: hold your options, hold your tempers, hold your mouth and teeth when laughing…This mindset not just leads to a stereotype of Chinese/Asian people in many western countries, it also destroys the 'confidence of speech' for Chinese, especially Chinese women.

Earlier this year, Sheffield School of Architecture launched the latest Field journal '*Embodying an Anti-Racist Architecture*'.[1] The aim was to respond to the document in 2020 '*Anti-Racism at SSoA: A Call to Action*'[2] which condemned the school and university institution for being

1 Cheatle, E. & Hernan, L. & Butterworth, C. & Ogoegbunam Okoye, V. & Mejia Moreno, C., (2022) "Editorial; Embodying an Anti-Racist Architecture", field: 8(1), 1–8. *http://field-journal.org/portfolio-items/field-8-embodying-an-antira-cist-architecture/* [Accessed 2022]

2 Students from SSoA have drafted an open letter "to SSoA staff and students arguing that our school has been and remains complicit in the structures that perpetuate systemic racism within archi-tecture" *https://feministssoa.group.shef.ac.uk/cgi-sys/* [Accessed 2022]

complicit in systemic racism in architecture and in parallel; to revisit the start point when touching on architectural education and research. Encouraged by the movements of BLM,[1] students in Sheffield stood up, using their voices to fight for their own rights, to spread and promote their stories and theories. Although I was not in Sheffield at that time or participated in the movements, I was still deeply inspired and touched when reading their articles. However, I have noticed something quite interesting – there is sadly not a typical Chinese-spelling name appearing in those twenty-two articles, in this whole journal. Almost in the same week, I found the Hashtags topic about how Chinese people feel London and the beautiful piece of writing above. As I know, the number of Chinese students account for a large part of the international students in the University of Sheffield – but why there was no Chinese name, officially, obviously, showing on those publications, in order to speak out on behalf of our community? This discovery was like a wake-up call for me, to revisit the purpose of my PhD work. What is the true message I want to deliver? Who are my audiences?

I have spent a lot of time researching and learning the concept of 'feminine subjectivity'[2] in the first few years of my PhD research. I started with famous '*Nomadic Subjects*'[3] that Rosi Braidotti brings forward and the ancient Chinese notion of '*live within*'.[4] My take away from her theory I studied a few years was the motivation of '*becoming*',[5] which to me, is to recognize and accept my identity from the root, and to know the strategy of being dynamic, to situate my body differently and to think beyond established labels.[6] However, at this moment, when I revisit her theory and my previous research, I have to say that, sometimes my thoughts of identity and subjectivity are relatively limited from a political point of view. The problems I saw and talked about were like a scratch on the surface. The truth is, in the 'peacetime' (before this pandemic), I would never know that the world could tilt so fast in such a short time. If some kids did not 'addressed' me as 'corona' loudly on one of the main streets in London; if Chinese government had has not locked down the cities over and over again by using this virus as their excuse; if my parents did not have to take three Covid tests in 72 hours and quarantine for two weeks in two hotels, just in order to get back the country they were born and grew up, and live for over half a century; or, if my cousin who lives in San Francisco did not have to worry about her children getting murdered in school because they have

yellow skin …I probably wouldn't never have this level of understanding how urgent new transformation of identity is needed. That is, in Braidotti's argument, actions of becoming – nomadic becoming; a complex process of being opposite to the Sameness; the principle of 'the unify / the One'[1] the courage to act against the abuse of power, to confront the domination, to challenge the majority. She keeps emphasizing the importance of 'together' with 'disposable bodies of women, youth and others who are racialized or marked off by age, gender, sexuality and income and reduced to marginality.'[2] This allows me to think over the core value of my research: the voice – my voice; the anonymous voice I saw online; the 'silent' voices in the moment '*A Call to Action*' at SSoA'; the voices that have been left outside of their own country, the voices from my community, the voice of Chinese people, Chinese students.

The voice of us matters; the voice needs to be heard.

Three crucial 'roles' are mentioned in Braidotti's nomadic philosophy: *imagination, remembering* and *figuration. Imagination*[3] becoming nomad (you don't have to travel to be moving around constantly); *remembering* 'to become what you are – a subject-in-becoming – you actually reinvent yourself on the basis of what you hope you could become…'[4]; *Figuration* is 'a living map, a transformative account of the self'.[5] To me, my interests are always to apply the rich, sophisticated thinking into practice. In my research and case studies, self-observation and self-reflective form of creative writing is my Imagination: '*An Unknown Plant*'[6] on my window still; the PhD table in my '*Flat Near Docklands*';[7] those fingerprints left in the '*Walks in Sheffield*'[8] My travelling stories and links with wider context, cities, countries, and multiple cultures are my Remembering: remembering the situation of being 'In-between', the people who lived in '*47 Mornington Terrace*'[9] and '*Memories of Archway*'.[10] The bilingual research backgrounds, immigrating experience, methods of reflexivity are my Figuration – my *auto*ethnography.

Tony E. Adams, Carolyn Ellis and Stacy Holman Jones explain the key purpose of approaching and doing *auto*ethnography is to show 'people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of their struggles'[11] as well as to pass the messages to the readers /audiences who may or may not have the same directly experiences or knowledge on such institutional oppressions, political problems, cultural

1 Black Lives Matter *https://blacklivesmatter.com/* [Accessed 2022, 2023]

2 Rosi Braidotti, *Writing as a Nomadic Subject*, [Edinburgh University Press, 2014] DOI: 10.3366/ccs.2014.0122 *https://rosibraidotti.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Braidotti-Rosi-Writing-as-a-Nomadic-Subject.pdf* [Accessed 2015, 2022]

3 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory,* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2011]

4 '道德经' [Tao Te Ching], written by the sage Lao-Tzu, circa 600 BC

5 Rosi Braidotti, *Writing as a Nomadic Subject*, [Edinburgh University Press, 2014] DOI: 10.3366/ccs.2014.0122 *https://rosibraidotti.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Braidotti-Rosi-Writing-as-a-Nomadic-Subject.pdf* [Accessed 2015, 2022]

6 Ibid.

1 Rosi Braidotti, *Writing as a Nomadic Subject*, [Edinburgh University Press, 2014] DOI: 10.3366/ccs.2014.0122 *https://rosibraidotti.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Braidotti-Rosi-Writing-as-a-Nomadic-Subject.pdf* [Accessed 2015, 2022]

2 Ibid., p. 178.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., p. 173.

5 Ibid., p. 179.

6-10 See Book *Three*, *Legends of Urban Space*. [Author]

11 Tony E. Adams, Carolyn Ellis and Stacy Holman Jones, Autoethnography, The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods, 2017, *https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0011* [Accessed 2022]

conflicts or religious issues. Those experiences and 'insider knowledge' from *auto*ethnographic storytelling do not have to be precise or to be necessarily correct, but it offers us the maximum freedom and creativity compares to how traditional social researchers may be able to do.[1] Borrowing the words from Linda Smith, 'research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions.'[2] The process of doing ethnographic study is observing, participating in, writing the personal sense of being in a 'cultural field', communicating with 'insiders', taking 'field' notes, and so on, according to Adams, Ellis and Jones.[3] To me, *auto*ethnography is never detached from investigating the uses of space and place, where the social events are unfolding. It leads to a powerful and interesting combination of ethnographic studies, and creative spatial researches. In my PhD approach, I normally start from a very small point of view, usually things that happened in a private, even a very 'feminine' background – a room, a corner, a flat, an in-between space, etc. The observation and narrative in my work are always interacting with everyday life – causal walks in the daytime and nighttime; an indoor plant live and die on my travel journey; secret inspection of my flat mates and neighbours…More importantly, it is about my absolute internal feelings of discord, confusion and being totally lost in the city/cites.

In Adams, Ellis and Jones' article, the final aim of *auto*ethnography is to 'create texts that are accessible to larger audiences, primarily audiences outside of academic settings.'[4] Obviously, this is also my ambition with my PhD, speaking out for Chinese students and Chinese immigrates; allowing more individuals to read my stories; sharing while transforming the affective energy, processing and exchanging our 'identity bound truth'.[5] As an architectural and urban designer and carrying out spatial research at the same time, I am never satisfied with only the outcome of literature. Besides, along with the blooming of digital social media and the massive usage of smart phones and tablets nowadays, in my opinion, a more accessible, more attractive methodological tool urgently needs to be used widely, to engage both scholars and people who are not in the research field. Therefore, in my *auto*ethnographic studies, I attempt to blend visual tools – mapping into my methodology. Perhaps I should refer it to 'creative mapping' as it includes photography, infographic creation, hand sketching, watercolour painting and

architectural drawing. Edward Tufte in '*Beautiful Evidence*'[1] justifies the purpose of using mapping is 'often represent an explanatory theory applied to the visual evidence'.[2] If mapped images can be self-explanatory and can be considered as evidence, they can certainly be used for analysing the ethnographic experiences, which are normally asked for by social science conventions.[3] Carolyn Ellis talks about the way to make autobiographic writing aesthetic by using techniques of "showing", which are 'designed to bring "readers into the scene"- particularly into thoughts, emotions, and actions'.[4] For me, nothing is more powerful than the hybrid methodology of visual presenting and creative storytelling. I consider it a 'legend' to urban space.

In 2016, *Living Ashes II* was first staged at the 2016 CLICK Festival in Helsingør.[5] In this performance, a scientific experiment is subtly combined with art, including pre-prepared specific stage design (white protective suit with gas mask, 'kitchen-look' lab, etc.); acting (a series of biochemistry experiments); and beautiful filming via microphotographic camera. The main aim of this performance according to Carolina Ramirez-Figueroa, Luis Hernan and Pei-ying Lin, is to rethink the further meaning of 'boundaries' – boundary between science and art; between in and out; between biological body (organism) and physical body (abiotic component); between '*living*' and '*non-living*' matter.[6] Although I haven't studied biology and chemistry systematically since high school, I am fascinated by how a well-established and universally acknowledged notion of 'live', can be challenged and reconsidered into different levels of understanding based on various perspectives.[7] From my interpreting of their art piece, boundaries between living and non-living matter are 'indefinable' due to the fact of 'live' itself (protocell as metaphor),[8] which are sequences of 'transformational processes'.[9] It is '*vibrancy*'[10] which is a dynamic state that questions about our fixed political structure and our social economic environment.

Their observation and rethinking on boundary in *Living Ashes II* immediately reminds me of the notion of identity as well as the art practice based methodology on representing 'life'. Traditionally, to be or to think subjectively, we involuntary 'set up' some boundaries. Boundaries between genders (e.g., 'As a woman, I believe…'); between nationalities (e.g., 'I celebrate lunar new year because I am from China.'), between political occupations, preferences, ages, religions, education levels,

1 Tony E. Adams, Carolyn Ellis and Stacy Holman Jones, Autoethnography, The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods, 2017, *https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0011* [Accessed 2022]

2 Linda Tuhiwa I Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples,* [Dunedin, University of Otago Press, 1999] p. 5

3 Tony E. Adams, Carolyn Ellis and Stacy Holman Jones, Autoethnography, The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods, 2017, *https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0011* [Accessed 2022]

4 Ibid., p. 4.

5 Ibid

1 Edward Tufte, *Beautiful Evidence,* [Cheshire CT: Graphic press, 2006].

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Carolyn Ellis, *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel About Autoethnography,* [Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004] p. 142.

5 Living Ashes II,2016 *https://peiyinglin.net/page?p=livingashes2* [Accessed 2022]

6 Carolina Ramirez-Figueroa, Luis Hernan & Pei-Ying Lin *Living Ashes, Performance Research,* 25:3, 25-31, DOI: 10.1080/13528165.2020.180774610.1080/13528165.2020.1807746 *https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2020.1807746* [Accessed 2022]

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

wealth conditions; between living and non-living. When such solid boundaries provide us qualitative identical definition, they also flattens the opportunities for us to grow, to imagine; they turn into labels, which directly causes duality, and so-called groups of 'one-kind', which certainly leads to the dreaded divisions in our society. However, the notion of dissolution of boundaries offers us opportunities to challenge the transitional theories of what we have and who we are. More importantly, the ways that we take to enlarge our voice, to pass the message to our audiences are crucial. Creative writing, map-ping and documenting using camera, phone or other devices, walking, interviewing and storytelling…These are all part of the hybrid creative method that 'captures the outside world by making itself receptive to the totality of perception' [1]

'Representation, simulation, metaphor and image production give way to a process of re-materialisation based on principles of authenticity and presence. Life is not only represented and alluded to, as it is often the case in other art practices, but instead presented on stage with a range of strategies to transfer knowledge to the audience to acquaint themselves with the 'trans-formational processes' taking place.' [2]

During the past few years, the world has changed substantially, and we are all the witnesses - the way to communicate, to connect, the way to think, the way to work, to study, the way to live and the way to stop. In this essay, I summarise the methodology I have used in critical thinking and creative practice. Creative spatial writing can be the bridge that links and conjoins spatial research and spatial design. I have challenged the current way of doing architecture and urban design, which barely represent the users' experience / users' voice. Later on, I explain the importance of voice, specifically the voice from minority, from Chinese community. The purpose of referring to nomadic feminist theory of '*be-coming*' is to help myself understand the true value of pursuing our identity / our voice, which is a non-fixed, non-binary, iterative transforming process. This essay also reacts most of my PhD approaches, which in general, is *auto*ethnography. I briefly discuss the derivation of *auto*ethnography, in order to explain how this form can be used for my study, for enlarging my voice as a Chinese woman and in the hope that anyone who may or may not be lost in any alien city can receive my message.

This is a conclusion in a prelude.

A prelude before a prologue.
A prelude after a prologue.
A prelude after chapter one, chapter two and chapter three.
A prelude after an epilogue.
A prelude has been done afterwards.

Five more minutes to midnight, also to the usual but fully uncertain tomorrow. I just received the message from my cousin who lives in San Francisco saying that her little one tested positive on Covid, again; I opened up my mailbox before bedtime habitually, the price for the flight tickets back home are raised, again; I stood up, went to the kitchen to get myself a glass of water, Alexa from Amazon on the dinner table are displaying today's news from BBC, which are:

1.' If the police won't do their job, we will do it for them – Mums whose children have been attacked by teenagers are on patrol saying police are not doing enough.'

2. 'Claims of torture of China Uyghurs credible – China is accused of serious human rights violations in long-awaited report that it tried to stop being published'

I came back, saw Arundhati Roy's publication on *Financial Times* on my desktop: '*The Pandemic is a portal*'.[1]

It is 23:55pm now.

'*Whatever it is, coronavirus has made the mighty kneel and brought the world to a halt like nothing else could. Our minds are still racing back and forth, longing for a return to "normality", trying to stitch our future to our past and refusing to acknowledge the rupture.*

We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.'[2]

1 Arundhati Roy, *The pandemic is a portal*, https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca [Accessed 2022]

2. Ibid

Afterword   Part I

'Abstract'

'Afterword Part I / Abstract' was written in the summer of 2023, after my second PhD Viva.

This piece of writing is an expansion of 'Prelude' in order to update the literature review of the key feminist theories and key methodologies that frame this PhD work. More importantly, this 'Afterword' states the contribution of the full thesis and helps to position this thesis within the wider academic field.

This section can also be seen as an abstract /user manual for navigating the book. It provides relatively linear thinking guideline for any new reader to understand how the philosophy and methodology framework has been formed. However, as I discussed in the main body of work, design practice based PhD approach is always a to and fro process and a never ending project. Any previous work, any thought that has been developed during this iterative process, any mistake I made are now considered as a found object. It encourages me to challenge myself and the dominant voices in spatial research.

The timeline of me carrying out my thesis is long, linear and it is one way. But the PhD thinking process and the development of my mind-set is never straightforward. I always attempted to find a way to explain how my thesis is formed, how the book is structured, and, how to read it. But it was not so easy, to me or to my dear readers. A decade ago I graduated as an architectural student and I started this journey by trying to challenge the static visual language that was mostly being used in architectural education and practice. I asked, how to represent time and movements in architectural drawings as well as how can we unveil the intricate relationship between space and its users? In fact, these research questions I initially formulated remain relevant and continue to be employed when describing my doctoral topic to architects and designers.

During that time, I was inspired by Jane Rendell and her books 'Critical Architecture' [1] and 'Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism'.[2] I started to rethink the methods of conveying perceptions of architectural design through narratives and expressions; ways of merging subjective experiences with purely objective architectural / spatial elements (such as forms, materials or functions). I tested a few methods, including storytelling intertwined with the act of walking - to walk freely, to walk politically as a protest, to walk as part of daily practice, etc. Through carrying out my walking activities (mostly solo walking), the notion of identity/identities in space became my main research focus. Influenced by Nomadic Subject, [3] I was keen to explore complexities of identity that were shaped by different public / semi public / private spaces. In return, how space can be formed / reformed by the dynamic nomadic subjectivity. The concept of nomadic and fluid understanding of 'the self' [4] offered me a much wider perspective on spatial research. I extended my research to some ancient Chinese philosophies regarding 'live within', [5] which emphasised the interconnection between changing dynamics (time, sociocultural status, geo-context, etc.) and the body (the self). Meanwhile, I also attempted to combine graphic and creative writing and to explore the balance between and complementariness of visuals and literature. Encouraged by my mentor Renata Tyszczuk's essay 'Mappa Mundi' [6] and the notion of infographic, I started to integrate maps into storytelling and vice versa. Mapping, in addition to pure text, provides another layer of interpretation on subjectivity in another sensory dimension for readers.

Whether it was writing, walking, or mapping, they were methods I employed in spatial research in the course of first few years of my PhD study. However as discussed in 'Prelude', after experimenting with these various methods, there have been many times when I wasn't quite sure about the direction my research should take. I wasn't fully certain about the methodological approach to carry out my study, or a substantial theoretical framework that fully supported my spatial research.

In 2021, Lauren Fournier published her book Autotheory as Feminist Practice in Art, Writing, and Criticism. [7] Although the concept of autotheroy began to emerge in literary field in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Lauren Fournier expands the boundary of autotheroy from memoir books, autobiography and theory in writing to much wider disciplines. It gives opportunities to marginalised writers by demonstrating the complex relationship between the 'personal' and the 'outside'[8] (to me, the urban space in which our bodies are situated). Autotheory also emphasizes the significance of subjective lived experiences as a source of philosophical knowledge and insight, enabling the telling of transformative stories - the story of 'becoming'.[9]

An understanding of autotheory brings me back to my spatial research. I re-evaluated nomadic subjectivity and contemporary feminism from a fresh perspective, drawing from my own experiences as an PhD 'insider'. More importantly, how my work can be positioned in a wider sub-discipline? What is the potential contribution of my thesis? Both autotheory and nomadic subjectivity focus on the concept of 'self'. While nomadic theory addresses the intersectionality of identities and the importance of considering the complexities of gender, race, class, and sexuality in feminist theory and activism.[10] Autotheory, on the other hand, is diving into the 'body' by sharing personal experiences among marginalised writers and artists, which contributes to the understanding that personal issues are intertwined with larger social and systemic problems.[11]

Over the pass few years, both autotheory and autoethnography are utilised in my study. Both have certain similarities but play different roles in different fields. Autoethnography has a much longer historical root, which is mainly associated with the social sciences

1 Jane Rendell, Critical Architecture. [Oxon: Routledge 2007]

2 Jane Rendell, Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism[London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010]

3 Rosi Braidotti, Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory. [New York: Columbia University Press, 2011]

4 Rosi Braidotti, Writing as a Nomadic Subject, [Edinburgh University Press, 2014] DOI: 10.3366/ccs.2014.0122

5 '道德经' [Tao Te Ching], written by the sage Lao-Tzu, circa 600 BC

6 Renata Tyszczuk, Joe Smith, Nigel Clark and Melissa Butcher, Atlas: Geography, Architecture and Change in an Interdependent World, [London: Black Dog Publishing, 2012]

7 Lauren Fournier, Autotheory As Feminist Practice In Art, Writing, And Criticism. [Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2021]

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Rosi Braidotti, Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti. [West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2011]

11 Lauren Fournier, Autotheory As Feminist Practice In Art, Writing, And Criticism. [Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2021]

and practiced by researchers concerned with qualitative research methods. The insight of autoethnography encourages me to blur the boundaries between the intimate and the academic,[12] allowing me to deeply examine my very own experiences and emotions as part of the research process, especially during the early stage of the PhD project. On the other hand, autotheory opens the door for me to revisit my hybrid methods (creative spatial writing as well as creative mapping through body arts / movements). This relatively new methodological approach helps me engage theories (nomadism, spatial theories, etc.) with my lived experiences. Moreover, it helps me construct a personal understanding of the complex conceptual interplay between space and people.

In this thesis, I situated myself as a nomadic woman (subjectivity outside of traditional categories and norms).[13] My solo stories of everyday life practice in alien places play a central role in combining self-reflection and spatial study. While Lauren Fournier and Maggie Nelson mainly focus on marginalised gender and the fragility of queer identities in their books,[14] I seek to understand and expand auto-theory as a spatial practice based genre, integrating subjective lived experience while engaging with feminist theory and art / architecture studies. As I wrote in 'Prelude', part of my aim in carrying out PhD study was to explore interactions between urban space and *us*,[15] to look for methods that can represent such relationships. However, after years of the iterative process of thinking – questioning – rethinking, I gradually recognise the deeper value of my study. It is also to challenge the dominant voices and methods in spatial research and offer potential opportunities for understanding lives, especially for Asian / Chinese women through adopting the combination of spatial visual culture with critical subjective literary study.

12 Tony E Adams.; Jones, Stacy Holman Jones; Carolyn Ellis. Autoethnography. [New York: Oxford University Press, 2015]

13 Rosi Braidotti, Writing as a Nomadic Subject, [Edinburgh University Press, 2014] DOI: 10.3366/ccs.2014.0122

14 Both of Lauren Fournier and Maggie Nelson are pioneers in autotheory. Lauren Fournier, Autotheory As Feminist Practice In Art, Writing, And Criticism. [Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2021]
Maggie Nelson, The Argonauts. [London, Melville House UK, 2016]

15 See Chapter One 'Us'

Reference for Prelude and Afterword

Books and Articles

Adams Tony E.; Jones Stacy H; Ellis C. Autoethnography. [New York: Oxford University Press, 2015]

Braidotti R, Writing as a Nomadic Subject, [Edinburgh University Press, 2014] DOI: 10.3366/ccs.2014.0122

Braidotti R, Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory, [New York: Columbia University Press, 2011]

Cheatle E, As/saying architecture: a ficto-spatial essay of lying-in, Special Issue 55: Writing | Architecture, eds Eleni Bastéa and Patrick West, [2019]

eds Cheatle E, Hernan L, Butterworth C, Okoye V, and Moreno C, Embodying an Anti-Racist Architecture, [field: volume 8, issue 1, March 2022]

Ellis C, The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel About Autoethnography, [Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004]

eds Frichot H and Stead N, The Ways in Which We Write, Writing Architectures Ficto-Critical Approaches, [London, Blooms-bury Publishing Plc, 2020]

Hernan L, Ramirez-Figueroa C and Lin Pei-Ying, Living Ashes: Associated milieus and distribut-ed agencies, Performance Research Volume 25 Issue 3 on Microperformativity. ISSN: 1352-8165 [2020]

Lao-Tzu, 道德经 Tao Te Ching, circa 600 BC

Roy A, The pandemic is a portal

Smith L T, Decolonizing Methodologies Research and Indigenous Peoples, [Dunedin, University of Otago Press, 1999]

Tufte E, Beautiful Evidence, [Cheshire CT: Graphic press, 2006]

McIntosh C, Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Fourth Edition [Cambridge University Press, 2013]

Braidotti R, *Writing as a Nomadic Subject*, [Edinburgh University Press

Fournier L, Autotheory As Feminist Practice In Art, Writing, And Criticism. [Cambridge, Massa-chusetts: The MIT Press, 2021]

Nelson M, The Argonauts. [London, Melville House UK, 2016]

Tyszczuk R, Smith J, Clark N and Butcher M, Atlas: Geography, Architecture and Change in an Interdepend-ent World, [London: Black Dog Publishing, 2012]

Braidotti R, Writing as a Nomadic Subject, [Edinburgh University Press, 2014] DOI: 10.3366/ccs.2014.0122

Rendell J, Site-Writing: The Architecture of Art Criticism[London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010]

Rendell J, Critical Architecture. [Oxon: Routledge 2007]

Braidotti R, Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti. [West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2011]

Website Accesses

Fournier L, https://laurenfournier.net [Access 2023]

Rendell J, https://www.janerendell.co.uk [Access 2014]

Cheatle E, As/saying architecture: a ficto-spatial essay of lying-in, https://textjournal.scholasticahq.com/arti-cle/25427-as-saying-architecture-a-ficto-spatial-essay-of-lying-in [Access 2020]

Hashtag top #I would like to know your feelings about London, created in Application The Litter Red Book 小红书 [Ac-cess 2022]

Cheatle, E. & Hernan, L. & Butterworth, C. & Ogoegbunam Okoye, V.& Mejia Moreno, C., Editorial; Embodying an Anti-Racist Architecture", field: 8, http://field-journal.org/portfolio-items/field-8-embodying-an-antiracist-architecture/ [Access 2022]

https://feministssoa.group.shef.ac.uk/cgi-sys/ [Access 2014]

Braidotti R, https://rosibraidotti.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Braid-otti-Rosi-Writing-as-a-Nomadic-Subject.pdf [Access 2013]

https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doipdf/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0011 [Access 2015]

Ramirez-Figueroa C, Hernan L & Pei-Ying Lin Living Ashes II,2016 https://peiyinglin.net/ [Access 2022]

Ramirez-Figueroa C, Hernan L & Pei-Ying Lin https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2020.1807746 [Access 2022]

https://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/ [Access 2014]

Roy A, The pandemic is a portal, https://www.ft.com/content/ [Access 2022]

Black Lives Matter https://blacklivesmatter.com/ [Access 2022]

McNamara R, A Deep, Feminist Dive Into Autotheory, https://hyperallergic.com/647014/autotheory-as-feminist-prac-tice-lauren-fournier-mit/ [Access 2023]

Writing The Self, Communally: An Interview With Lauren Fournier, https://c-j-l-c.org/portfolio/writing-the-self-communal-ly/ [Access 2023]
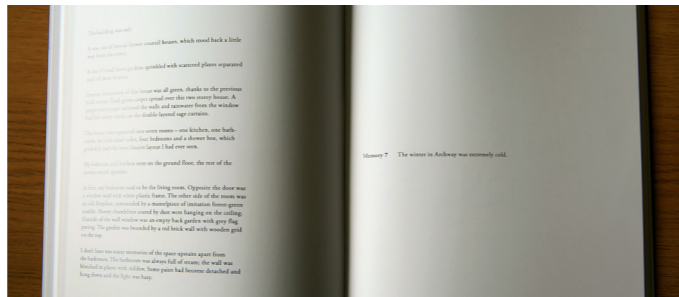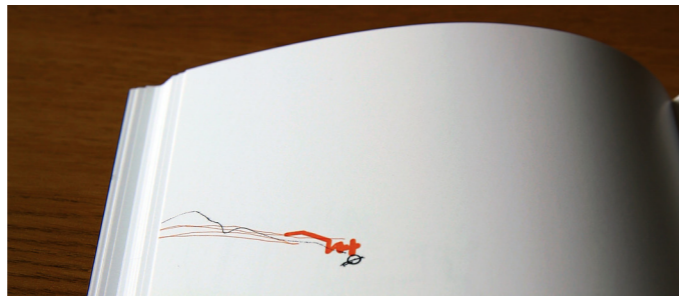
The Harvard Plan That Failed Asian Americans, https://harvardlawreview.org/print/vol-131/the-harvard-plan-that-failed-asian-americans/ [Accessed 2023]

Hartocollis A, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/15/us/harvard-asian-enrollment-applicants.html [Access 2023]

2023

The Indeterminate Legends of Urban Space

The first PhD submission in 2015

2015

This is:

a tale;

an atlas;

an auto ethnography;

a personal diary of nomadic experience that I would like to share;

a self-examination of my architectural education and practice over 10 years;

a collection of thoughts about urban space for anyone who loves our city.

My aim is to explore the indeterminate relationship between urban space and humans from a subjective point of view;
to offer a unique, critical way of looking at urban space, to experiment with creative hybrid methods in spatial research and spatial representation, and which may be reflected in ar- chitecture and urban design work. Besides, the piece of work itself is part of an open ended, iterative process.

Contents

This book is produced as my PhD by design submission.

However, It can also be considered as a tale, an altas or a piece of nomadic experience that I would like to share.

One introduces the theoretical context. Two introduces my methodology and its process of development. Three includes narratives, mappings and theoretical reflection produced as an iterative process.

I truly hope my readers could take on the journey with me whist reading. Therefore, you don't necessarily have to read it linearly. You could pick any parts that interest you. You could start wherever you like.

Acknowledgement

Prologue

'I've been thinking about 'space' for a long time. But usually I've come at it indirectly, through some other kind of engagement. The battles over globalisation, the politics of place, the question of regional inequality, the engagements with 'nature' as I walk the hills, the complexities of cities. Picking away at things that don't seem quite right. Losing political arguments because the terms don't fit what it is you're struggling to say. Finding myself in quandaries of apparently contradictory feelings. It is through these persistent ruminations – that sometimes don't seem to go anywhere and then sometimes do – that I have become convinced both that the implicit assumptions we make about space are important and that, maybe, it could be productive to think about space differently.'[1]

Four years; two cities and me, my Doctoral study draws to an end. On a wild morning in October, I stared outside the window before starting to work. I saw the heavy grey swirl drifting past the city and condensing in drops onto the window glass; DLR[2] was rushing to the station across skyscrapers; I saw the strong grip of nature and the modern human-made handiwork on every side. I saw the space that exquisitely linked them. Just like Doreen Massey, I have been thinking about space for a long time. I cannot help asking myself, after all the years of learning, researching, designing and writing, what is space, to me?

'Before the supreme ancestors, the world (the universe), was just a big black ball of chaos, with no order what so ever. Pan Gu was in the black ball of chaos. He slept in this ball for 18,000 years. One day, he woke; he started cracking the ball with an ax. After another 18,000 years, the ball was cracked into pieces. The light side floated up, became the sky; the cold and dark side became the earth. After Pan Gu created the universe, his breath turned into the wind and clouds, his voice turned into the rolling thunder. His eyes became the sun and the moon. His body turned into mountains and his blood became the roaring water.'[3]

This old Chinese story was the first impression of space for me, as I remembered. I never thought the story was real, but the nexus of human and space (the idea that human created space) planted a seed in my mind. Years later, I went to architecture school, where I learned how to represent space by using architectural language; how to analyse, arrange and re-arrange space properly based on uniform aesthetics of the school or from one certain group of people (especially at my traditional architecture school in China). Space for me changed from a word to a thing (an object). A thing that I had to learn, to draw, to design, or to manipulate. It was a very important period of time for me in being trained as an architectural student. But somehow, there was a disconnection. Rigorous training compelled me to only focus on design processes (it blocked my eyes on some level). The traditional architectural design methods that I had learnt, usually, were to divide space into different parts

Prologue is an introduction of my first PhD submission which explains where my journey started, and how my initial research questions formed.
It is also the abstract of my previous study. It summarises the theoretical analysis that framed the work; the methodological approaches that I have used and tested. It also offers a quick glance of the main body of work - my creative nomadic stories.

1 Doreen B Massey, *For Space*, (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2005), *part one*.

2 Docklands Light Railway

3 My translation from an ancient Chinese legend '盘古开天地' The story was first seen in '三五历纪' (Three Five Calendar) during the *Three Kingdoms*, circa 220–280 AD.

for further processes according to the functional and constructional needs, which sometimes neglected other crucial factors strongly related to space.

After that, I started my PhD. Doctoral training subverted my understanding of space. I realised space was neither a single word nor one thing. Doreen Massey, in her book '*For Space,*' debates that space has three initial propositions. First of all, space is recognised as an outcome of interrelation. Second, space consists of numerous elements; it can be considered as a set of possibilities or a multiplicity which embodies the movement of those elements. Thirdly, space is an ongoing process of making or creating.[4] Space brings plurality to the existence of elements, the movements of elements, as well as the relations between those elements. It allows the movement and relevant relations to happen in it, at different or the same time. As she suggests, 'Perhaps we could imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far.'[5]

Doreen Massey's concept of space has inspired me. According to her, space is 'never finished; never closed.'[6] In my interpretation, the movements (activities, events, social life) in urban space are non-stopping and unlimited. Also, referring to Massey's spatial theory, if space can be thought as a set of possibilities, that is to say the people-space relations may not have a fixed definition; they should be infinite, variable and multiple. Therefore, I ask, how do we explore these relationships? Why are they uncertain and unlimited? How do we research something that is unlimited and unknown? More important, in what way can we represent space that is understood as indeterminate relations?

I name my book 'The Indeterminate Legends of Urban Space.'

4 Doreen B Massey, *For Space*, (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2005), pp. 9 -11.

5 Ibid., p. 9.

6 Ibid.

Contents

Indeterminate

adjective
not exactly known, established, or defined

ORIGIN Latin word; from:
in-'not' + Latin- *determinatus* 'limited, determined.'
• **undetermined**
• **unlimited**

Legend

noun
1 a traditional story sometimes popularly regarded as historical but unauthenticated
2 an inscription, esp. on a coin or medal
3 a caption; the wording on a map or diagram explaining the symbols used
4 historical the story of a saint's life : the mosaics illustrate the legends of the saints

ORIGIN Middle English:
• from Old French *legende*;
• from medieval Latin *legenda* '**things to be read**;'
• from Latin *legere* 'read.'

My work is divided into three sections:

One **Space, Us, Time.**

This section defines my understanding of space and people, as well as offering a note on time.

Space begins with an analysis of what space is to me, moreover, what urban space is, drawing on theories including Lefebvre's philosophical standpoint and understanding of space. That is, considering '(*Social*) space as a (*social*) product.'[7] In '*The Production of Space,*' he made an argument about the three spatial modes; 'spatial practice,' 'representations of space' and 'representational space.'[8] I will talk about these three spatial modes, along with my personal understanding of the processes of achieving these three spatial modes. More importantly, they are considered as the triad of the 'perceived,' the 'conceived' and the 'lived.'[9] I interpret this triad not only as an reflection of his three spatial modes, but also as a means of revealing interconnections and interactions between space and people. I believe, on some level, it is an idealised process of people approaching space. As a counterpoint to the Western philosophical and social theories I will discuss my understanding of space from two Chinese philosophical perspectives: Taoism and Confucianism. To me, Western spatial theory can seem to consider space from a macro perspective (in terms of a society, a community or a group). Conversely, traditional Chinese notions of space are microscopic; they are from the perspective of an individual human being. They are concerned with interchangeable flowing processes, with lived experiences, with subjective experiences of being **within**. They emphasise the importance of self-reflection and self-creation.

The combination of Western and Eastern theoretical ideas of space establishes my personal understanding of space. The key value is found in approaching the understanding of urban space from both theoretical roots, which is the interaction between space and the people, from the perspective of individuals. Notions of urban space are derived from cognition of various social factors. The most significant factor, I believe, is people. Researching urban space is to research the relationship between space and people. Lefebvre's concept of (*social*) space as a (*social*) product leads me to ask: if the term 'social' is so broad, in which myriad elements are embodied, such as race, religion, culture, history, political standpoint, economics, sexuality and so on; where is my starting point? In exploring the relationship between space and people, how do I position myself in this relationship? Also, does society stands for everyone? What if someone doesn't belong to any society? What if someone belongs to multiple societies or cultures? What if someone moves around frequently; changes his/her identity between different societies or communities? What if there is one kind of person who doesn't belong to any category?

7 Henri Lefebvre, *The production of space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 26.

8 Ibid., pp. 33, 38-39.

9 Ibid., p. 40.

In **Us**, I will establish my position in researching relations between space and people. Drawing on my own cultural background, which constantly confuses me, I will analyse the position of being 'the cultural outside.'[10] This 'being outside' position allows me to think of my position from a overall perspective. Thus, I look back; re-think my connection with the city and determine the particularity of who I am. Rosi Braidotti's notion of being nomadic, as well as a new style of thinking helps me abandon fixed binary definitions in situating myself. She suggests that instead of positioning oneself, of offering a fixed place for a person, or of defining the identity of a person; maybe we should think differently. Is it necessary to have a fixed position? Various new forms (new gender, new living form, new social structure, new life style) are allowed in the Post-modern social structure. Polarised dualistic descriptions in sociology and philosophical research are getting less and less useful.[11] Thus, nomadic thinking is playing its role. According to Braidotti, being nomadic is a state of mind which is concerned with the process of becoming rather than physical movements.[12] I will draw on my understanding of being nomadic in critically situating myself in relation to the city and in searching for *home*. With reference to Braidotti's theory of the 'body,' this section introduces the notion of **Us**. It relates to the multiple identities embodied in one person, which varies with different social-cultural structures and factors.[13] More importantly, the nomadic 'body' not only represents the sense of self, but also bridges sense of self with sense of others as well as the world. The key point in approaching the space-people relation is **Us** - the nomadic subjectivity(ies). It is this experiencing of urban space from within, through the body, that I am keen to explore, understand and represent.

Later on, I will talk about my own understanding of **Time**. My main interest in time is to reveal the relation between time, space and people. By carrying out an exploration into the cognition of time in ancient China, I will explore how social events affect the formation of the ancient Chinese time concept. The main idea in the ancient Chinese time concept is 'time based on events and events conform to time.'[14] And this concept of time, which is based on the understanding of social activity, is subjective. I will also introduce Jeremy Till and Elizabeth Grosz's theories about time, in order to explore time as continuous experiences rather than an absolute moment or a static status. In my understanding, the continuous experiences (from the past, to present, then to the future) in time are similar in space. There are plural.[15] They are the 'thick time' - the **lived time**.[16]

Two **To - Fro**

This section presents and contextualises my methodology: the hybrid methodologies that I have developed for and through carrying out my spatial research. It introduces the three interconnected narrative and visual methods

10 Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001), p. 31.

11 See, Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti*, (New York: Columbia University Press,2011), pp. 8, 11, 16.

12 Ibid., pp. 29-31.

13 See, *Writing as An Nomadic Subject*, Oxford Talk by Rosi Braidotti, May, 2013, [accessed 2015] http://www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/getattachment/

14 See, '周易' (*The I Ching*) circa 1045 -771 BC; '道德经' (*Tao Te Ching*), circa 600 BC.

15 Elizabeth Grosz, *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power* (NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005), p. 134.

16 Jeremy Till, *Architecture Depends*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 95, 96.

(**storytelling**, **walking** and **mapping**) employed to explore the subjective experiences of my relationship, as a nomadic woman, with the urban space in which I live and have lived. This section also provides a reflection on my early motivations for undertaking this spatial research as well as the beginnings of my interest in investigating the indeterminate people-space relationship.

In carrying out a PhD by design, I have engaged in an open ended process; an **iterative** process of doing, reflecting and theorising, and re-doing. Each iteration allows for emergent insights to help critical theoretical reflection and to inform the development of the way in which the next method is used. My approach openly embraces the very subjective, interpretative nature of my research and personal, emotional connection to my work. I consider myself as a nomadic woman. I hope that my hybrid methodology can give a means of spatial representation and critical spatial thinking as well as a form of expression and emergent understanding for other people who have similar experiences.

Urban Legend (storytelling) is introduced as one of Michel de Certeau's 'everyday life practice.'[17] My cultural background helps me to think about the way narrative can be used as a map, or as the legend on map (and vice versa) in representing the relationship between people and space in ancient Chinese books - notably the '山海经' (*Shan Hai Jing*).[18] I also consider the spatial (visual) components of Chinese characters themselves. In referring to work of Jane Rendell and Georges Perec I will explain how subjective narrative can be used in exploring the space-people relation.

Wanderlust (walking) is another crucial 'everyday life practice.'[19] It is also one of the first steps in my PhD research. I will discuss Rececca Solnit's idea that walking strongly relates to mind, body and space.[20] Francis Alÿs' art project '*Seven Walks*'[21] will provide different examples of how urban space can be connected with people, especially the way that an outsider can have a transformative effect on space. Janet Cardiff's '*The Missing Voice*'[22] shows the possibility of experiencing space though one's subjective multiple voices (Us). Emma Cocker's project '*Performing The City*'[23] is about experiencing the city through the rhythm of the moving body, and revealing an invisible affective sense of the others. In Jane Rendell's project '*Walking to Wapping/ Walking through Angels,*'[24] walking is the metaphor, which represents movements between space and times as well as the connection between narrative representations and walked experiences of space.

City Map (mapping) plays an important role in my hybrid methodology. It primarily mirrors the storytelling and helps in reviewing the research. In some cases mapping stands alone as an exploration of alternative representations of my subjective experience in the city. It is considered as an exploration in spatial representation. In my case, the process of producing maps involves

17 See, Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (London: University of California Press, 1984).

18 '山海经', also known as '*The Classic of Mountains and Seas*', The exact author(s) of the book are undetermined, circa from Warring States (453-221 BC) to the beginning of the Han Dynasty (202 BC-220 AD).

19 See, Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (London: University of California Press, 1984).

20 See, Rebecca, Solnit, *Wanderlust*, (London: Verso, 2001).

21 See, Francis Alÿs, *Seven Walks*, [accessed 2012] http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2005/seven_walks

22 See, Janet Cardiff, *The Missing Voice*, [accessed 2012] http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/walks/missing_ voice.html

23 See, Emma Cocker, Bianca Scliar Mancini, Sara Wookey, *Performing The City*, (Nottingham Trent University, 2012)

24 See, Jane Rendell, *Walking to Wapping/ Walkng through Angels*, [accessed 2015] http://www.janerendell.co.uk/walks/walking-to-wapping-walking-through-angels

the layering of subjective responses to the city, memories, mobilities (experiences in travelling) and time. The process itself is iterative. I will start this part by discussing the limitations of traditional maps, in order to introduce the kind of new maps I am searching for. Edward Tufte's '*Beautiful Evidence*'[25] gives many examples of the way that mapping can be considered as graphic information. I will further discuss Charles Joseph Minard's mapping, '*Napoleon's March*,'[26] in order to show how maps represent not only visualised data, but also a interaction of space and time, and also serves as an affective message to people who read it. The Hereford '*Mappa Mundi*'[27] represents how maps can be illustrated with both geographical and spirtual information which reflect religious stories and humanitarian history. Janice Caswell's[28] mappings are discussed as inspiration, in the way she maps memory very subjectively.

Three **Legends of Urban Space**

In this section we will see that these methods are not used independently. Mapping reflects my narrative and walks, and vice versa. The explorations occurred in my various homes or cities, (mainly in Sheffield and London). The narrative and visual methods become explorations in their own right as well as ways of representing each other. The process itself, we will see, develops throughout the work. Critical and theoretical reflection is not separate from these three practices and therefore intersects the presentation. Indeed, I believe that it is evidence that my own personal understandings through reflection are an integral part of the iterative processes and also develop in depth and criticality throughout the work.

The first collection, **Walks in Sheffield**, includes three stories about my little rambles in Sheffield, along with three visual representations. Those stories were written in the early stage of my research. They were my first explorations in expanding my personal understanding of urban space through walking. The original idea came after walking near West Street and Sheffield city centre. My interest at that time was in trying to define the identities of urban spaces as well as the relations in-between. In attempting to define identities of urban space, I used the concept of the boundary as my clue for finding the relations in-between. I referred the idea of 'Negative Space'[29] in trying to look at the city from new perspectives, focusing on the places that I usually ignore and the places between destinations. I also tried to explore the multiple identities as experienced in urban space.

The second, **An unknown Plant**, is a travel story. This is not only an experimentation of nomad theory in spatial study, but also a truthful portrayal of my life at that time. This article was written after I had moved to London following a period of time drifting between cities and losing a family member.

Being a nomad was not strange to me, but I used to consider this kind of fear of getting lost, this aloneness and uncertainty, as an negative mental issue. I started blaming the city and questioning my decisions and I even doubted the purpose of traveling and being dynamic. Finally, researching feminist theories offered me new ways of looking into myself, considering my position differently as well as looking at the city critically and understanding the fact that home was where you wanted to have a home. The structure of this story may be a little unusual, the whole article is a kind of flashback, which includes my story and some theoretical thinking. Narration is written chronologically whilst the theoretical reflection is written in reverse – I not only wanted to analyse the processes of exploring space from a nomadic subject perspective and how nomadic theory could impact on spatial study, but also wanted to explain how it changed my state of mind, as well as contributing to the processes of finding my home.

Four Homes is another story collection. Four stories about four places where I live and have lived in London. They are travel stories, everyday life stories. They are all experiments in narration and aim at expressing my personal senses and memories, which vary with different areas of London. In writing those stories, I kept looking back, re-reading the stories and I could not help myself rethinking urban space in various ways. In mirroring the narration, I undertake a series of subjective drawings and mappings, which can be considered as a parallel visual version of my nomad stories. Unlike other mappings I have produced, these drawings are full of my imagination. Rather than being drawn to scale, they include plans of memories of the house/flat that are based on my experience of occupying the space. They are also my subjective image or schema of the area and include abstract traces of my daily routes.

Finally, **Occupy London** tells of my little adventures in London. *Part one* was inspired by the '*Occupy London*' protest and is set in that context. It contains a reflection on contemporary architecture practice from a intern urban designer's perspective. *Part two* is a retrospective account of my life in Lon-don and my movements in the city at different scales. The experiences are presented as subjective memories.

other Legends includes another set of Urban Legends: 'My Version of London.' They reflect not only the places I have lived, but also the main area in London. Also the sketches that may not be extremely close to the main structure, but have still played important roles in developing the hybrid methodology. Both in approaching the people-space relation as well as its representation. They are part of the process.

'Lexicon' in the back pocket and 'Conversations with Didi Zhang' include voices from others and offer insights into my Chinese cultural background. Some of them could be considered as the foundation or inspiration of my spatial thought long before I had noticed it.

25 See, Edward Tufte *Beautiful Evidence* (Cheshire CT: Graphic press, 2006).

26 [accessed 2012, 2015] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Charles_Joseph_Minard#/media/ File:Minard.png

27 Hereford Cathedral is home to the Hereford Mappa Mundi, one of the world's unique medieval treasures. Measuring 1.59 x 1.34 metres (5'2" by 4'4"), the map is constructed on a single sheet of vellum (calf skin). Scholars believe it was made around the year 1300 and shows the history, geography and destiny of humanity as it was understood in Christian Europe in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. http://www.themappamundi. co.uk [accessed 2015]

28 See, Janice Caswell [acessed 2012, 2015] http://janicecaswell. com/work/ new/

29 Negative Space is, quite simply, the space that surrounds an object in a image. Just as important as that object itself, negative space helps to define the boundaries of positive space and brings balance to a composition.
[acessed 2012, 2015] http://www.creativebloq.com/art/ art-negative-space-8133765

Space, Us, Time.

'Space, Us ,Time' is the first chapter and the theoretical foundation at the early stage of the PhD study. It contains literature reviews and philosophy studies from three perspectives:
'Space' is the combination of my understanding on Western and Eastern spatial ideology, which can be considered as social products (*Lefebvre,1991*).
'Us' discusses about the subjective identities (*Braidotti,1994*) in urban space. It starts with a personal lost sense of belonging in the alien cities, which makes me rethink the notion of space as a social product, as well as the relationship between space and its users. During the study of Braidotti's nomadic theory, I gradually realise the relationship between space (city) and people (me) can be binary or multiple. It is fluid and a process rather that a fixed state.
'Time' verifies, from another point of view, that space is fluid, never finished, never closed.

2014

2012

Space

I went to the exhibition '*Sensing Space*'[1] in the Royal Academy of Art in London last year. Seven architects/architectural practices from all over the world were invited, and six pieces of work using completely different materials, with different spatial concepts were displayed in the main gallery. The aim of this exhibition was not only to test the essential factors of architecture, such as materials and light, but more importantly, to find out how space could be perceived, experienced and imagined with people's senses and memories. The spatial experiences came from both individual and collective works, who had various cultural and education backgrounds, lifestyles, personal histories. This exhibition offered a great opportunity to explore the diverse methods used in building up relations between space and people, and how architectures as well as architectural design work could be understood in different ways. However, with respect to those installations, I was more interested in the quotes on the walls, which showed the importance of the space-people relationship and architects' personal understanding of space as well as the messages that they wanted to pass on to its users. It caused me to immediately reevaluate my understanding of space: How did I understand the concept of space from the perspective of an international architectural student, who had both Eastern and Western cultural and educational backgrounds?

Ten years ago, when I began my architectural training in a traditional architecture school in China, space to me, was an object to design. Space, to me, meant something to draw or to model. At that time, with the urbanisation processes in China, the Chinese architectural market rapidly expanded; over-developed cities emerged surprisingly fast; skyscrapers and massive shopping malls seemed to emerge every single day. Such huge developing demands had an influence on the architectural education system in China. In my undergraduate learning process, I was taught to focus on the design work but only in terms of the appearance of buildings. However, this kind of focal point (in architecture or urban space design) created a terrible misconception for me. It kept my designing and research away from people's actual daily uses; also, I forgot to really read about what I had seen. After my Master's course training in the UK, I became aware of the true meaning of spatial research. I started to think about elements and relations that went beyond the so-called functionality or aesthetics of buildings; to look at the city in different ways; to explore the people and space relations as not just an architectural student, but also as a person who actually lived in the city.

1 See, *Sensing Space*, [accessed 2015] https://www. royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/ sensing-spaces

'Remember who you were before you were branded an architect. Remember that you too inhabit this world. Remember that you too use buildings, occupy space.'[2]

My first attempt, as a PhD by design student, was to analyse the question 'what is space?' by simply defining the identity of space. I tried to find the boundary and the missing space in-between destinations. In my opinion at that time, boundary was the entrance of a certain place, which could be considered either as a node that links people and space, or a sharing point between two places. The in-between space was a connection space,which, it seemed, was constantly ignored. Defining the identity of space may had helped me in thinking about the people-space relation from certain perspectives. However, my thoughts on urban space were based on my learning background at that time. The research was sporadic and my understanding of space was restricted. It was just a brief start.

'...we often use that word 'space', in popular discourse or in academic, without being fully conscious of what we mean by it.'[3]

Therefore, I ask myself,

What is space ?

2 Jeremy Till, *Architecture Depends, (*Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2009), p. 126.

3 Doreen B Massey, *For Space*, (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2005), p. 17.

In the middle of 20th century, Henri Lefebvre brought out a great idea of a new understanding of space. From my point of view, he criticised former definitions of space - those from the viewpoint of mathematicians (geometrical) and philosophers (mental). He deemed that the basic study of space was certainly lacking in theoretical analysis at that time, which could only be described as some fragmentary spatial thoughts. Thus he combined both physical space (nature space) and spiritual space (mental space) with another crucial element - society. He made a systematic and complete explanation of '*The Production of Space*,' which gave us a diversity of spatial concepts, that is, multiple layers in space. He constructed a united platform, a 'unitary theory,'[4] which allowed researchers from different realms to carry out spatial study from different disciplines.

The core value of Lefebvre's spatial theory was production and reproduction of social space. '(*Social*) space is a (*social*) product.'[5] He argued that space existed and became meaningful in the process of production. Also that processes of life (production) were connected with different types of space. In '*The Production of Space*,' Lefebvre indicated three key points in his spatial theory: 'spatial practice,' 'representations of space' and 'representational space,'[6] and provided dialectical analysis of the three moments of space.

'Spatial practice' focuses on space in functional ways, which includes the sense of space before experiencing, the ways of organising and ways of using space. It concerns the material and daily usage - the 'production and reproduction'[7] of material. 'Spatial practice' builds a bridge between people and the real urban space (the city), which can be considered as the foundation of economic and daily life.[8] In my understanding, it is the material, physical realistic space - the streets where we walk, the building where we live, the grocery shop where we buy food or the park where we take our lunch break everyday.

'Representations of space' are conceptualised spaces, which can be seen as ideal spatial models. They exist in the analytical processes of scientists, architects, urban planners, technocrats or even politicians. They represent space as 'the concept without life.'[9] For example, 'Representations of space' are the houses / cities that architects design, or the mathematical forms that physicists conceive.

'Representational space' is the used space, which I believe, has overlaps with the material, physical, realistic space. It is imagined space, experienced through symbolic signs and images after physical space has been lived. In my understanding, 'Representational space' can be considered as a rethought, interpreted 'Spatial practice.' It allows subjective imagination and individual life experiences. It also represents people's cognition of society.

Compared to the three modes of space that Lefebvre established, I am more interested in his ideas of understanding space as 'the triad of the perceived, the conceived, and the lived.'[10] It is actually a simplified interpretation of his three moments of space. Perceived – 'Spatial practice;' conceived – 'Representations of space;' lived – 'Representational space.' In fact, I believe this triad of perceived, conceived and lived, on some level, reflect the process of developing my personal understanding of space. Firstly, knowing the way to see space, is an ability with which I am born. Before taking any architectural training, space to me, was physical - the ground under my feet, the roof above my head - I perceived space by using my instinct as a human being. When I began to study architecture, space had another meaning to me. It became the conceptual forms in my design process - I conceived space by using architectural design skill and language. And now, when I re-think the question 'what is space?' I need to further explore space as a lived space, as an interaction of a series of complex social factors. In other words, the concept of space should be considered as this 'perceived – conceived – lived' triad rather than a single model. The triad is either a simple linear sequence, or a cyclical pattern. They are interacting and interconnected. These three overlapping moments of space can take place in any time, any location.

Lefebvre's spatial triad gives a comprehensive analysis of space from philosophical, historical and political perspectives to modern theories of urbanism. It helps me in reviewing my learning process in spatial research; it offers me a strong theoretical support in looking at space differently. The diversity of understanding space and his spatial theory that '(*social*) space is a (*social*) product' leads me to ask - if social space, indeed, as a social product, in this case, is there any difference in understanding urban space in a different social and cultural context?

Looking back to my first architecture design tutorial as an undergraduate in China, I remember my tutor wrote down a sentence (with a marker in huge black font) :

凿户牖以为室, 当其无有室之用,
故有之以为利, 无之以为用 [11]

It means (in my translation): 'We carve windows and doors to create a room; the void allows the function of the room. Life engages in action with visible (material) things, because the invisible (immaterial) is active.' This old adage comes from '*Tao Te Ching*,' which was written by one of the greatest ancient Chinese philosophers Lao-tzu.

4 Henri Lefebvre, *The production of space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 11.

5 Ibid., p. 26.

6 Ibid., pp. 38-39.

7 Ibid., pp. 32-33.

8 See Iain, Borden, Joe, Kerr, Jane, Rendell and Alicia, Pivaro, *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002)

9 Ibid., p. 7.

10 Henri Lefebvre, *The production of space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), pp. 32-33.

11 '道德经' (*Tao Te Ching*), written by the sage Lao-tzu, circa 600 BC, Chapter 11.

This text is probably one of the first theoretical descriptions of space in Chinese history. From my point of view, it accurately indicates the essence of space. Space is not a thing that we make. What we make (doors, walls, windows) are structures for a place. What is in-between all those material things is actually space. In other words, what is important is what is contained, not the container. People make visible (material) objects in order to live. In fact, it is the invisible things in-between (space) that create functionality for us to act. Invisible (immaterial) space can exist due to the initiative of people. The concept attaches importance to the harmonisation of the realms of nature, human and spirit. The relativity of visible (有) and invisible (无) can also be considered as the balanced relationship between Yin (阴) and Yang (阳).[12]

一生二，二生三，三生万物. [13]

(My translation): 'One produces Two; Two produces Three; Three produces All the things.'

In my understanding of this text, One can be interpreted as the *balance* point between the Yin and Yang. Two stands for Yin and Yang. They can also be considered as the sky and the ground (the earth). Three stands for the sky, the ground (the earth) and the human. Therefore the sky and the ground is derived from the *balance* of Yin and Yang. Emergence of sky and ground (earth) brings the emergence of human. Because of the interaction of the sky, ground, human beings, and the movements in-between them, all things emerge. Such philosophical thinking suggests not only the *balanced* relation of nature and people, but also the importance of human movements and activities. According to Lao-tzu, this *balanced* relation is not an absolute stationary state. On the contrary, it is an interchangeable, dynamic process, a lived experience, which can not be permanently held or absolutely known.[14]

谷无以盈，将恐竭；万物无以生，将恐灭. [15]

(My translation): 'A valley will dry out without rain filling; creation will die with out growing.'

People live in the space, in-between of sky and ground. They experience nature and undertake physical and spiritual changes (movements) in space and keep the *balance* with nature.

The belief of another main ethical and philosophical system in ancient China, Confucianism, is that everything is in practical order. This is a fundamental condition in most of the works of Confucius. These orders comprise of the order of seasons, orientations, the fivefold conceptual scheme / Five Elements (The Wu Xing, 五行), the order of human beings and the order of the Cosmos. I personally divide 'all orders' into two parts, which are, in my words, systems of universe and humanity.

System of universe, as a direct translation from the Chinese character '天,' denotes the Cosmos, the reality, the physical world. It is, all natural forces. Some philosophers refer it as 'The Great One.'[16] As I have mentioned, this spatial system includes concepts of the order of time (spring, summer, autumn and winter); orientation (east, west, south, north and middle) and the order of Five Elements (wood, fire, earth, metal and water).[17] Distinct orders have their own circulation. However, in the meantime, I believe they also interact with each other and correspond to each other. Humanism is the core of Confucianism. It emphasises the importance of the human being, of human qualities, the cultivation of virtue and maintenance of ethics. Moreover, it focuses on the individual's experience of surroundings and the influence from outside (as opposed to inside – the *subject*), from the environment and other people. When the system of universe (The Great One) relates with humans, a new system has emerged: humanity.

This system of humanity, in my interpretation, is Confucius' spatial model. 'Sun and moon are moving above us, whilst mountains and rivers are changing below us, that is how the world goes. Human being exists in the middle, observing the sky and surveying the ground, that is how humans engage with the world.'[18] In this model, 'The Great One' (system of universe) has its own particular order of movements. It is, according to Confucius; permanent, invariable and unbreakable. In this case, people must rely on their own initiatives, improve, cultivate and manage themselves carefully and to adapt to the external immutable environment. This stance in my own terms, is **to live within**, which derives from Confucius' conceived spatial model. It focuses on subjective experiences, the endeavour of individuals and communities, particularly **self-reflection** and **self-creation** and it has had a huge influence on various social practices throughout Chinese history.

Lefebvre, Lao-tzu and Confucius (Western and Eastern, in my understanding) had distinct spatial concepts, theoretical models, and of course different perspectives in progressing their spatial thoughts. Lefebvre started with points from history, from mathematics, psychology, politics and economics. Through a rational analysis, he introduced sociology to his spatial theory. Confucius and Lao-tzu looked at space originating with the understanding of natural forces and metaphysical concepts and they emphasised the value of the individual within its context. Despite those differences, I believe people can be considered as one of the key points in researching space in both Western and Eastern theories. As discussed above, researching space is researching the relationship between space and people.

'(*Social*) space is a (*social*)' product, it is produced and inevitably affected by complex, multiple social agencies, including political context, practice of individuals, economy, cultural collision and interaction and historical remains, and so on. Therefore, to find my own interest, my personal perspective and

12 Yin and Yang in Taoism has various meaning: the sky (Yang) and the ground (Yin), male (Yang) and female (Yin), the sun (Yang) and the moon (Yin), day (Yang) and night (Yin), hot (Yang) and cold (Yin), up (Yang) and down (Yin), etc.,
Key point of this notion is to describes opposite or contrary forces / elements / structures can be complemented, interconnected, and interdepended. The concept concerns the *balance* between things, which is not static, but flowing.

13 '道德经' (*Tao Te Ching*), written by the sage Lao-tzu, circa 600 BC, Chapter 42.

14 Amos Ih Tiao Chang, *The Tao of Architecture*, (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 4.

15 '道德经' (*Tao Te Ching*), written by the sage Lao-tzu, circa 600 BC, Chapter 39.

16 The concept of 'The Great One' is seen in many Chinese philosophers, such as in '论语' (*Analects of Confucius*), circa 475 –221 BC; '周易' (*The I Ching*), circa 1045 -771 BC.

17 See, '周易' (*The I Ching*), also known as *The Book of Change*. circa 1045 -771 BC.

18 My translation of '天在上，日月运行，天象生焉；地在下，山川并存，地理蕴焉。人在中，上能观天象，下能察地理', which is from '周易' (*The I Ching*), circa 1045 -771 BC.

to find my audience is crucial, not just in carrying out the my PhD research, but also in looking at space, especially as an international student who has a distinctive cultural and educational background. Of course, I am not here to encourage people to avoid or hide from any social factors, which I believe we can never avoid. My aim is to explore space from a specific, subjective critical standpoint, in order to research the valuable *balanced* relationship, the interchangeable, dynamic process of looking at urban space. To understand the city from **within** (which is the core value in Confucianism and Taoism); to experience space with an individual body and all senses; to 'perceive,' 'conceive' and to truly '**live**.'

'It is good to have roots, as long as you can take them with you.'[1]

'What do you do for your PhD?' I have been asked questions like this many times since I started my course. Questions like 'what is your topic?' 'Why do you do this?' 'What is your purpose?' 'What has this got to do with architecture and urban planning?' Those questions come not just from people who are completely outside the field of architecture; but also from architects, artists, other architectural or PhD students and academic researchers. At that time, I tried to answer those questions in different ways, but I didn't think I actually got the correct point. Or, I didn't even have proper time to think about it. What is the true value of my work? What is my position? Who is my audience?

Us

I was born in a massive developing city in the Southwest China. I took my undergraduate courses in a coastal city in Northeast China. After five years of architectural training (learning and working), I went to Sheffield, where I finished my Master course and now I am based in London, carrying out spatial research through writing and drawing urban space. My travelling (re-locating) experience and multiple cultural backgrounds have helped me in thinking about and feeling cities uniquely, but, occasionally, it has confused me. I have referred to *home* as many places - places like my parents' house where I grew up in Chongqing, the flat I am staying at this moment, or London, or China, or sometimes my husband's terrace house in Cardiff where he grew up. Strangely, when I mentioned or talked about *home*, it was always somewhere else. Moreover, where I was actually, physically situated in that moment, to me, was a limbo place. This limbo place brought me unique critical perspectives of living and a special way of looking space, but it reduced my sense of belonging in the real world. I tried so hard to identify myself in different cities, countries, but I always failed. This fading sense of belonging and security haunted me more and more each day. How did I situate myself in the city?

1 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory,* (New York: Columbia University Press,1994), p. 1.

Who am I?

Where is *home?*

She walks along the river in the dark; feels the cold wind cutting her knees. There are not many people around this time of the day, only few cyclists flash by. She sighs slightly. The gradually deserted streets reminds her of her hometown – a semitropical city that never sleeps. She remembers her favourite shopping centre that opens till midnight; the flow of people on the street, chatting and wandering desultorily; the mixed smell of various street foods that pervade the air; the cheap taxis shuttle in every corner of the city; and neon light. 'I miss my home', she thinks quietly.

She is awakened by the car noises from the street, and the hot, humid, sticky air. It is almost 40 degrees outside today, but she doesn't even know a place to grab an ice-coffee because the city has been changed a lot since last time she visited. She has to go out to take a little adventure; after 20 minutes walking under the sun, still no ice coffee; there is not even a place to sit, to have a break. The crowds and endless traffic that stream in this massive concrete jungle give her a bad headache. All of the sudden, she remembers the little local sandwich shop next to her home near Canary Wharf with lovely flowers and benches in their front garden – 'they make the best Mocha in the world', she talks to herself, 'I want to go back home.'

The flight from Hong Kong just landed in Helsinki, she rushes out from the aircraft, tries to find the right gate for the next flight to London as quickly as she can.

'Hello, do you need any help?' Says the airport security, 'may I know what language do you speak?'

'I moved on.
The house moved on.
The home I remember is only my imagining.
Only in dreams do I ever go home.'[2]

2 Jane Rendell, *Travel Stories: Angels and Nomads' in Sue Ridge: Travel Narratives*, (Norwich, 2000), [accessed] http://www.janerendell.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/travelstories.pdf

In '*Architecture from Outside,*' which is written by Elizabeth Grosz; she mentions the term 'cultural outer space.'[3] I personally think this 'cultural outer space' is similar to the limbo place that I have described above. It is different from being physically outside, but relates to personal emotion, class, religion, ethnicity, habitual living pattern, language, gender and so many other factors. In fact, I believe I am not the only person who has experienced this 'cultural outer space.' It occurs in any voyager's life, especially in this era of globalisation – rapid development of technology increases cultural interaction globally; promotes the movement of people and exchange of information worldwide; new things, new genders, new food, new inhabiting styles and new commuting modes. Being culturally outside is inevitable. Of course, when I say being culturally outside, I do not mean either being antagonistic to society at large, or not being sociable. On the contrary, I refer the cultural outsiders, mainly, as the group of people who have the same experience as me, who maybe travel and move all the time, who have multiple cultural and educational backgrounds, who are outsiders, who are different, who get lost in space many times, who are always struggling to find their identity or who don't have a *home.*

Rosi Braidotti, in '*Nomadic Subjects,*' describes different types of people who are normally in an unfixed situation. Such as a nomad, a migrant and an exile. Migrant, according to her, has clear a destination, which is bound to economic issues, whilst exile normally coincides with political reasons.[4] She introduces the notion of being nomadic, which can be considered beyond classification - it abandons the thoughts and appetency for fixity (physically and mostly, psychologically).[5] To explain the notion of being nomadic, Braidotti begins by analysing the current social, cultural and political situation, the situation that is in reality: There is a gap between how we live and how we represent or position ourselves in this lived world.[6] As I have argued above, we now live in a world that rapidly changes. The structure of society and culture; the politics; the form of inhabiting as well as the way of thinking are constantly changing. The traditional, old ideas and habits have changed as well. Under these circumstances, we need to rethink ourselves and in this fast changing world. '[...] we need more conceptual creativity.'[7] She pointed out the definitions of identities (not only the identities of people, but also defini-tions of status, ideas, terms) today are most likely a polarised duality, such as nature / culture, male / female, home/ foreign, body / mind, and so on. This kind of either A or B definition is no longer working but put inaccurate and inflexible labels on us, on this changing world, and divides our social life into fixed pieces, which isolates people, reduces the passions of exploring and thinking dynamically.[8] '[…] the dualistic mode of thinking supported by social constructivism is no longer sufficient [...]'[9] Therefore, a(some) new way(s) of thinking, a(some) new creative figuration(s) are imperatively to be explored.[10]

Let us go back to the limbo place that haunts me all the time. Perhaps it is not the fact of being culturally outside (or the fact of being different, being new) that haunts me. It is me that haunts myself. On one hand, I move, travel, absorb various cultural differences from different countries; whilst on the other hand, I keep framing myself with binary definitions, keep putting fixed labels on myself. Perhaps the reason for losing a sense of belonging is not because of my moving or changing situation, but because I am obstinately trying to belong to a fixed definition. Perhaps the reason I feel I am getting lost in space is because I am rushing to position myself. Perhaps instead of thinking about the limbo place, I should criticise myself, criticise the way I think first.

The BBC once aired an interview with a Chinese-British writer/film maker, Xiaolu Guo, exploring themes of alienation, personal journeys and the identity of the Chinese writer / artist abroad. She debated whether an artist like her should have to be cornered into one identity (when she was asked by the host to choose one stance in the debates regarding Chinese Nobel Prize in Literature winner Mo Yan).[11] Xiaolu Guo suggested maybe artists should think beyond their unitary identity. In her current book '*I am China,*'[12] she creates a story that has a multilayered exploration of social life and culture across three continents. There are three main characters in her story, in which I am very interested: a male musician, his female lover and a young translator who is based in London. The male musician used to be at the heart of one of the biggest Chinese politic struggles. The woman, his lover, has an opposed opinion to him and she believes life is much more important than anything else. The London-based translator writes, thinks and questions in plural languages and travels through love letters. I personally think the three characters are all epitomes of Guo herself. They are actually dimensions of her own self as well as the message of thinking beyond fixed identity that she wants to pass on to Western media. 'I refuse to be nationalized or identified as one' says Guo, 'I'm not even a woman, because tomorrow I can do an operation and become a man. I want to live multiply, I want to live in many identities.'[13]

To Braidotti, the notion of nomadic subject concerns the people who don't have a home or a home country.[14] Home or home country, is commonly understood as geopolitical and historical term. This kind of geopolitical and historical terms (home, home country, foreign country, etc.) In my interpretation, are a typical type of negative binary definition. In thinking of such binary definitions, it isolates me from the place, the culture or the society that I am actually in. It blocks the possibilities for multiplicity. I was trapped in the idea of binary definition, too scared to escape from it or to think outside of the box. Therefore, having one home, or many homes, or having no home is only part of a process of changing. Being a foreigner, an outsider, a homeless person, a solitary man/woman, a voyager; being in the situation of a minority or nomadic subject is part of an on-going transformation. I

3 Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge. Massachusetts: MIT Press. 2001), pp. 31-33.

4 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects,* (New York: Columbia University Press,1994), p. 22.

5 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti,* (New York: Columbia University Press,2011).

6 Ibid., p. 13.

7 Ibid., p. 9.

8 Ibid., pp. 14-16.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 BBC Hardtalk, August, 2014 [accessed 2014, 2015] http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b04c364c/hardtalk-xiaolu-guo

12 See, Xiaolu Guo, *I am China,* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2014)

13 My translation from the report of Guo, [accessed 2015] http://www.swissinfo.ch/chi/culture/

14 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti,* (New York: Columbia University Press,2011), p. 14.

believe this transformation isn't static; it is about who we really are and how we actually behave. In other way of understanding this piece of nomadic theory, maybe we, as a foreigner, an outsider, a homeless person, a solitary man/woman, a voyager or a nomad, don't need a home or home city or home country to frame us. Do I really need an identity? Do I really need a home? Do we have to be either inside or outside? Why don't we have multiple identities in city(ies) rather than just one ID? This doesn't mean throwing away the original cultural, religious, political or historical backgrounds; instead, it brings more opportunities for the interacting of multiple social factors, such as sexes, races, nationalities, natures, and so on. In other words, maybe it is better for us to think of *home* as belonging in multiple locations whilst keeping the origin, in multiple cultures or social structures.[15]

'No identity is to be taken for granted anymore, certainly not the national ones and the modes of citizenship that sustain them.'[16]

Therefore, old fixed binary ways of understanding the world should be weakened. As I have mentioned, it is time to explore a(some) new creative figuration(s), which may include new travelling styles, new living patterns, new critical identities, such as the third (or forth) gender, multiple citizenships, various cultural hybrids, undocumented things, undocumented non-people, etc.[17] More importantly, we need to learn to think critically, dynamically and positively, rather than an having an accurate, finite definition or a theoretical representation. By questioning the polarised dualistic definitions, Braidotti introduces the concept of thinking about flow, the transformation, thinking about the **process of becoming** as well as exploring the representations for those experiences. According to Braidotti, being nomadic does not only relate to people whom actually travel or drift between different cities or countries. This dynamic notion doesn't necessarily require physical movements. It is a **style of thinking**, a **state of mind**.[18]

'Thinking is life lived at the highest possible power – thinking about finding new images, new representations. Thinking is about change and transformation.'[19] In adopting this new style of thinking, I consider that the situation of having no *home* or many *homes,* of being in transition, travelling and the experience of being lost, are my subject-positions / subject-identities. These represent the collective figurations of *me* in the process of adjusting and becoming in different social structures, cultures, cities, countries and shuttling in-between. Instead of saying *my* subject-positions, I should say, subject-positions of **Us**. 'The multiple differences of locations, which reflect the diversity of possible subject positions therefore coalesce in practice of dis-identification from the familiar. [...] this practice marks the beginning of nomadic wisdom.'[20]

The question then arises: If old fixed binary definitions need to be weakened and subject-positions of **Us** in space are plural and such subjective positions

are dynamic and transformative. Then, in what way can we research the indeterminate people-space relationship beyond binary definitions of identity? I consider **Us** as being localised in the 'body.' Braidotti discusses the notion of nomadic vision of 'body,' which she also refers to as the 'embodiment of subject.'[21] According to her, the 'body' not only stands for our biological body, but also sociological positions - the nomadic subjectivity. It is defined 'as multi-functional and complex, as a transformer of flows and energies, affects, desires and imaginings.'[22] Namely, nomadic 'body' is opposed to fixed binary definitions. It offers the possibilities of interplay and interconnection of various social layers and living experiences.[23] I personally believe that Braidotti's theory of nomadic 'body' ('embodiment of subject') not only simplifies the my understanding of subject-positions, but also gives more comprehensive, more flexibility when thinking about the idea of **Us**. In my understanding of the nomadic body, it concerns the sense of self (inside), it also concerns the sense of 'others' (outside)[24] - other people, other organisms, other materials, other life forms, or other self - other **Us**. The 'body' is a nomadic subjectivity, which bridges the sense of self and the sense of the world. It 'transforms our knowledge of ourselves and of the world.'[25] Therefore, researching the relationship between me and the city is the threshold of researching the indeterminate relationship between **Us** and urban space through nomadic 'body.'

In fact, the notion of 'body,' in a way, could be reflected in ancient Chinese culture through literature. The Chinese character '体' is the direct translation of body, the flesh or the physical body as a noun. '体' is combined by two letters (characters): '身' (the flesh) and '本' (self). It can also be interpreted as a verb, which has several meanings - one is 'experience, personally experience or observe something.' Another meaning is 'put oneself in another's position, think for others.'[26] That is to say, according to the interpretation of the Chinese character '体', we are able to see how ancient Chinese people thought. Body is never just about oneself, but understood as a bridge of self and others through personal experience. Moreover, the idea of knowing the others and knowing the world through knowing oneself is also the key value in Confucianism, as discussed in section 'One.' According to Confucius, self-reflecting, self-criticising and self-creating are the paths to understanding the world.

Analysing Braidotti's critical theory of being nomadic helps me in situating myself, not just in doctoral research as a PhD student, but also situating myself in the city or in any city. Moreover, the nomadic style of thinking and nomadic living mode helps me recognise the value of my 'suject-positions.' The notion of embodiment of subject; the nomadic 'body;' gives me a much broader perspective in knowing the sense of **Us**. As discussed previously, to think about urban space critically by drawing on Lefebvre's theory and ancient Chinese philosophy is to 'perceive', 'conceive', truly 'live,' and to experience the city within. Experiencing urban space through nomadic body is a way of exploring the people-space relationship and knowing the world.

15 See, Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press,2011), p. 260. 'Home is lived both at the material and at the imaginary level where it might be a destination or something that is repeatedly deferred. It is not necessarily a place of 'origin,' but can also mean belonging in multiple locations.'

16 Ibid., p, 257.

17 Ibid., Introduction and Part One.

18 Ibid.

19 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects* (New York: Columbia University Press,1994), p. 101.

20 *Writing as An Nomadic Subject,* Oxford Talk by Rosi Braidotti, May, 2013. [accessed 2015] http://www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/getattachment/

21 *Writing as An Nomadic Subject,* Oxford Talk by Rosi Braidotti, May, 2013. [accessed 2015] http://www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/getattachment/

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 See, Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphic Others And Nomadic Subjects,* [accessed 2015] http://www.tanyaleighton.com/p/p000620/LARIC_Braidotti_Metamorphic_Others_and_Nomadic_Subjects464f5.pdf

25 *Writing as An Nomadic Subject,* Oxford Talk by Rosi Braidotti, May, 2013. [accessed 2015] http://www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/getattachment/

26 My translation of the meaning of Chinese character '体' ('体会,' as a verb), from [accessed 2015] http://www.zdic.net

'The knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original; it is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly, and therefore able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another.' [27]

27 Donna Haraway, *Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective*, (New York: Routledge,1991), p. 193.

Time

The truth is, I tried to avoid digging out the link between time and space, or understanding the topic of time for a while, maybe since I started my architectural training. Why? Jeremy Till makes an interesting argument in '*Architecture Depends*,' about how time can be understood in varying, unexpected, uncertain formats.[1] Further, the ways in which we interpret time are diverse. The representation of time: linear as it shows on the calendar or cyclical as the monthly or yearly cycles. The forms of the existence of time: the rising tide and the failing tide, the shifting sands and the changing moon. The fragmented time as memories. The 'focused time'[2]: the newspapers, the journals; or the elapsed time: death, rusting materials. The breadth of the topic made me scared of drawing out the idea of time, or made me constantly or secretly ignore the relationship between time and my research. 'The reaction to the uncertainty of time is by no means unique to architects but is symptomatic of a much wider tradition...'[3] Till suggests strategies of facing and maybe solving such problems, namely to accept the changing of time and accept the inevitability of time rather than trying to escape from the various time notions.[4] Therefore, I believe it is time for me to make a thought about **Time**.

时者,所以记岁也.[5]

My translation: 'Time, is to record the on-going social events (the good or poor harvest)' - Guanzi

Ancient Chinese people considered that time was linked with human activities. They believed time should be framed into all human events. A variety of historical events, folktales and anecdotes have been recorded and written down in order to constitute a complete time line spanning over 5000 years. In Chinese, time is '時.' It is combined by two letters (characters) - '日,' means the sun; '寺,' means running / on-going. Thus,'時,' literally, means 'the running sun.' In traditional Chinese culture, there is a unique concept for time called '岁時,' which refers to a conceptual time combination system rather than 'time' itself (in my understanding, a fixed point in time). '岁,' means a cycle of a year and '時,' as mentioned, means the on-going sun. Therefore, '岁時' is a composition of human events in yearly cycle, which occurs and corresponds with the running sun (with the day light). If the idea of 'running sun' represents the first consciousness of time for Chinese people, then the concept of '岁時' is part of the achievements in the progress of a social and farming civilization. Based on experiences of observing the

1 Jeremy Till, *Architecture Depends, (*Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 93, 94.

2 Ibid., 97.

3 Ibid., 93.

4 Ibid.

5 '管子' (*The Guanzi*), circa 403-221BC.

changing of the climate, of the astrological aspect and the transformations and metamorphosis in natural world, ancient Chinese people explored the relationship between space, time and social events, which was expressed as the notion of '天时'- '以时纪事, 顺应天时.'[6] In my translation: 'time based on events and events conform to time.' This notion is neither simply focused on social event, nor just simply on time or space. It means the ultimate interaction and mutual intersection.[7] Therefore, time ('時') in ancient Chinese culture represents social awareness of time, and the experience of managing of dividing time. It is a combination time system derived from the laws of nature and human activities. '時,' on the other hand, takes on the notion of 'time based on events and events conform to time' (以时纪事, 顺应天时). It transforms the understanding of natural rhythm to the understanding of human existence and social behaviour. More importantly, '天时' is the intersection of space, time and social events. It is not linear, or cyclical; it is constituted in the intricate 'changing.'[8]

This 'time based on events and events conform to time' notion leads to the ancient Chinese belief that the time is not linear. Because it is interacted with space and social events, ancient Chinese people believed that time is subjective. Unlike the understanding of time (physical time), which can be considered as an existence of objective order, from instant to forever; in the ancient Chinese culture this time was stretchable.[9] It could be subjectively extended or shortened by personal psychological factors. In this way, time was not limited by fixed data, but opened up with subjective sense; the 'time based on events and events conform to time' is more like a relative time concept, rather than an absolute time concept.[10]

Back to Jeremy Till's understanding of time. By drawing on a concept of 'thick time,'[11] he suggests that instead of thinking about the notion of time as abstracted, tangled ideological terms, maybe we can think of it as experiences.[12] In spite of the a great many understandings of time, or the different notions of time in various cultures or religions (the linear, the cyclical, the instant, the short/long term, the forever...), we should accept its multiplicity and we can turn it into our own 'thick time' – the '**lived time**' that is embedded in everyday life, in people's own experiences.[13] 'Starting with what you know, what you see, what you experience; start with the everyday...'[14] In my interpretation, the notion of '**lived time**' has many similarities with the ancient Chinese understanding of time. Time is always linked with people, with space and with events that happen in the space.

Elizabeth Grosz discusses relationship between time, space and people from a different perspective. 'Time is neither fully "present," a thing in itself, nor is it a pure abstraction, a metaphysical assumption that can be ignored in everyday practice.'[15] She points out that time is embedded in all living forms, it is the true meaning and representation of life. She starts the argument by discussing her theory of 'the thing.'[16] In my personal understanding, 'the thing' can be considered as a metaphor for any living beings, tangible items, or for any everyday events. 'It has a "life" of its own, characteristics of its own, which we must incorporate into our activities in order to be effective, rather than simply understanding, regulating, and neutralizing it from the outside.'[17]

To me, that is to say, when we think of 'the thing,' we should think of its history, its presence and its future. According to Grosz, thinking of its history and its presence helps people to question their original desire and their actual actions on 'the thing;' thinking of its future offers people opportunities to explore the continuous progress from 'the thing' to 'another thing.'[18] Conversely, 'the thing' exists because we think and act(ed) on its past, its present and its future. 'Space, time, and things are conceptually connected: space and time are understood to frame and contextualise the thing, they serve as its background, and they are, as it were, deposited by or inhere in things and processes...'[19] From my perspective, if we can consider 'the thing' as the living 'body,' or the extension of the living 'body,' thus, the nomadic subjectivities, the **Us** are not just collective figurations of *me* in space, but also in time. Moreover, time, the '**lived time**' should be considered as an inevitable factor in the exploration of the indeterminate people-space relationship. Namely, instead of researching the experiences of **Us** through the body in an absolute moment, or static status, we should also research it in the past (the memories), in the present (living temporally), and in the future (the dreamed *home*). In relation to Grosz, **Us** 'live in the plural times and spaces.'[20]

'As we have seen, out of time is out of this world. To be in (thick) time, however, is to be in the world, not a world of static objects but a world of social and temporal exchange.' [21]

6 The concept of '以时纪事, 顺应天时' (time based on events and events conform to time.) is found in many ancient Chinese literatures. Such as '周易' (*The I Ching*) circa 1045 -771 BC; '道德经' (*Tao Te Ching*), circa 600 BC.

7 See, Xianglong Zhang, '中国古代思想中的天时观,' [accessed 2015] http://www.confuchina.com/

8 This notion is also referred in '周易' (*The I Ching*), which is the basic philosophy of Change.

9 See, Ruirong Lu, '中國古代時間觀的萌芽 ─《詩經》時間意識探討', The Humanities and Management Journal (人文及管理學報), National Ilan University, November, 2007, p. 23-44.

10 Ibid.

11 Jeremy Till, Architecture Depends, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 95, 96.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., p. 96.

15 Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely*, (NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2004), p. 5.

16 Ibid., Chapter 8: *The Thing*

17 Elizabeth Grosz, *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power*, (NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005), p. 132.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., p. 134.

20 Ibid.

21 Jeremy Till, *Architecture Depends*, (Cambridge, Massachu- setts: MIT Press, 2009), p. 98.

As I discussed in the Prologue, 'space is never finished, never closed.'[22] It is a 'product of interrelations', a 'sphere of possibility of the existence of multiplicity.'[23] To say space is a 'sphere of possibility of the existence of multiplicity' is because the embodied subjectivities and the within experiences are the key points in the process of exploring the those interrelations.

In carrying out research on the those relationships between **Space** and people from both Western and Eastern philosophical standpoint, the relations could be considered and represented as subjective experiences of the city through the body of **Us**. Neither can be separate from each other and both are submersed in **Time**.

22 Doreen B Massey, *For Space*,
(London: SAGE Publications Ltd,
2005), p. 9.

23 Ibid.

To and Fro

I have always tried to find a right moment to look back after many years of study in architecture, to string all my ideas and thoughts into something. Something that can help me in thinking back and forth, or to string together fragmental ideas about space, something that allows me to think deeply about space. Emma Cocker once presented a paper for the Cumulus Conference in Finland via her blog '*Not Yet There,*'[1] where she asked 'What is Artistic Re-search?' Further, 'What is the role of artworks in it? How is artistic research related to various traditions of combining art and research: a) Research for art, b) Research of art, c) Art for research, d) Art + theory = research? Why are (some) artists trying to combine art and research? What can be gained with it? [...] In what sense is art research?'[2] — I was so interested by this series of questions because I had always considered art and architecture to be constantly connected on so many levels. I could not help myself asking paral-lel questions from an architecture student's point of view: What is spatial research? What is PhD by design? How to do a PhD by design?

I was definitely not the only person who raised these questions. People who undertook architectural practice always asked me the same question. But I didn't know the answer. I read, write, swim in the ocean of philosophy and theory (try my best to stay away from drowning). I design, draw and make maps; I attend lectures, listen to talks on the Internet, attend conferences and go to different exhibitions in arts and architecture. I talk to people in different fields, discuss with other PhD students, work with architects, urban planners and builders. I walk, travel in cities, take photos and record events on the street. I always want to find my own way of doing architecture. I am still searching. In fact, my relationship with architecture started a long time ago. I grew up in the oldest architecture university in Chongqing, where my father used to work. My favourite thing to do after primary school was sitting on the grass with architecture students, watching them life-drawing different buildings and landscapes. Although it has been over twenty years, the im-ages of those drawings are still deeply engraved in my mind. Later on, I was driven to learn to paint because of those deep childhood memories. To me, those incredible colours, lines and the details of buildings were the whole ar-chitecture world. After starting undergraduate courses in architecture school, I learned how to design space and how to use computers to draw buildings rather than painting. I learned structures, new technologies and different building materials, details of nodes, façades or rooftops, various ventilating systems, heating and cooling systems; I learned the history of

'To and Fro' is the second chapter of this thesis. It clarifies the main methods I have developed for and through carrying out PhD research - storytelling, walking and map-ping. The hybrid, interconnected methods employed to explore the subjective expe-riences of my relationship, as a nomadic woman, with the urban space in which I live and have lived. This section also provides a reflection on my early motivations for un-dertaking this spatial research as well as the beginnings of my interest in investigating the indeterminate people-space relationship.

2015

2012

1 See, Emma Cocker, *Not Yet There,* [accessed 2011, 2012, 2015] http://not-yet-there.blogspot. co.uk/2012/01/event-what-is-artistic-research.html

2 Ibid.

Western and Eastern architecture, such as the Western Classic Orders, the reason that ancient Chinese building were always made from wood. After undergraduate studies, I moved to Sheffield, where I finished my master course. I learned how to engage social activities with site surveys, how to manage a project, cooperate with clients, builders and other architects, how to incorporate art practice into architecture design. I learned some spatial theories, I under-stood that architecture was involved with so many other disciplines, or, as Jane Rendell described, an 'interdisciplinary'[3] state of knowledge. However, there was always a problem facing me, maybe facing many PhD by design architectural students - space, as I have argued, is not an objective existence, but close to a subjective abstract notion. Its occurrence depends on the actual human actions (movement or activity) and relates to history (time). To re-search space, is to explore the relationships between space and people, which is indeterminate. How do I research something this uncertain and unlimited from my personal perspective? How to research something that alters with time? How to research something with an open ended, exploratory approach, from my understanding and my position?

On a grey drizzle afternoon in middle December, I met up with an old friend in a pub called 'Globe' on Marylebone Road. We both studied in Sheffield in 2009, same year, same block, where he took his landscape design master course and I studied for MAAD.[4] In 2009, we lived in the same flat in Sheffield, went to art shops and museums together, and messed up our shared kitchen by making models, like the rest of the ar-chitecture students. After graduation, he back to China and worked for an urban design practice in Shanghai. I stayed and continued my academic journey.

The pub started getting crowded, we finally got our drinks and were lucky enough to get a comfortable sofa chair next to the window. "So…tell me about your PhD project, what is the methodology?" He asked, "I am in-trigued."

"It is a hybrid narrative methodology that I have been using," I tried to explain, "in order to explore urban space differently, critically."

(Before he continued asking me questions, which I knew he would) I started questioning him, "how to you represent space in practice?"

"Drawing and modelling of course, like the way we did in the university." He answered, with no hesitation. "How do you occupy space or the city?" I kept asking him. "That is a big question,' he laughed, 'using space…I go to work, come back home, I have daily routines in the city; I also like travel, go to dif-ferent places, feel and relax in different cities…why did you ask?"

3 Jane Rendell, *Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London,* (London: The Athlone Press, 2002), p. 2.

4 MA in Architecture Design

"We use certain ways to read and represent space, to design our cities; as my supervisor once mentioned, it is an architectural language. And this 'archi-tectural language,' is normally used in architecture practices. For example the master plans, the elevation or section drawings, they are pretty fixed. Appar-ently, it can effectively express certain contents in an area or spatial structures. This visual language is classical, straightforward, globalised. However, in my understanding, it has its limitation in expressing the various dynamic rela-tionships in space, in social space. Jane Rendell refers to architectural drawing in her essay as 'a horizontal or vertical slice in one moment in time, which maybe inappropriate to reveal real life.'[5] It is 'codification for the production of space'[6] rather than collective investigations of space." I kept saying, "the concept of social space, of the city, exists because of interactions between space and its inhabitants; urban fabric and the structure of the city that alters with time. We have some common ideas of ways of inhabiting, but also some unique experiences of living, traveling in the city and maybe some uncertain sense about one place or a few places. Therefore, we should never ignore people or time when we try to research or represent urban space. However, classic architectural language, which is widely used in professional practices, can barely engage with these two crucial factors: people and time. In this case, critically thinking about space with people and time, more importantly, exploring the relations in-between is really my research topic; and of course, my understanding of doing PhD by architectural design."

"I agree." My old friend nodded, "so, how to explore this relationship?"

"There are many architects, urban designers and philosophers who have tried, using interesting methods to rethink 'space - people - time' relations. For instance, Elizabeth Grosz reveals secrets of space from the dialectic notions of 'outside' and 'inside.'[7] Michel de Certeau re-considered spatial language from ordinary people's daily life (the operations) in '*The Practice of Everyday Life*.'[8] His standpoint, his research on everyday routine practices, such as walking, communicating and dwelling opened up a huge door for us in finding new methods of urban space investigation. Rebecca Solnit shares her experience of looking into space in a very 'romantic and natural'[9] way – walking, which give us a good method of revealing historic changes in cities and her ap-proach of encouraging the embodiment of everyday life is very positive.[10] In Emma Cocker's project '*Performing The City*,'[11] she explores her feelings in the city through the rhythm of folding and unfolding the body - choreographing. During dancing, the body is passing on its affective messages to others whilst also receiving messages from others, which can be understood as a process of becoming, a self-training. Performing through the body makes continuous conversations between self and the others, not just along spatial differences, but also along differences in time.[12] Jane Rendell presents narrative stories of rambling during 18th and 19th century in London, and explores how gender (feminist theory) can inform spatial research.

5 Jane Rendell, *Architecture Writing,* [accessed 2014] http://www.janerendell.co.uk/articles/architecture-writing

6 Ibid.

7 See, Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space,* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001).

8 See, Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall, (London: Univer-sity of California Press, 1984).

9 See, Rebecca Solnit, *Wan-derlust*, A History of Walking (London: Verso, 2001).

10 Ibid.

11 See, Emma Cocker, Biana Scliar Mancini, Sara Wookey, *Performing The City*, Nottingham Trent University, 2012.

12 Ibid.

She argues that gender effects the way urban space is used, by utilising historical stories and illustrations.[13] Also, there are many artists who find ways to represent these tangled relationships in various ways, such as Francis Alÿs's narrative projects '*Seven Walks.*'[14] Janet Cardiff's walking and mapping '*The missing voice.*'[15] Ideas of undertaking spatial research are drifting back and forth in many disciplines. As I have said, the understanding of spatial theories is an interdisciplinary state of knowledge. Relations between space, people and time are unlimited and indeterminate. Therefore, the key for me, in my spatial research is not finding one, or a series of certain methods to read or represent urban space, but developing a methodology in my own voice. And the process matters."

I continued, "First of all, I need to establish my position. I consider myself as a **nomad**. It is not a negative statement; on the contrary, being nomadic is a kind of liberation of my identity. When we describe one person, we instinctively say: 'she is a woman,' or 'it's a boy!' When we talk about an 'individual' from a worldwide perspective, we generally label s/he by his/her races (sometimes even by their skin colours), such as an 'Asian man,' 'Europeans,' or 'half white half black.' When we discuss the classification of a population in a country, we often simply directly divide people into two parts according to their passport – 'native' or 'foreigner.' When we discuss the status of one person in a city, we normally say, s/he is either a local or a traveller. I believe that this absolute, fixed and binary definition influences the mainstream of urban and architectural design; and the state of mind of people inhabiting and understanding the city. However, there are numerous identities and a variety of living forms and lifestyles. What if there are some people, who don't belong to any kind, don't have any fixed status, instead, they live in-between of many existing forms, always change their living status in one or multiple places? What if their identities themselves are a process of becoming? In fact, I think I am one of them, a nomad. My relationship with the city is constantly changing over time and through my past experiences. The feeling of being at once an outsider, insider, 'in-betweener,' a solitary, tourist, a refugee, a migrant or a citizen, bothered me.[16] I have been working hard on exploring the sense of belonging and struggling to position myself in the city until I realised that being in multiple positions is truly being myself. And that is my identity. In Rosi Braidotti's words, a 'nomadic citizenship'[17] is my citizenship. According to Braidotti, the status of being nomadic doesn't have to represent someone who is physically moving. It is a style of thinking, a state of mind, which allows a power inversion between so called majority and minority. It is an individual encompassing multiple cultures, religions, living forms, languages and genetic types. Nomadism makes me realise the importance of existence as subject. To me, to understand nomadic figure is to understand subjectivity, which is an awareness of self. Being nomadic helps me realise the way in which the sense of self varies within different spaces. The notion of nomadic body, which is also written as the 'embodiment of subject'[18] by Braidotti, offers possibilities to link the sense of self with the sense of the

others. That is why I start thinking about carrying out urban space research from this microcosmic point of view, to focus on my sense of myself, on my stories in different cities. According to Braidotti, how we live is different from how we represent ourselves. Old binary definitions, such as man vs. woman, urban vs. rural, gradually become less useful in thinking about social life or researching social space. More dynamic and pluralistic living modes are required. The advancement of current science and technology provides more possibilities for such living modes. Actually, in my interpretation, I believe the experience of being nomadic, being multiple, exists at some point or in some state in everyone's lifetime. It doesn't matter which gender you are, which passport you hold, what occupation you have or where you are. It does matter how you think and live. To study the experiences of individual inhabi-tation of the city through body - the subjectivity, is to help in exploring the relation between space and people from a more human, realistic and practical perspective. Knowing through my body is a way of knowing the world."

"I understand the importance of your position, so, in what way can you approach it?" Asked my friend.

"Researching the subjectivity, as well as how this sense varies with urban space is not easy, on the contrary, it is probably one of the hardest things I have had to do." I tried to explain, "there is barely a fixed pattern, no formula to follow. It is not logical, not linear and not traceable. It has no end, no certain outcome, but rather is a process. Perhaps my work can be understood as an auto ethnography expressed as a series of 'to and fro' self-reflections of living **within**, or an iterative process of me *reading* the city subjectively and critically. The methodology is hybrid and combines ways of experiencing and observing urban space through my body, such as **storytelling**, **walking** and **subjective mapping**. The methods of exploration and modes of representa-tion are interlinked and overlapped. The sense of self during walking, travel-ling, living and observing comes from my body, which normally comes first. Storytelling and subjective mapping sometimes are created at the same time, sometimes one comes after the other; sometimes they mirror and inform each other and sometimes they are stand alone explorations. Afterwards my stories and maps help me in rethinking the notion of subjectivity and the way that I *read* city. The process is always back and forth, back and forth.
Stories and maps are both my legends of urban space. In maps, the stories are the legends; in stories, maps are the legends. The explorations (walking) and representations (storytelling and mapping) allow me to study my posi-tion in space and my relationship to urban space critically and differently. In the process of drawing on spatial, sociological theories and the process of knowing myself, I continue to try new creative modes of representation; back and forth, over and over again. The hybrid methodology, the narrative-visual methods, can be considered as an open-ended approach in spatial research. I believe this art practice based exploration and study is research by design."

13 See, Jane Rendell, *Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London,* (London: The Athlone Press, 2002).

14 See, Artangel, [accessed 2012] http://www.artangel.org.uk

15 See, Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller, [accessed 2012]http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/walks/missing_voice.html

16 See, Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti ,* (New York: Columbia University Press,2011), p, 14.

17 Ibid., Chapter Three.

18 *Writing as An Nomadic Subject,* Oxford Talk by Rosi Braidotti, May, 2013. [accessed 2015] http://www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/getattachment/

19 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti ,* (New York: Columbia University Press,2011), p. 13.

Urban Legend

'Narration created humanity.'[1]

Michel de Certeau made a high evaluation of stories (narrative) in his spatial theory. He referred to stories (narrative) as one way of recreating everyday life space. They pick up and connect their own place; 'traverse' and 'organize' place back and forth.[2] Stories, to him, are spatial practice. From his point of view, stories have the power to change space. As previously mentioned, the subtle, complex, indeterminate interaction of space and individual sense of self is nonlogical and non-traceable. However, stories play the role of giving form to space in a linear or interlaced series, which are represented by and acted in by 'actors' – indefinite individuals (a foreigner, a city-dweller, a ghost).[3] Stories are from daily life, are concerned with daily life. They are, part of the everyday 'tactics' according to de Certeau.[4] He analysed how stories, as everyday spatial practice, 'traverse' and 'organize' space; from basic spatial relations, to information that is gained in space, to daily events, to imaginary pictures, and to memories and predictions.[5] They are 'not language. In reality, they organize walks. They make the journey, before or during the time the feet perform it.'[6] He discussed how stories help explore the relationships between space and people through distinguishing between space and place. 'Space is a practiced place.'[7] In a way, stories are such practices that transform places (space with no human impacts) through description. It is a specialised operation.[8] Research on spatial practice gradually changes from structures to action. Narrative action alters the relation between space and place; transforms places (space with no human impact) to space. Places can be linked through narratives. Michel de Certeau gave us a new tour guide of how stories inform spatial research from a theoretical perspective.

About 2000 years before he proposed this complete theory, there was a book in ancient China, called 'Shan Hai Jing,'[9] which made a good example of storytelling as a narrative action. It is a collection of geographic and cultural legends. 'Shan' is '山,' which in Chinese means mountains. 'Hai' is '海,' which means oceans. 'Jing' is '经,' which is a very interesting character; it can be interpreted in many ways: literally, it means 'get through / go through / see through,' or 'pass by.' It is also a geographic term that means longitude. In ancient China, it meant a form of book that recorded standards of ideas, morals and social behaviours. It is 'Jing' in this sense that 'Shan Hai Jing' refers to. The book contains stories on the physiognomy of humans, animals, plants, landscapes as well as information about minerals, medicine, astro-

1 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall, (London: University of California Press, 1984), p. 115.

2 Ibid., Chapter IX.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., Introduction.

5 Ibid., p. 116.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., p. 117.

8 Ibid., Chapter IX.

9 '山海经', also known as '*The Classic of Mountains and Seas*', The exact author(s) of the book are undetermined, circa from Warring States (453-221 BC) to the beginning of the Han Dynasty (202 BC-220 AD).

nomical phenomena, weather, witchcraft and forecast. The story is actually very simple. It talks about the positions first: what the direction is, what the distance is; and introduces a place, a mountain or a lake. Secondly, it introduces what plants, animals or minerals are found in this mountain or this lake (place). Next, it introduces what humans can do with the plants or animals. For instance, a plant may help heal a certain disease. My interest in this book is not just the mythic stories, but also the way this book represents all the stories. The stories are divided into two main parts: the '*Shan Jing*' (山经) and the '*Hai Jing*' (海经), which involve detailed descriptions of locations (places) of Mountains, Regions Beyond Seas, Regions Within Seas and Wilderness. In each part stories are not arranged by timeline, but by the order of geographic directions: from South to West, then to North, then to the East, and finally back to the middle. The chronology is spatial. This book, composed of stories about astronomy, geography and culture is itself a map. 'The world' that is described in this book does not exist in reality. Rod Shields describes '*Shan Hai Jing*' in his book as a 'conceptual organisation of space;'[10] as 'conveying fundamental ideals about the world through its overarching schema…'[11] In this book, 'the world' is sketched out as a complete geographic image, a complete space through narrative and imagination. Although these natural formations do not depict the physical form of real China (or any other actual places), the natural formations cross-reference and cross-coordinate the others. More importantly, 'the world' that '*Shan Hai Jing*' represents has its own characters, which may be a mythic figure, or a real species. They have their relations and correspond with the others. Shields considers 'this world' as 'metaphors of unknown hinterlands, the sort of liminal zones discussed in places on the margin.'[12] In my understanding, the way that '*Shan Hai Jing*' represents space may not be as precise as the way an atlas or index represents information, but the social and cosmological orders that are described reflect the society at that time. Moreover, it represents the prevailing understanding of space, experience of operating in space and exploring unknown places as well as an illusion of the ideal world through narrative.

> '…we all tell spatial stories, we exchange narrative of architecture in, and of, the city. Inspired by a desire to 'know' the past as a woman… It is the story of my pursuit of pleasure…'[13]

Narrative is one of the first records of a people and space relation in many different cultures; I believe that narration tends to provide the most direct and honest expression of where we are or the experience of living. We travel from places to places; we live in cities or the middle of nowhere; we have emotions and memories of certain streets or our hometown. Further, this sense changes with time. We tell others these emotions and memories in different places or environments, but we can never define them precisely. We learn from history and we pass on these stories to the next generation. 'Every

story is a travel story – a spatial practice.'[14] I keep using this quote in many of my essays, because it is so true. Storytelling concerns everyday life. Spatial stories are written by footsteps, by the daily news, legends; from memories and fictions of foreign countries or from the past to life that surrounds us, and to the future.[15]

Renata Tyszczuk refers to stories as 'to and fro' movements in her essay '*Future worlds - To-ing and Fro-ing*', which relate memories (the past) and anticipations (the future).[16] She interprets the world on both sides, the world we know and the world we cannot imagine.[17] I personally think, this concept fills the blank that traditional architectural language cannot reach. 'Stories, which attempt to make sense of where we have been, where we are and where we are heading, provoke an engagement with a world that is inevitably more complicated than we try and make it out to be.'[18] Spatial narrative can be written in many forms: it can be a collection of mythic tales such as '*Shan Hai Jing*,' or a critical conversation about space, time and narrative, or a medieval romance or a deck logbook; a scenery fabricated with words, such as Italo Calvino's '*Invisible Cities*;'[19] or a story about rambling as in Jane Rendell's book '*Pursuit of Pleasure,*'[20] which was based in twenty-first century London. Story telling can be really personal. It can be the most intimate emotional depiction of space - I love walking on this street in the sunshine / I am not comfortable going to this area. It can also be a summary of understandings from a group of people or one community. 'The street, try to describe the street, what it's made of, what is it used for? The people in the street…Decipher a bit of the town. Its circuits: why do the buses go from this place to that? Who chooses the routes, and by what criteria?… The people in the street: where are they coming from? Where are they going? Who are they?'[21] In summary, stories, understood as everyday spatial practice,[22] are a rich representation of peoples' understanding of their context in space and in time; as well as their place within it. Narrative is influenced by and has the power to transform space. As such, it should be engaged with by spatial researchers and designers.

Although the order I arrange my book begins with spatial theories; then moves on to a discussion of methodology and such layout may conform to an academic research logic, the truth is, the relation that I have with storytelling began far earlier than my feminist, spatial or any social theory study.

I have liked reading all kind of stories since I was a little girl. I still remember the scenario of me reading books under my duvet in the mid-night; the stories about a biologist travelling under the sea; the princess trapped in the Tower of London; about the adventures that Tom and Huckleberry took. However, the most fun part was to imagine the environments in the story after reading – what was the route of the trip under sea? What did the dungeon look like? Was there another way of getting out from Tom's cave… All

10 Rob Shields, *Spatial Questions: Cultural Topologies and Social Spatialisation*, (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2013), p. 3.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., p. 2.

13 Jane Rendell, *Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London*, (London: The Athlone Press, 2002), p. 2.

14 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (London: University of California Press, 1984), p.115.

15 Ibid., p. 116.

16 Renata Tyszczuk, Joe Smith, Nigel Clark and Melissa Butcher, *Atlas: Geography, Architecture and Change in an Interdependent World,* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2012), pp. 132-133.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 See, Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* trans. William Weaver (London: Vintage Classic, 1997).

20 Jane Rendell, *Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London,* (London: The Athlone Press, 2002).

21 Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces,* trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 50.

22 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (London: University of California Press, 1984), p. 115.

the imaginary pictures that came from those stories were stuck in my mind. Those pictures constituted my first understanding of the world. I didn't pass my NCEE[23] exam in mathematics unfortunately, but I got almost a full score in writing. Narration, in my life, is more like something dissolved in my blood rather than a methodology. After I started my PhD, the fear of an unknown future, the lack of confidence, the worry of getting lost and the suffocating homesickness pushed me into a fickle, baffling state for a long time. In wandering in the city alone (sometimes in the middle of the night) and writing my little tour story, the process of narration was a precious escape from my melancholy at that time. Later on, with the deepening of understanding in philosophy, I have developed understandings of various living modes and social formations, new ways of knowing and being and a new emphasis in sociology. I realise that for people, especially women, being nowhere or being in-between can be considered as a unique figure for examining issues of identity, social structure and cultural exchange. Nomadic experience can be used critically in the exploration of relations between people and space. Moreover, this individual sense offers unique perspective in spatial research. So, I ask, how do I further explore the relevance of this subjectivity in storytelling?

'In the context of 'the city', the 'spatial story' is a way of understanding the urban fabric in terms of the relationships that can be made between people, things and places. In contemporary urban and architectural discourse, we are increasingly obsessed by spatial stories in the guise of figures which traverse space: the flâneur, the spy, the detective, the prostitute, the rambler. These figures are metaphors of our quest for knowledge. They represent voyages of exploration, passages of revelation, journeys of discovery both in and of the city and in and of the self. Spatial storytelling explores the territories between public and private, between past and future, between real and imagined, but most importantly between space and subjectivity.'[24]

Jane Rendell's critical thinking brings me back from an overall concept of spatial narrative to the idea of myself (subjectivity). In her writing '*The Welsh Dresser*'[25] she tell us a spatial story of women in her family through the perspective of a welsh dresser. It is a feminine story of real life; a peaceful, simple piece of narrative like any bedtime story a mother would tell her children; an extremely personal experience in space exploration along with the passing of time; a memoir of relationships as well as a sense of self. Rendell discussed the increasing focus on identity and subjectivity in post modern feminism, space and cultural research in '*Travel Stories*.' - 'Where I am makes a difference to what I can know and who I can be.'[26]

'Space is a doubt: I have constantly to mark it, to designate it. It's never mine, never given to me, I have to conquer it.'[27]

I think Georges Perec's observations and ruminations regarding space, as presented in '*Species of Spaces and Other Pieces,*' is to me a good example of experiencing space through the body, particularly his attention to details. His narrative exploration of space begins with 'the page.' The page itself, in space, is occupied by text.[28]

'I write: I trace words on the page.
Letter by letter, a text forms, affirms itself, is confirmed, is frozen, is fixed:
a fairly strictly h
        o
          r
            i
              z
                o
                  n
                    t
                      a
                    l
                            line is set down on the blank sheet of paper,
blackens the virgin space, give it a direction, vectorizes it.'[29]

Then he moved on. He observed in order, moving from 'the bed;' then from 'the bed' to 'the bedroom,' 'the apartment,' 'the street,' then to 'the city,' 'the country' and 'the world.' What interests me is the way he used the same or varying viewpoints to represent space at different scales and in a large span. The presentation varies from personal experience to imagination, from emotional to surreal, from daily life to unexpected surprises. He managed to discover all the facets of the 'world' in which he lived and to experiment with various ways of writing space. This book itself is a test of spatial forms to me. By reading Perec, we are able to return to his space, his era, his zoom. We are able to reach his life from the inside – the room where he stayed, the movements he made, the city he traveled, and the space he lived and breathed. Although he didn't mention very much about the politics or world situation at that time, to me, the honest feeling of getting lost and nostalgia that he blended into his narration was a self-analysis and an unmerciful social reflection. He had a massive enthusiasm for exploring small things in daily life, in ordinary space and for constantly questioning everything and himself, which makes his narration a manual book for everyday life and a reminder for **Us** in experiencing space.

23 NCEE (National College Entrance Examination) is equivalent to A-levels in China.

24 Jane Rendell, *Travel Stories,* [accessed 2014] http://www.janerendell.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/travelstories

25 Jane Rendell, *The Welsh Dresser: an atlas* [accessed 2014] http://www.janerendell.co.uk/textworks/the-welsh-dresser-an-atlas

26 Jane Rendell, *Travel Stories,* [accessed 2014] http://www.janerendell.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/travelstories

27 Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces,* trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 91.

28 Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces,* trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 9.

29 Ibid.

'The world, no longer as a journey having constantly to be remade, not as a race without an end, a challenge having constantly to be met, not as the one pretext for a despairing acquisitiveness, nor as the illusion of a conquest, but as the rediscovery of a meaning, the perceiving that the earth is a form of writing, a geography of which we had forgotten that we ourselves are the authors.'[30]

30 Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 79.

As I recall my projects, I realise that most of my ideas about how to write, or on what to focus, occur on the road. I love walking on streets, following the rhythm of my body at the city, at varying times of a day, season or year. Walking is not just to feel the pleasure and freedom of being on the road, but also to observe the space around me whilst moving feet. Walking, observing, breathing, feeling, imagining and thinking; sometimes singing, I can manage to do all of them at the same time only when I am on the road. In 'Wanderlust,'[1] the book that has inspired this part of my thesis, Rebecca Solnit carries out a detailed study on walking. The word 'wanderlust' comes from an early twentieth century German word, which means 'desire to travel.' As Solnit discusses in her book, 'walking, ideally, is a state in which the mind, the body, and world are aligned, as though they were three characters finally in conversation together, three notes suddenly making a chord.'[2] Walking and traveling are not just my personally habits, there are also the foundation of my methodology. More importantly, to me, wanderlust is not only the act of traveling, but also the desire to do so.

Wanderlust

At the beginning of the first year of PhD, as I have mentioned before, I had felt lost, several times, in the fear of an unknown future and the feeling of having no sense of belonging. The pressure was so strong and I had never felt like that before. I forced myself to read books in order to act like a PhD student. In fact, I hardly had an idea of those big, professional, philosophical terms. New methodologies, various study processes and different fields in research made me dizzy. The fact that I was going to stay far from home for another three or four years, along with moments of seeing friends from previous courses moving away, dragged me down. The worst part was that I felt like I gradually lost my ability to think critically. After suffering and panicking for almost two months, I remember it was an early morning in mid-spring, I walked passed the Weston Park in Sheffield before I went to my office in the Arts Tower, as I normally did. I can still feel the ashen grey air that was bleached by the light rain that morning. 'What a typical British weather,' I talked to myself. For no reason I decided to have a ramble through the park. It was quite early and only few joggers were on the path. I had a walk around the museum, then into the Northeast side where the duck pond was. If not for this detour, I probably would never know such a beautiful little landscape and so many lovely wild creatures right next to where I spent most days. Later on, the sun came out with a slightly chill wind. More people gradually emerged in the park. I saw a mother pushing her baby in the sun;

1 Rebecca Solnit, Wanderlust, (London: Verso, 2001)

2 Ibid., p. 5.

dogs chasing and running freely on the grass; two old ladies, who both had gorgeous grey hair, chatting about something, a couple sitting, shoulder by shoulder, under the tree, whispering and smiling to each other, a small group of people playing tennis ball on the hard court…I didn't go to my office that day. Instead, I spent a whole morning rambling in the park, watching people coming and going. Memories of that morning were like a brain wash to me, I was impressed how exploration of everyday surroundings could be so interesting, and how intimately I could get in touch with the city by moving my body. '…A desk is no place to think on the large scale.'[3]

In the words of Rebecca Solnit, 'moving on foot seems to make it easier to move in time; the mind wanders from plans to relocations to observation.'[4] Walking itself is a conversation between different parts of a human body, cooperations of the mind, the feet, eyes, ears, etc. It is a way to free our body as well as our thoughts. 'It is a bodily labour that produced nothing but thoughts, experiences, arrivals.'[5] This mind-body[6] allied activity allows a panoramic angle as well as a closer perspective to observe the surrounding environment. It also provides comforting rhythms (neither too fast nor too slow) for the mind and body to think and see in the same time. It can be seen as a visual activity 'to think over sights, to assimilate the new into the known'.[7] For most people, walking seems to be one of human being's instinctive behaviours,[8] or an activity for leisure, exercise, observing, travel, or moving. To me, walking is a meditation - from the city centre high streets to some shady alleyway; from morning market to rural woodland. By walking, I feel free, peaceful and strangely, I feel 'settled.' I can see the city very clearly, my feet are touching the ground, my lungs are breathing the air, my body can feel the sun, or the rain, and sometimes the passing pedestrian will offer me a smile. By walking, I know I am connecting with the city and the city, any city, feels like a home. 'Their story begins on the ground level, with footsteps… Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces.'[9]

Michel de Certeau introduced the concept of ordinary people producing a power reversal via their everyday practice (the procedures of everyday creativity).[10] He analysed two ways of achieving such a power reversal. Firstly, by the use of everyday language and culture to undermine the dominant power system; and secondly by walking. In my understanding of his theory, walking creates opportunities of observing and surveying details. It 'messes up' and 'shatters' the stable order of the urban that is developed by those in power.[11] When walking in the city, my body is interacting with it's surrounding environments and others. Wanderers have the privilege of occupying the city, and turn it into their own space. During walking, boundaries are blurred by wanderers, who create their everyday legends, connect fragmentary architectural places, geographic dots. 'Walking as a space of enunciation.'[12]

I consider walking as an attitude, which is also the initial step in my spatial research process. As I have said, walking in the city give me a clear panorama

3 Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust*, (London: Verso, 2001), p. 4.

4 Ibid., p. 5.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., p. 3.

7 Ibid., p. 6.

8 It is still a debate whether 'walking' is a instinctive behaviour or a learned behaviour for humans in social science field.

9 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (London: University of California Press, 1984), p. 97.

10 Ibid., Part Three.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., p. 98.

view. This rhythmic, authentic sensory perception (not only visual senses, but also auditory senses, olfactory senses and tactile senses) brings me opportunities to make correct judgments about where I am, where I have been and where I am about to go, and also gives me psychological suggestions as to whether I am safe or not. During walking, I have one-hundred percent control of myself and my movements, which I can barely have in any vehicle. Walking whilst simultaneously observing and feeling – this triangular process allows me make my own conversation with the city. It is a very subjective process that varies greatly from individual to individual.

As Emma Cocker said, in her project '*Performing The City*,' the relation between body and space is lived, intertwined, also rhythmical.[13] Only when the body moves, we can see not only the invisible connection between self and the others, but also the other themselves, the real **Us**. Also, only when the body moves, we can examine its affection via the movements. Only when the body moves can the embodied subjectivities be continued in both time and space.[14]

        'Every story is a travel story – a spatial practice.'[15]

There are numerous projects, art works or articles that provide evidences for useful insights into the value of walking as a method to open up new understandings of the city. Francis Alÿs carried out a series of walking projects in different cities, such as London and the Mexico City. In 2005, Alÿs, made his '*Seven Walks*'[16] project with Artangel[17] in the centre of London. This project spanned five years and explored the everyday rituals and habits of Londoners. The '*Seven Walks*' were taken in different parts of the city, such as Hyde Park, centre of London, National Portrait Galley, and the streets near Regent Park. His work doesn't stay in one place or one style; it is something physically happening. In his conception, urban space is often considered as being divided into points, barely connecting with inhabitants, or itself.[18]

Through the '*Seven Walks*' project, Alÿs attempts to seek a bridge that connects city and people, an interrelated net to hold both inhabitant and space by using different methods. Alÿs chooses his own personal action in order to make a conversation with buildings and spaces on the streets. His work normally starts with a simple action. '*Railings*' is one of my favourite projects of the '*Seven Walks*.' In the video, he was rattling sticks of different materials along railings whilst rambling around London. Different materials made various sounds, which were unexpectedly beautiful. We can only see Alÿs' back (sometimes his feet or the shadow) in the video. Therefore, experiencing whilst walking in the city may also be interpreted as listening (experiencing with ears) and walking. Such sense is actually a very direct way of connecting with the city, but sometimes, people ignore it. In my understanding, the various sounds deliver multiple voices in the city. Another project in '*Seven Walks*' is called '*The Nightwatch*.' I also find it is very interesting.

13 See, Emma Cocker, Bianca Scliar Mancini, Sara Wookey, *Performing The City*, Nottingham Trent University, 2012.

14 *Writing as An Nomadic Subject*, Oxford Talk by Rosi Braidotti, May, 2013. [accessed 2015] http://www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/getattachment/

15 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (London: University of California Press, 1984), p. 115.

16 See, Francis Alÿs, *Seven Walk* [accessed 2012]http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2005/seven_walks also see, [accessed 2015]http://www.francisalys.com

17 [accessed 2012] http://www.artangel.org.uk

18 Conversation came from Francis Alÿs and James Lingwood (2005). [accessed 2012] http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2005/seven_walks/rumours_a_conversation/rumours_a_conversation_between_james_lingwood_and_francis_alys

FA: Walking happens to be a very immediate way of unfolding these stories. …

JL: Walking generates a particular conception of time, of a human body moving at the pace that the legs can easily move. The writer Rebecca Solnit suggests the mind moves at three miles an hour? Is walking a tool for thinking for you?

FA: It's a perfect space to process thoughts. You can function at multiple levels simultaneously. It's like my method of working on lots of different scenarios in parallel, I always bounce from one project to another, it's the only way I can progress. Also, when you are walking, you are aware or awake to everything that happens in your peripheral vision, the little incidents, smells, images, sounds….Walking brings a rich state of consciousness. In our digital age, it's also one of the last private spaces.

He let a wild fox loose in the Tudor and Georgian rooms of the National Portrait Gallery in the middle of the night and filmed its movements with security CCTV. The fox is a complete outsider in the building, which could be considered as a metaphor for people who are living in the darksides of modern civilisation, looking for their own places. However, that night, when the fox strolls past those oil paintings, the National Portrait Gallery turned into a nocturnal world due to the 'break-in' and the exploration of this cute 'outsider.'

Janet Cardiff uses another interesting way of walking to approach her understanding of space: audio walk / video walk. She walks around with her voice recorder and detects something extremely obvious, but somehow is not typically given much attention; the sound made whilst walking. When she made her project, '*The Missing Voice,*'[19] in London, the city was not familiar to her (which made her something of a nomad). 'It is a work for a city where everyone is a stranger – a city where people come to lose themselves, or find themselves.'[20] This walk started from the Crime section of the Whitechapel Library (to me, Whitechapel is a very interesting but mysterious feminist place),[21] through the streets of Spitalfields, into the City of London and ended in Liverpool Street Station. Her walking reveals different layers of urban narrative and the voice itself become a female character in the city. 'While listening to these notes again in my apartment I realised how this voice became another woman, a character different from myself, a companion of sorts.'[22] The study shows us something of the multiple identities of a single subjective experience. Multiple identities, which we may have, especially as women, may help us in adapting to unfamiliar space. She not only experiences and observes from a different perspective, but gives voice to multiple identities.

Walking is indeed a series of physical movements that come from the body, however, it can be imaginative. You could walk alone, enjoying your absolute freedom; you could invite anyone in real life to walk with you; or you could have your imaginary companions; or you can walk with all of them. Jane Rendell did her three-hour walk from Angel tube station to Wapping pump station in London.[23] She represents three kinds of voice in her work. The walk started in Angel, where five main streets met, a crossing point. Also, the figure 'angel,' according to Rendell, 'mediates between the human and divine realms,' it is a messenger, who shuttles in-between. She cleverly uses Angel as both the actual starting point in her walking, as a symbol of historic intersection, and as the metaphor for crossing boundaries (moving back and forth) in space, time, social and cultural structures as well as in thinking. During her walk, her personal voice flows with her footsteps, and with voices from different philosophers writings about 'angel' as well as artists who produce angelic works. In my understanding, 'angel' is actually the metaphor for Rendell herself in this work, as she shuttles in between streets and buildings; but also in between various ideas and in between subjective and objective voices.

19 Janet Cardiff, *The Missing Voice* [accessed 2013] http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/walks/missing_voice.html

20 Ibid.

21 I know Whitechapel because of the famous but mysterious serial killer *Jack the Ripper*. It is not only my first impression of Whitechapel, but also one of my first impressions of London as a Chinese woman. Even now whenever I walk somewhere near Whitechapel, I still strangely get upset. 'Your senses are heightened. The atmosphere remains taut and compelling as the walk unfolds with much that is reminiscent of detective fiction and film noir...There is indeed a sense of participating in a book or a film as you are caught up in the narrative, both aware of its fabrication and at the same time immersed within the space-between it creates' (David Pinder, *Ghostly Footsteps: Voices, Memories And Walks In The City, Ecumene 2001 8)*

22 Janet Cardiff, *The Missing Voice* [accessed 2013] http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/walks/missing_voice.html

23 Jane Rendell, *Walking to Wapping/ Walking through Angels* [accessed 2014] http://www.janerendell.co.uk/walks/walking-to-wapping-walking-through-angels

24 Ibid.

[...]

cross-wise;
we walk continually

on thin air
that thickens to a blind fog,

then step swifty aside,
for even the air

is independable,
thick where it should be fine
and tenuous
where wings separate and open,

and the ether
is heavier than the floor,

and the floor sags
like a ship floundering;

we know no rule
of procedure,

we are voyagers,
discovers of the not-known,

the unrecorded;
we have no map;

possibly we will reach haven,
heaven.' [24]

City Map

It is always a struggle for me to define whether mapping is a narrative method or a visual method, or both. It is indeed, a visual way of representing my work, but for me, mapping as a process, doesn't occur on its own. It is a reflection of my stories, an interlinked method of exploration and representation, a search for a means of my subjective expression, an intuitive act of mine rather than something my brain has to tell my body to do. It is, the legend to my **urban legends**, and vice versa. 'It has always been this way with the map-makers: from their first scratches on the cave wall to show the migration patterns of the herds, they have traced lines and lived inside them.'[1] In this part, I will not only aim to define my specific understanding of maps; I will also attempt to embed information of everyday life and subjective emotion in graphic thoughts and practices. As John Pickles mentioned, maps or map-ping can be considered as the 'missing element in social theories of moder-nity. [...] in which our lives have been and are being shaped and constituted through myriads of intersecting and overlapping mapping in use everyday.'[2]

Before I started my master courses at the University of Sheffield, the structure of my undergraduate training meant that I barely knew anything about map-pings in the field of architectural research. Map, to me, initially, was a colourful formalistic drawing that permanently sticks on the wall in my grandma's old flat, with names and different shapes of the countries. In '*Mappa Mundi*'[3] Renata Tyszczuk describes the development of maps in world history in the context of emerging perspectives of geography and geometry. For example, the Mercator Projection, was described as a 'New and augmented description of Earth corrected for the use of navigation.'[4] It helps me understand the historical background of maps, also understand how people gradually found out about the space in which they live, moreover, how people recorded it. She goes on to argue that current geographical form (traditional maps) froze space and time. The world is changing every second. However, the only thing we see on static maps are names, colour boxes or territories. Those static maps confuse people. 'They allow us to think that the world doesn't change so fast, that it is stable, dependable.'[5] She raises the question: 'Why are maps static?'[6] Also, how do we do to make maps ask questions?[7] From her standpoint, traditional maps have gradually lost their usage in representing events, wanderings, journeys and stories, which 'has taken the life out of maps.'[8] Tyszczuk proposes, 'New maps require a new kind of cartographer, one that can summon up both an effective resistance and a creative response to what the present throws at us.'[9]

1 John Pickles, *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping and the Geo-Coded World,* (Oxon: Routledge, 2003), p. 3.

2 Ibid., Preface xi-xii

3 Renata Tyszczuk, Joe Smith, Nigel Clark and Melissa Butcher, *Atlas: Geography, Architecture and Change in an Interdependent World,* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2012).

4 Ibid., p. 10.

5 Ibid., p. 11.

6 Ibid., p. 10.

7 Ibid., pp. 10-11.

8 Ibid., p. 11.

9 Ibid.

I began to think about new ways of making maps in which movements, stories and jour-neys can be inserted. More importantly, if maps are able to tell stories, and stories are unique to individuals, then such maps are necessarily subjective.

'It is not space that takes the life out of time, but representation.' [10]

In thinking about the transformation of maps, I made an online interview with a artist/graphic designer, Didi Zhang. From her point of view, mapping is infographics - graphics with information: 'Everything around the world has a rule, or in another word a form; or in my words, a phenomenon. For scientists, they maybe figure out the causes of specific phenomenon after lots of calculating, the way for them to find a proper result is a series of formulas. For information technologists, they explore phenomenon through comput-er programs, and the way for them to find out answers is through software or application. For artists, like myself, we use visualisation to communicate responses to these phenomenon. — We collect data, gather people's reac-tions/feedback, then we visualise things in our own way, which is what I call infographics: graphics with information.' [11]

Indeed, such graphics with information are a visual method of collecting and representing data. But to be a useful representation of the lived experi-ence, there is still something missing. In what way can infographics represent events, the varied environments, the elapsed time and the subjective sense of oneself?

'Making an evidence presentation is a moral act as well as an intellectual activity. To maintain standards of quality, relevance, and integrity for evidence, consumers of presentations should insist that presenters be held intellectually and ethically responsible for what they show and tell. Thus consuming a presentation is also an intellectual and a moral activity.' [12]

In my understanding of Edward Tufte's words at the beginning of his book '*Beautiful Evidence*,' mapping can be thought of not just as a product of a series of actions in a logical process: data collecting, tracing movements or event recording; but also allows emotion and feeling to be addressed in the actions, which according to Tufte, is the moral and intellectual act of evi-dence presentation, an explanatory image. [13] It can be argued that to be artistic in representing data as a map can lead to the perversion of the facts that the data represents, (to lie or to be immoral in Tufte's explanation). However, artistic practice also allows for means of repre-senting emotion and feeling. Therefore it can conversely be argued that, if we consider a spatial map to be deficient without layers of emotion and feeling being represented, then the map gives us an incomplete picture. It is my aim to explore ways in which the subjective nomadic experiences of space can be given a visual presence.

The first time I realised the true value of mapping was through studying the graphics by Charles Joseph Minard; '*Napoleon's March;*' which shows the devastating losses of the French Army in Napoleon's Russian campaign. [14] Tufte disseminates it in his book '*The visual display of quantitative informa-tion.*' [15] Although the initial idea of introducing the drawing, for Tufte, was to illustrate and explain in detail his six fundamental principles of analytical de-sign, I was absolutely impressed and touched by the power that comes from one image. The mapping represents in two dimensions, six types of data: the number of Napoleon's soldiers; the distance to Moscow; temperature; the exact latitude and longitude where the number of people was decreased; the travel direction; and name of locations in this journey. Unlike traditional static maps, '*Napoleon's March*' clearly depicts the movements of soldiers that alter with space and time. Because changes in time and space can be shown vividly on this map, we are able to understand the whole story, to see the true picture of this tragedy. A comparison of the lines that start from the begin-ning and comes back to original point deliveries a direct affective impact to people who read this map. But a map, as a visual language, also allows people to draw on their own personal imagination through the reading process.

'This known reality is differentiated from the reality we see, hear and feel, and this is the magic and the power of the map. [...] The map opens world to us through systems and codes of sedimented, acculturated knowledge. [...] The map points us to a world that we might come to know provided we are willing to learn and accept...' [16]

According to Pickles' words above, maps should represent something beyond real world by stretching reality, by using abstract symbols, making people think. Through thinking and our emotion, we can *read* the world and society, to confront the reality. It is the key value of representing a map, also the reason that maps work initially.

In the Hereford '*Mappa Mundi*' [17] represents a world from a religious perspec-tive that combines geographical reality and spiritual experiences. We can see religious stories, historical stories, travel stories, geographical features (moun-tain, rivers), social structures (city, market) and imaginary strange creatures in this map. In fact, every single image shown in this map has its own travel story. [18] I personally think Hereford '*Mappa Mundi*' has some similar charac-teristics to the '*Shan Hai Jing*.' It does not truly correspond to the geographi-cal knowledge of the 14th century. However, it did to some extent reflect the social-cultural situation, and maybe the idealised world of the time. What is more interesting is that Hereford '*Mappa Mundi*' represents a collective sense of the world derived from a sense of self and others.

10 Doreen Massey, *Some times of Space,* (London: Taté Publish-ing, 2003).
[accessed 2015] http://www.f-i-e-l-d.co.uk/writings-violence_files/Some_times_of_space.pdf

11 Didi Zhang, artist/graphic designer who works and lives in San Francisco

12 Edward Tufte, *Beautiful Evidence,* (Cheshire CT: Graphic press, 2006), Introduction.

13 Ibid.

14 [accessed 2012, 2015] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Joseph_Minard#/media/File:Minard.png

15 Edward Tufte, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Informa-tion,* (USA: Graphics Press, 2001), p. 40.

16 John Pickles, *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping and the Geo-Coded World,* (Oxon: Routledge, 2003), p. 61.

17 [accessed 2015] http://www.themappamundi.co.uk

18 [accessed 2015] http://www.themappamundi.co.uk/explore.php

Janice Caswell has achieved something intimate.[19] Instead of mapping in space, she investigates ways in which the body coordinates with the mind, particularly with memories. Janice's mappings, mostly, represent personal mental maps. She tries to trace the shape of recalled experience, records the movement of bodies and consciousness through time and space. She uses unique visual languages, such as points, lines and fields of colour to tell of spatial experiences, meanwhile, examining the body through mapping experiences.[20]

Ultimately, my understanding of maps has changed from a traditional geographical projection drawing, to graphic with information. Then, to a visual representation that captures movements, events and activities; revealing hidden relations between people, space and time; to ways of depicting our imagination and reflecting our memories in order to create a narrative, not just about what the world is, but also how the world is understood through our experiences.

'If we look at mapping in this way (as already multiple, experimental, and open to flows, relations of difference, and change), we can, I think, begin to speak of cartographies as already and always involving imaginative open, contested and contradictory mappings.'[21] That is not to say that the traditional, geographical projection maps should be replaced. Instead; with a great respect to the traditional maps, which opened my eyes to the earth, to space and moreover, brought me enough courage to develop new maps; I will keep on developing subjective representations of my narrative, as well as experimenting with a broader range of maps which empower me and hopefully others to think critically about ourselves and space.

19 Janice Caswell, [acessed 2014] http://janicecaswell. com/work/new/

20 'Memory is a flawed system. Gaps arise in the process of recollecting and the mind is constantly reconfiguring and recreating the past. My work embraces the mind's faulty processes. In drawing my "maps," subjective decision making, human error and revaluation come into play. The result is a representation that is simultaneously deliberate and vague... In attempting to create a system
for representing experience, the pieces become dynamic records of memory itself in the act of recreating what would otherwise be lost.'
See, Janice Caswell's statement, [acessed 2014] http://janicecaswell. com/statement/

21 John Pickles, A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Map- ping and the Geo-Coded World, (Oxon: Routledge, 2004), p. 188.

Legends of Urban Space

'Legends of Urban Space' is the collection of the subjective stories / creative spatial writing where I situate myself in different places. In this section we will see that the methods introduced in Chapter Two are not used independently - creative narrative and visual study become explorations in their own right as well as ways of representing each other. Moreover, critical and theoretical reflection is not separate from these three practices and therefore intersects the presentation. Indeed, I believe that it is evidence that my own personal understandings through reflection are an integral part of the iterative processes and also develop in depth and criticality throughout the work.

Different stories express different literature and visual approaches of the intimate conversation between me and the city / cities (the surrounding culture, political or social context). This chapter also truthfully documents the confusion and difficulties I encountered as the study progressed, as well as my growth in the process of writing and theoretic analysis.

Preamble

City is a lovely word – which is always full of everyday stories, feelings and experiences. I grew up with those fascinating stories - they were my initial impression of the world; the sense of love and fear; my earliest understanding of past, now and the hopeful future.

I have moved my 'place to live' 17 times in the past 10 years, in four cities. I have been studying architecture, learning different methods in architectural design and spatial research and different representation skills for a long time. Before undertaking a PhD, I considered space as a goal. I was anxious to achieve it, to design it, to define or judge it. I would wake up, have some breakfast, sit in front of my desk and start reading something about space. I would spend the whole morning learning, trying my best to be a proper PhD student. I failed to find a clear path forward, like the day before, and the day before that. What was the true meaning of city? What had I missed? City is a lovely word, as I said it is about the varying layers in a city, the myriad aspects of everyday life, the experiences of traveling and dwelling, the sense I have, or I used to have in the city - the legends.

It was time for me to slow down; it was time for me to read the city properly.

My stories contain experimental narrative writings and mappings, which include walking and mapping in Sheffield as well as nomadic stories about experiencing London through living and traveling; they are reflections of my subjective sense of moving and the process of searching for home as a nomadic female. They are also experiments in narrative and representational methods of exploring relations between myself and the city.

Walks in Sheffield

'Walks in Sheffield is written at the very beginning of my PhD.
It contains three stories: 'Identity', 'In-between' and 'The City and Me'. The original intention of writing these three stories was to explore the relationship between the city, space, and the individual, to gain a deeper understanding of how space, as a social product, establishes the connections with its users through everyday practice, not only from architectural design practice bases, but also from critical theory and philosophical thought perspective.

Obviously, the writing and the mapping were only scratched the surface of spatial study. However, my position in these three stories was unique and has a lot of great reference value, for people who are currently involved in the nomadic status, particularly for those new relocated students. Meanwhile, these stories also convincingly provides an example of the first step in the process of continuous practice and self-correction of autotheory.

2011

· Identity

The walk starts in West Street in Sheffield, where I live.
From West Street (in walkable distance):

to the North – nothing

to the East – the University of Sheffield;

to the West – the city centre, the city hall and the Cathedral; Sheffield train station;

to the South – my favourite park, residences and offices; 'the Moor' and the biggest Chinese supermarket in the city.

Every time when I walk on West St, which is always full of pedestrians and vehicles, I cannot help throwing myself into the vivid atmosphere; my mind gets dizzy sometimes, but I am completely obsessed by all the things that happen in this place which was full of life. I consider West Street as my locus - The sign saying 'YOU ARE HERE.' It helps me navigate in Sheffield. No matter what my destination is, I always start walking from West Street. Walking is based on my own coordinate systems and although my way of navigating might take me on a little detour. Instead of reading actual maps (or using a 3G smart phone), I trust my personal spatial sense. This confidence in my spatial sense inspires me, helps me create my own mapping systems and allows me to see hidden details of the city. I believe people's personal experiences have a great impact on their understanding urban space; and offer insights into the links between people and space. Therefore, as my first attempt in spatial research, I try to search for a clue, which can link both people and space. The site of my first walk is in Sheffield city centre, which includes West St, Devonshire St, Division St, Leopold St, Pinstone St, Surrey St, Norfolk and High St.

In this work, I try to explore a personal relation between myself and space. I use fingerprints, a very unique but significant impression that is made by the human body. Fingerprints show clear evidences of people's activities, movements and routines in everyday life. Fingerprints not only record life routines, but also differentiate humans from other creatures, from a biological point of view. Personally, I think boundaries can be considered to reveal the identity of space, particularly in-between private space and public space, in-between green landscape and industrial building sites, or in-between crowded high streets and shaded back streets.

I rambled, sought doors of each building and entrances to different areas and followed my eyes in the street. I left my fingerprint quickly, as people would normally do; on door handles of post offices, cafés, bars, restaurants, residences, groceries shops, shopping malls, museums and school buildings, as well as on the railings, ramps and benches of outdoor spaces such as parking places, squares, outdoor markets and parks; in order to trace the direct relations of physical urban space and people.

The series of photographs above
are associated with the mapping
on the right.

This was my first attempt of
embedding identities into urban
space. I used the most direct,
simple symbol of a human body,
a fingerprint, to represent identity
of an individual. Leaving finger-
print on the entrances of different
public spaces in the city centre
of Sheffield indicating the traces
of the body and also the physical
connection between space and
its users.
The photos are evidence of the
situated (female) body. And the
mapping is the collection of sim-
plified 'identities'.

·· In-between

I am interested in a picture that is a posted on one of my friend's Pinterest. It is a black and white picture: the white side is just a simple outline of a vase; in the black side, there are two faces facing each other. The point of this drawing, 'Negative Space,'[1] is not about the fancy presentation, but the ability to discover some hidden objects through thinking backwards. It reminds me of the identity of space immediately. The core value of Negative Space is in drawing attention to the space around an object, not just the object itself. If our destinations are considered as solid places or objects, what is the Negative Space in this context? Do we pay any attention to it?

After I finished my first walk, I kept exploring the relationship of people and space. I like walking and observing; I like having people around me, which makes me feel safe; I spent months to explore the connections; to read the city, read the relationships. What else?

Was there something that I missed?

I still used Sheffield city as my site. This time, my site was located in two areas – Crookesmoor / Upperthorpe and the city centre. My plan was to find the missing space in-between places with strong identities, such as commercial buildings, residences, parks and public squares.

The walk started from Crookesmoor. I walked and recorded the buildings and places along the street. Firstly, I tried to understand the structure of each street and the various occupations of different places, in order to discover the gap, the in-between space. In the mapping drawing, I choose several vivid colours to make spots on a pitch-dark sheet. The black sheet represents an invisible geographic map of Sheffield, on which I place different colours, which represent different types of buildings. Coloured spots are vivid, on which we can easily focus (as buildings in the city). But what about the black margin? What can we see?

1 [acessed 2012, 2015]
http://www.creativebloq.com/art/
art-negative-space-8133765

The four illustrations and mappings on the left and drawings on right are trying to test and present what is in-between public and private / how space can be occupied in different ways. The idea was inspired by the notion of 'negative space'. This experiment was very much established 'architectural design practice based. And the in-between connection I was trying to unveil here was rather materialistic. However the story and the mapping recorded the learning transition from traditional architectural design practice to PhD spatial research.

● Yellow // Office building

● Green // Restaurant

● Khaki // Bank or Post office

● Red // Bar, Pub, Club or Restaurant

● Blue // Dwelling building
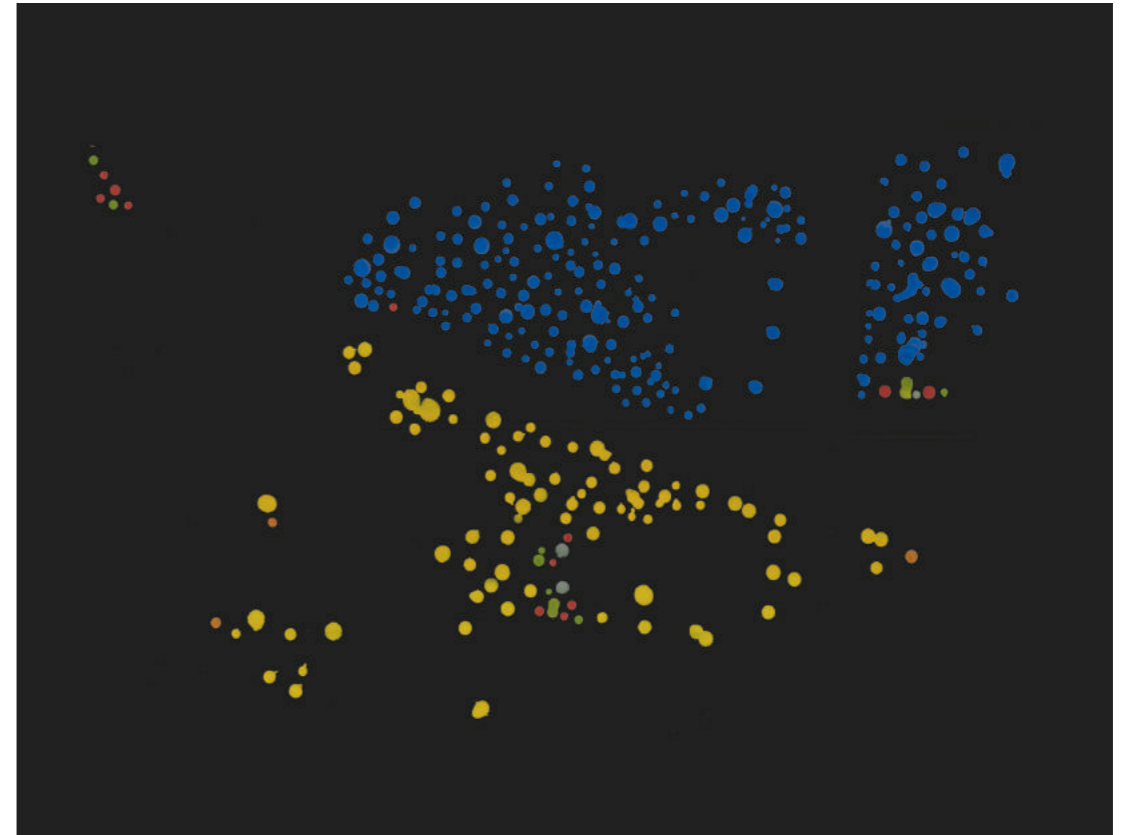
Yellow // Office building

Green // Restaurant

Khaki // Bank or Post office

Red // Bar, Pub, Club or Restaurant

Blue // Dwelling building

Orange // Super market or Groceries

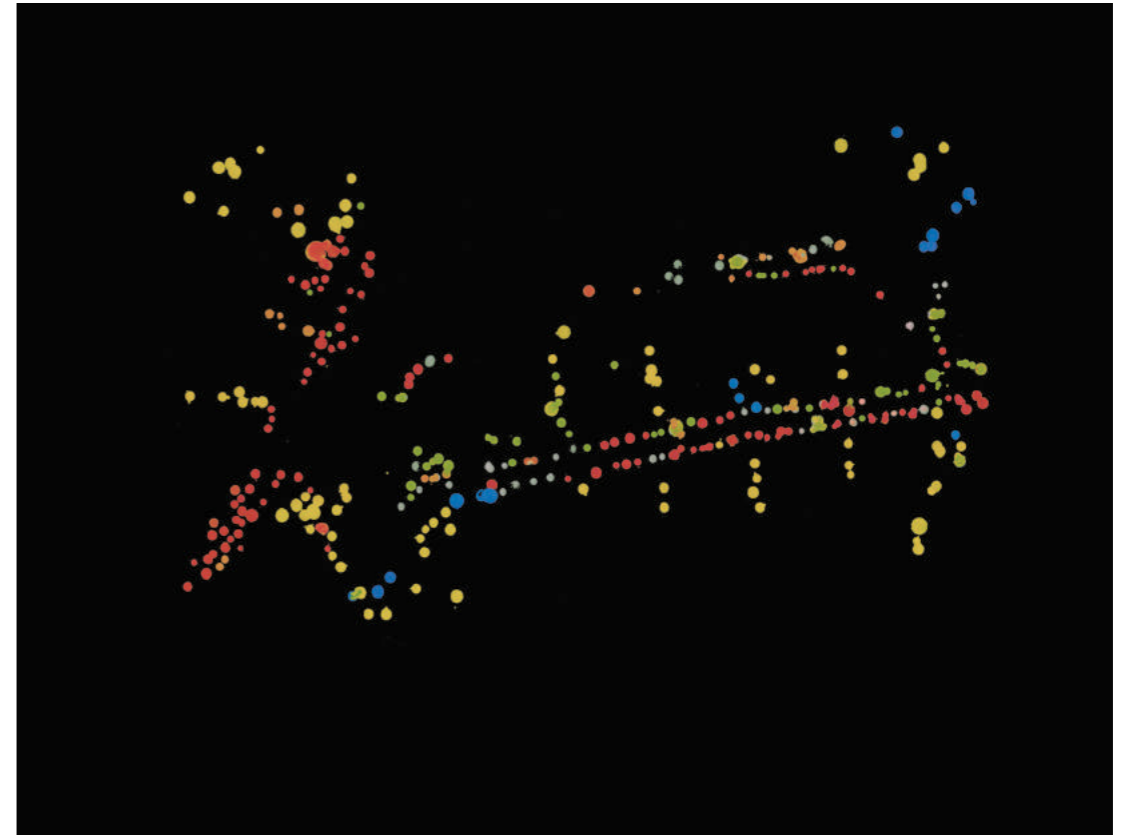## • • • City and Me

In Sheffield, I am an international student, who apparently is not a native person. However, I have been here over two years, I am not a stranger either. I have many friends in the university, who I can discuss my project with all the time. I attend seminars, lectures and conferences punctually. I go to some parties at the weekend, like a typical twenty-something girl. I have travelled a lot. But I am still in the process of searching for a home. I am a 'middle person,' in this case, I may represent both local and stranger. I start thinking about my position – what is my identity in this city? This time I again take Sheffield city centre as the site of my little project. It is the one of the most familiar places to me in this country. The site includes West St, Division St, City Hall and High St in the city centre. My little project spanned a week. During this week, I 'grounded' myself in the city centre; I recorded my everyday activities only in the this central area. Afterwards, I recorded my main activities point by point along with my everyday schedule. I draw each activity in an abstract way, and embed them into a miniature scenography of Sheffield city centre. Firstly, I want to identify myself as a woman in space. Secondly, I try to find out my relation with this city as well as understand how a woman, an international woman, occupies the city.

Monday – I did not go anywhere.

Tuesday – Visited Sheffield City Gallery in the morning, came back, have a coffee in my favourite Italian café on West Street, then came back home.

Wednesday – Had a walk in the park near my flat, and wandered down to Oxfam in West Street in the afternoon, guess what, I bought a dining table. And it was not very fun to drag it back.

Thursday – Moved my car from Wellington Street back to a cheaper car parking place on the back of West Street.

Friday – Had a night out with my best friend in 'the Grapes.' – Best wine bar in Sheffield, I think.

Saturday – Rambled in city centre and Sheffield Market; had my dinner with flat mate in Leopold Square.

Sunday – Apart from going to grocery shop downstairs, I didn't go anywhere.

2011

This mapping is a reflection of the story 'The City and Me'. I tried to challenge the static architectural language by adding events and times to a drawing (to a perspective sketch). Events were my daily practice and the places where those events happened are part of the social products (Lefebvre, 1991). The mapping is subjective, and strongly linked with the narrative above. In another way, the mapping can be the storytelling itself, while the narrative is found in legends of this map.
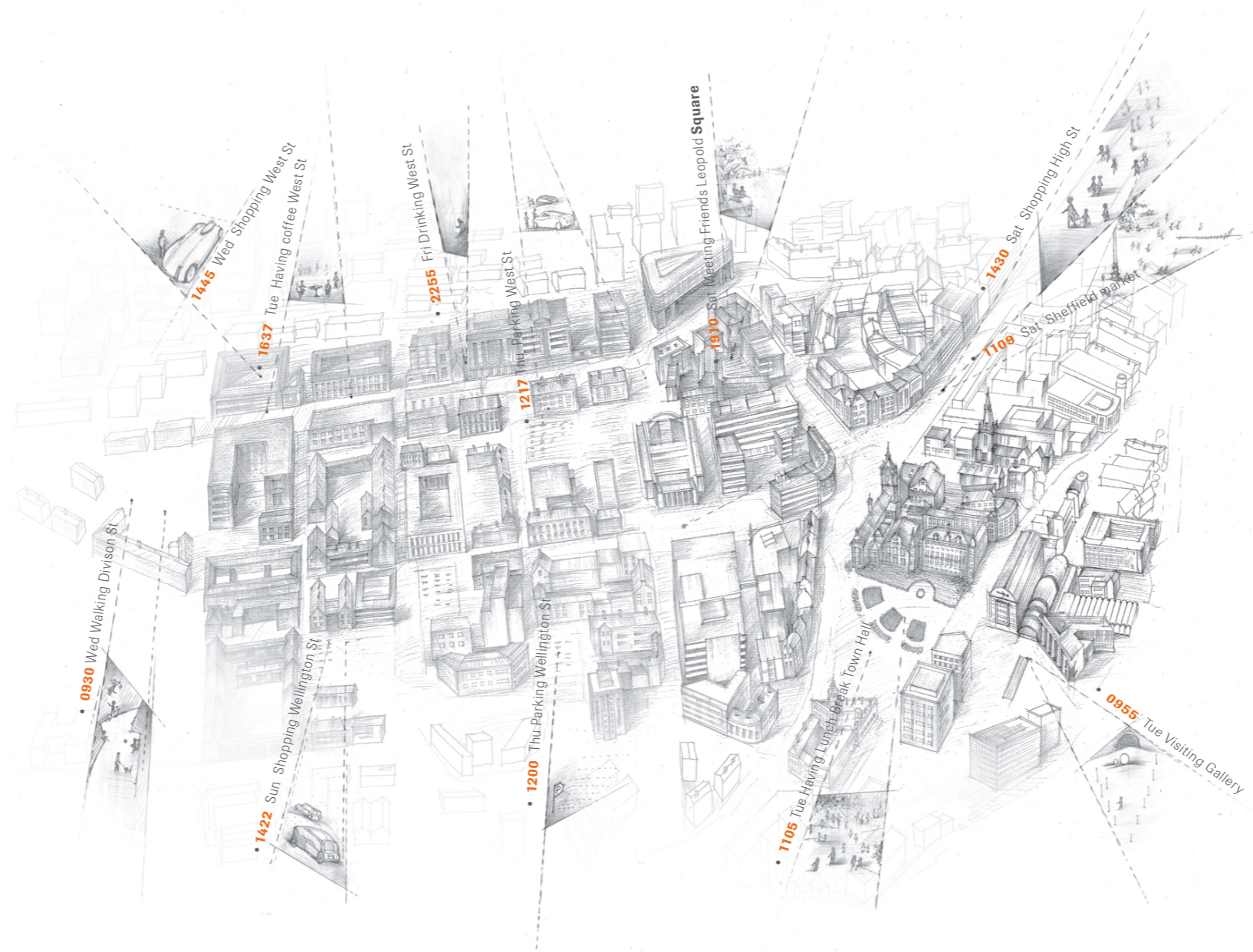
The original idea of carrying out the 'Walks in Sheffield' project was to investigate the connections between people and space after walking near West Street and Sheffield city centre. My interest at that time was in trying to define the identities of urban space as well as the relations in-between. For defining identities of urban space, I used the idea of 'boundary'[1] as my clue. For finding the relations 'in-between,' I took the concept of 'negative space,'[2] trying to look at the city from alternative perspective and focusing on the places that I usually ignored, the places between our destinations. I also tried to explore the different identities of urban space. At that time, I neither had a fully formed way of thinking about urban spaces as social products, nor knew much about feminist theory. I didn't even know the English word 'nomad.' My thoughts were quite simple and superficial. Nevertheless, I did have an honest and direct feeling of the street, the area and the city where I stayed and walked, maybe not as an academic spatial investigator, but as an ordinary dweller, an international student, a new person in a new city living out everyday life experiences, which could still be interesting.

However, looking back at the stories, I believe I made a mistake in understanding the notion of space at the very start. Michel de Certeau made a distinction between space and place in '*The Practice of Everyday Life*.'[3] He mentioned, 'A Places (*lieu*) is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence.'[4] In my interpretation, place is an objective existence; it has no life. According to de Certeau, place can be considered as 'a location it defines,'[5] which is stable. Space, on the other hand, 'is composed of intersections of mobile elements.'[6] It occurs because of people's subjective 'movements or acts.'[7] Thus, I believe place is a geometrical, geographic idea, which can be objectively quantitated and determined: a high street, a school field, two parking places, a playground or a few construction sites. It can be 'arrived at,' 'taken off from,' 'stayed at' or 'left.' It has a physical boundary and an area in-between. However, space doesn't have a physical boundary. It is 'a practiced place.'[8] Place is transformed into space by people, through everyday practice. The identity I was trying to define in 'Walks in Sheffield,' was actually the definition of a place based on its attributes. Also the idea of boundary in the story above, was only a geometrical and geographic term.

Harold M. Proshansky et al. introduced the term of 'place identity' and argued that 'place identity is a sub-structure of a person's self-identity, and consists of knowledge and feelings developed through everyday experiences...'[9] In my understanding, exploring a person's self-identity becomes a key area of interest, which leads me back to de Certeau's notion of space. 'Exploring the relationship between place and identity deepens our understandings of identity formation and the role of place in social and psychological development. The bonds between place and identity can influence social formations, cultural practices, and political actions'[10] Therefore, from

a personal viewpoint; this 'place identity' is in fact, part of the social-spatial relation. To research space is the study of mobile elements within.

Walking in Sheffield was the start of my iterative research processes. It allowed me to look back, repeatedly. In my opinion, looking back, putting away some fixed ideas and starting over again is always useful in developing my work. Reflections on what I saw, how I felt and where I traveled, always help me to understand spatial theory. They are also the motivation for me to keep going on exploring the indeterminate relationship between people and space.

1 The boundary(ies) I was trying to find, basically, in-between of different types of building and attributions of area (places).

2 Negative Space, in art, is the space around and between the subject(s) of an image. See, [accessed 2011]http://thevirtualinstructor.com/positive-and-negative-space.html

3 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (London: University of California Press, 1984), pp. xix-xxiv, 117.

4 Ibid., p. 117

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., pp. 117-118.

8 Ibid., p. 117

9 Jen Jack Gieseking, William Mangold, Cindi Katz, Setha Low, Susan Saegert, *The People, Place, and Space Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 73. Also see [accessed 2015]http://peopleplacespace.org/toc/section-3/

10 Ibid

This piece of narrative was an attempt to combine literature review / theoretic thinking with a story / memoir. I try to keep the story as pure and fluent as possible by adding a series of footnote numbers only to the text. After my reader finishes the narrative part, the theoretic thinking begins in a inverted order. The narrative and literature review are paralleled, while actively echo each other.
At the end, the story and the theory comes together, to the same point as a closure.

.
.
.
2 5
3 4
4 3
5 2
.
.
.
.
1 1

I try to write in the way one would shoot a suspense movie. I presents my doubts about life, about the city through my personal story, and then attempt to address and answer these doubts step by step by using feminist theories and literature reviews. Theory answers questions raised by the story. The subjective story inspires the theory.

One the core values of autotheory is the writers incorporating personal experiences and stories into their theoretical explorations, arguing that the personal and theoretical are intimately linked and inform each other. Further, autotheory encourages deep introspection and self-analysis. Through the process of writing, I have the opportunity to uncover and explore aspects of my personal identity and experience that I may not have previously considered. Meanwhile, the process can also lead to new insights and understanding in research.

An Unknown Plant

It is a 2.99 pounds unknown plant – I bought it from Sheffield market on a warm Saturday afternoon during my first summer in the UK. Although the walk is hard to remember, only a few pieces of fragmental memories left: the cathedral; the rain-washed flagstone pavement; a vintage car show near High street and this plant; I can still feel the excitement of wandering in this new city. **2**

'*It will last forever.*' Said the sales lady. **3**

Her smile reminded me of my grandma, and I liked the word 'forever' – It sounded so secure for a girl who had just moved into this country. Therefore, I took it.

The plant looks very common, the kind that you can possibly find it in any market – pointing, green leaves, with little golden colour along the edge and planted in a saddle-brown plastic pot. I brought it back to my flat in Endcliffe near Fulwood Road. It was a beautiful place to live. Flowers in Endcliffe woodland had bloomed the whole summer. I always left the window open for hours, let my new plant on windowsill breathe with the colourful world outside.

An unknown plant in a totally unknown city. Space to me, was a Rubik's Cube, full of freedom, imagination and self drawn mental maps. Days in Endcliffe are blurry, like a dream – A dream of an exciting adventure, without loneliness or fear. It was the beginning of being nomadic, and the best period of time in being nomadic, for the plant and me.

After that summer, myself and the plant were relocated to a student dormitory on West Street in the city centre – a place with no trees or flowers. The plant had stayed there, a little bit lonely, watched people and cars coming and going, the sunrise and the sunset, for one and half years. As time went by, the city became more and more familiar every single day; real geo-graphical maps replaced those imagined mental maps that I created long ago. Gradually, I learned how to navigate in the city 'properly.' I was able to find a dry cleaning shop or a bus back to my flat in the middle of night. I started defining different places in this city based on my feelings and understandings, which kept changing and twisting with time.

I went back to Sheffield Saturday market many times; I could no longer find the sales lady who sold me the plant.

London is different. The city is so famous that everybody knows a certain image of a certain street, park or square: Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, Tower Bridge, Hyde Park, London Eye, St Paul Cathedral, Trafalgar Square, Tate Modern, Baker Street and the red phone booths. There isn't much space for me to imagine, or to draw a mental map for myself, neither before nor after I had moved in. My new house is in Camden Town. It is a terrace house in-between Camden High Street and Regents Park. My bedroom is small so I have to squeeze the plant into a corner with books and other stuff - no more views, no more sunshine or fresh air coming from outside.

An unknown plant in this well-known city.

Life in London is always linear to me; **4** every movement is straightforward. I don't have to learn how to navigate. Information about this city is every-where, for Londoners, for tourists and for nomads like me. This city is easy to read, although there are so many labels for different areas and so many differ-ent life styles. I have lived in London almost a year, the feeling of this city has never changed for me - neither familiar, nor strange. The fearless excitement I had in Endcliffe had long gone. I can never get it back.

An unknown plant in the corner.

'It will last forever.' On a typical evening, I suddenly remember what the lady on Sheffield market said. Will it? I don't know.

It is weird, the more I know about the city, the more I get scared – scared of being lonely, being isolated – I don't know why. I see my plant hiding in the corner of a mess. I see that it cannot be replanted back to the ground where its bud sprouted. I see the darkness with no imagination behind it. Some-thing begins to bother me: a fear of losing my plant, losing control myself, losing the sense of belonging. **5**

I start wondering if the idea of moving is good. Not just moving to London, but also the idea of drifting within cities. If the word 'forever' was what I was looking for, why did I move in the first place?

What really is home? **6**

Why do I travel?

Why feeling scare? **7**

7 'A move that can also produce fear, sense of insecurity, and nostalgia. Change is certainly a painful process, but this does not equate it with suffering.' *(Braidotti, Nomadic Subjects, NY, 1994, p.219)*
I call what I have and what I have had 'home.' Anything that is uncertain or out of range is called 'elsewhere.' I have confidence in things that I have and situations that I can control. When the environment changes, I feel uncomfortable with what I do not know. I intuitively think what I am scared of is the unknown (unknown city, unknown people, or unpredictable future). However, once I am acquainted with the unknown, my confidence comes back. When the unknown becomes known, I am no longer scared. Maybe, what threatens me, is not the unknown, but the process of moving from unknown to known – the becoming. The fear is not the feeling of changing space, of relocation, or unknown environments, but the subversion of the meaning of power, or what I have and what I had. 'It is far simpler to think about the concept A or B …rather than the process of what goes on in between A and B. Thinking through flows and interconnections remains a difficult challenge.' *(Braidotti, Nomadic Theory, NY, 2011, p. 15)*

Rosi Braidotti pointed out that one of the core values in '*Nomadic Theory,*' is to think in terms of the process of becoming, 'Becoming women, becoming aliens, becoming insect, and so on.' (*2011*) She argued about the noticeable disconnection between 'how we live' and 'how we represent ourselves.' *(2011, p. 13)* We live in the world that rapidly changes, but the traditional, old thoughts and habits are decomposed, which turn into contradictory ways. *(2011, p. 11)* From her standpoint, presenting the notion of Nomadic thinking, which is concerned with the process, the becoming, is a response to the 'on-going process of transformation,' (*2011, p. 13)* This kind of either A or B binary definition put inflexible labels on us and divides our social life into pieces; it isolates us, reduces our passions for exploring and thinking dynamically. To get rid of the fear, is to break down the dualistic mode of thinking. If we are able to think critically from the perspective of an individual, or from the self, erase the idea of so-called definitions and focus on the 'process of becoming,' perhaps this fear will gradually disappear. '…to represent mutation, changes, transformations, rather than being in its classical modes, is the challenge for those who are committed to engendering and enjoying changes and the great source of anxiety of those who are not.' *(2011, p. 15)*

6 'Home' and 'Nomadic,' seem like two opposing terms, superficially. As I said above, I don't normally enjoy things that do not exist or things that are uncertain. I defined home as a certain place or a static status, which I have or used to have (am or was). But the fact is, I am always in the mode of travelling, or moving in the uncertainty. Home to me is something I hardly get and this is why I constantly get lost. According to Braidotti,

home or home country are only geopolitical or historical terms. Nomadic Subject is concerned with the people who don't have a home or a home country. (*2011, p. 24*) Instead of searching for a static definition, or a fixed identity, we should explore the 'process of becoming.' (*2011*) Having one home, or many homes, or having no home is only part of a process. Being a foreigner, an outsider, a homeless person, being in the situation of a minority or nomadic subject is also part of an on-going becoming. Braidotti also pointed out that we live in a rapidly changing era, in which new social locations are urgently desired in order to adjust ourselves in the transformation. (*2011, p. 11*) In this case, without the constraint of a fixed, static position, no home becomes an interesting and dynamic advantage in the exploration of new representations or social locations. 'Home is lived both at the material and at the imaginary level where it might be a destination or something that is repeatedly deferred. It is not necessarily a place of 'origin,' but can also mean belonging in multiple locations. (*2011, p. 260*)

5 'It is great to have roots, as long as you can take them with you' *(Braidotti, Nomadic Subjects, NY, 1994, p.1)*

4 'Becoming works on a time sequence that is neither linear nor sequential because processes of becoming are not predicated upon a stable, centralized Self who supervised their unfolding. These processes rather rest on a non-unitary, multi-layered, dynamic subject attached to multiple communities.' *(Braidotti, Nomadic Theory, NY, 2011, p. 35)*

3 'Life'... is an acquired taste, an addiction like any other, an open-ended project. One has to work at it. Life is passing and we do not own it, we just inhabit it, not unlike a time-share location.' *(Braidotti, The Posthuman. Cambridge, 2013, p. 133)*

2 'I am in love with changes and transformations and very excited about the pathbreaking developments I have witnessed in my lifetime. Neither nostalgia nor utopia will do. We rather need a leap forward toward a creative reinvention of life conditions, affectivity, and figurations for the new kind of subjects we have already become.' *(Braidotti, Nomadic Theory, NY, 2011, p. 53)*

[1] 'There isn't one space, a beautiful space, a beautiful space round about, a beautiful space all around, there's a whole lot of small bits of space, [...] In short, space have multiplied, been broken up and have diversified. There are spaces today of every kind and every size, for every use and every function. To live is to pass from one space to another, while doing your best not to bump yourself.' (*Perec, Species of spaces and other pieces, 2008, pp. 5-6*)

My plant is still in the corner, with a bunch of books. In between the past and the future; in between the outside city and me; in-between changes – since the travel story, my travel story, is on going.

This time, the plant will move to East London, a place next to Canary Wharf, on the edge of Isle of Dogs. Again, it will shortly face a completely different life style, landscape, culture, environment, or social community. Neither of us know what will happen in the future, but we do know, this time we will be brave and embrace our new life, to take any challenge, be creative, be motivated. I know I may get lost again, I may feel lonely soon, but this time, I understand all the feelings mentioned above are just part of becoming. I know, wherever I move, my home moves with me. So does this unknown plant. [1]

This is simply a 'self portrait' as
this 'unknown plant'.
The illustrated map tells the
places and the journey that this
plant has been through.

Four Homes

'Four Homes' is a set of creative writings and subjective mappings. It tells personal stories of me occupying my living space (the room, the flat, the house, the communal space, the neighbourhood) in different places and in different periods of time.

This section undertakes more creative and experimental forms of writing including memoir, detailed spatial writing, recording, mini ethnography, live drafting and theoretical literary study. I attempt to use different theories to explore the social, cultural issues that are encountered in the narrative, which in turn is an expression of my lived experience. The focus of my writing was always focused on the interplay between the personal and the theoretical thinking. During the writing - thinking process, I also tried to re-position my self in the city, which constantly gave me new perspectives to read the spaces around me.

• 47 Mornington Terrace

The Building

It is located in between Camden High street and Regent's Park. It is a former-ly symmetrical terrace house; three storeys, with attic and semi-basements; yellow stock brick with rusticated stucco ground floors; slate mansard roofs and dormers. It was built in the Mid-19th Century. It has three separated flats. At least eight people and three cats live in this building at this moment.

The People

Three person and me shared one flat which includes the ground floor and the basement. It is an 'architectural' flat. We all graduated in the same architecture school in Sheffield and we all ended up in London. Three of us are working as architectural assistants; I am doing my PhD right now.

Adam comes from South England. He has lived in England since he was born. He was educated in a local school, he likes local food and local beer. He always dresses properly with a well ironed shirt and a pair of smart Ox-ford shoes, like a typical English gentleman you can easily imagine.

Helen, on the contrary, is a total nomad, like me, but much more 'nomadic.' She came to the UK from Hong Kong ten years ago. She is a 'sample' of cultural combination. She is a devout Christian who goes to the church every Sunday morning. She also celebrates every Chinese traditional holiday. She is very good at making both western style dessert and Hong Kong dim sum. She likes watching Hong Kong television programs whilst having a cup of Early Grey tea from a beautiful teacup from her vintage tea set collection.

Toby is a Welsh boy, who comes from Cardiff. He can speak two 'mother languages' (both English and Welsh). He grew up in a very traditional Welsh school, where he learned his Welsh and most of the Welsh history. He always tells us the immigration stories of his Dutch grandfather who had a great nomadic life experience. According to him, he is 'geographically local,' but 'culturally nomadic'.

I, as what I have wrote before, am a PhD student who is from China. I stud-ied architecture both in China and the UK. Two different educational and

cultural backgrounds bring me different viewpoints in spatial thought and different feelings towards cities.

Alex lives with his wife and their new-born baby boy in the flat upstairs. They have lived in this building for at least five years. To me, they are 'proper' Londoners.

There is a grey haired French lady who lives in the top-floor flat. I only met her once and no one knows anything about her.

This hundreds of years old building is a chronicle of nomadic stories, a witness of war and peace, death and new-born, heartbreak and happiness, friendship and family, hate and love.

This building is also an epitome of a whole city – surviving and growing up with this kingdom.

It is an epitome of the city.

I have discussed the fear associated with being nomadic; the source of this fear and that the idea about *home* as based on my personal feelings. According to Bradotti, being a nomad is the process of being motivated and dynamic; of doing and re-doing.[1] It doesn't have to relate to actual geographical movement. It is 'movement and mobility at the heart of thinking.'[2] In this story, I want to keep talking about nomadic theory and nomadic thoughts from both spatial and cultural points of view, based on my own and other people's experiences and backgrounds.

Nomadic experiences occur everywhere, no matter where people come from, or where they will be; no matter what identity you have (no matter whether you have none or many identities). Being nomadic is being a 'social location.'[3] We are all aliens from where we were a moment before. We are all locals who belong to this planet at this moment.[4] Braidotti progressed nomadic theory for almost twenty years, which I think is a concept that draws on social and political theory, cultural politics, gender and ethnicity studies as well as feminist theory. As an architecture student and a spatial researcher, I believe nomadic experiences play a great role in exploring the 'indeterminate' relationships between people and space (as I have suggested, the relationships between people and space are unlimited and undetermined). Being nomadic is being dynamic. It can be physically dynamic, in the sense of moving, travelling or migrating. It can also be psychologically motivated, which I consider as critical thinking.[5]

Physically moving is a way of having conversations with space. Conversations that involve mind, body and place.[6] Michel de Certeau referred to this kind of physical nomadic action (travelling) as traversing and organising place.[7] 'They select and link them together, they make sentences and itineraries out of them, they are spatial trajectories.'[8] He also described the notion of space, which can be considered as an intersection of mobile elements.[9] He stated that, 'space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalise it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities.'[10] He also differentiated space and place.

'Space is a practiced place.'[11]

He considered where we live - streets, buildings, squares and cities as places, which are designed or defined by urban planners. But those places are transformed into space by walkers, travellers or nomads. In other words, mobilities and movements bring stories, legends and life into a place and in turn make it alive. Transform it into a space.[12] With regard to this narrative, 47 Mornington Terrace, physically, is just a certain building, which is located in a certain street. People move in and move out, life comes and goes and the nomadic experiences and experiences of us, transform it into

1 See, Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti*, (New York: Columbia University Press,2011).

2 Ibid., see, Introduction.

3 Ibid., p. 13.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., See Introduction, Part I.

6 See, Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust*, (London: Verso, 2001), p. 5.

7 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (London: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 115-117.

8 Ibid., p. 115.

9 Ibid., p. 117.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

a lived space – a space that we are able to talk with; a space we are able to feel.

In my little story, I have talked about seven people who live in the same building, including nomads (like myself and Helen); a local English man and Londoners (Adam / Alex and his wife); 'geographically local,' but 'culturally nomadic;' (Toby from Wales) and 'the absolute local.' (Alex' s new-born baby) What we can tell from the story is that being nomadic or being local, geographically, is one kind of state in one period of time. Both states can be changed or exchanged under different circumstances (different times or locations). We can even be both nomadic and local at the same time. Therefore, the key point of revealing this relationship between people and space (travelling and moving in space) is not to define what is to be nomadic, or to find the so called boundary between nomadic and local, but to be creative, to be dynamic, to be critical. If being a spatial nomad is just one state in one specific time then this state will be changed eventually. But what we do, what we learn and what we have in this specific transitional state is the most important and valuable thing. Either we keep it or we pass it on into another state (another space or another time).

Therefore;

you can be an absolute local;
you can try to keep your own habits and your own character.

You can be a traveller;
you can travel from one side of this planet to another;
you can embrace new cultures, learn new languages; you may not even remember where you came from when you started your journey;
you can always be a 'new person' in different places.

You can be a normal office worker who has a 'nine-to-five job;'
you might work in a different city or country from where you were born but you go back to your 'home' town or other cities during holidays.

Or;

you can be a student in your gap year;
take a trip by yourself and make lots of friends on the road to Europe.

You can be a house wife/husband who stays at home;
you hear a story in the fish market and you tell this funny story to your children.

You can be a banker who has business trips all the time;
you know the best restaurants and bars in many cities.

It really doesn't matter where you are or who you are. 'Nomad' is not a passport, but one type of spatial and psychological experience.[13] Nomadic theory is not concerned with definitions, but is a kind of 'brain- storming.' People share spatial experiences, talk about their stories, exchange information on the road, and learn from others. People pass on memories and histories, which I personally believe is the value of being a nomad and one of the key points for further exploring the '*indeterminate*' space-people relationships.

13 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti* , (New York: Columbia University Press,2011), p. 14.

I have attempted two sets of drawings as representations of the 'Four Homes'.

One set (example drawing on the left) is a free-hand drawing with few annotations. I combined sketches, architectural layouts and texts into one illustration based on my memories of one place. When drawing, I didn't intentionally limit the style, I quickly drew whatever came to mind. If there were places where I found I couldn't express with drawing, I supplemented with words. This child-like way of drawing maximally expressed my intimate emotion and the most authentic reactions to the space. Simultaneously for both public space (the city, the street and the neighbourhood) and private space (the flat, the room).

I tried to subvert common architectural language in order to explore a visual method that delivers a sense of movements, time and experiences to its audience.
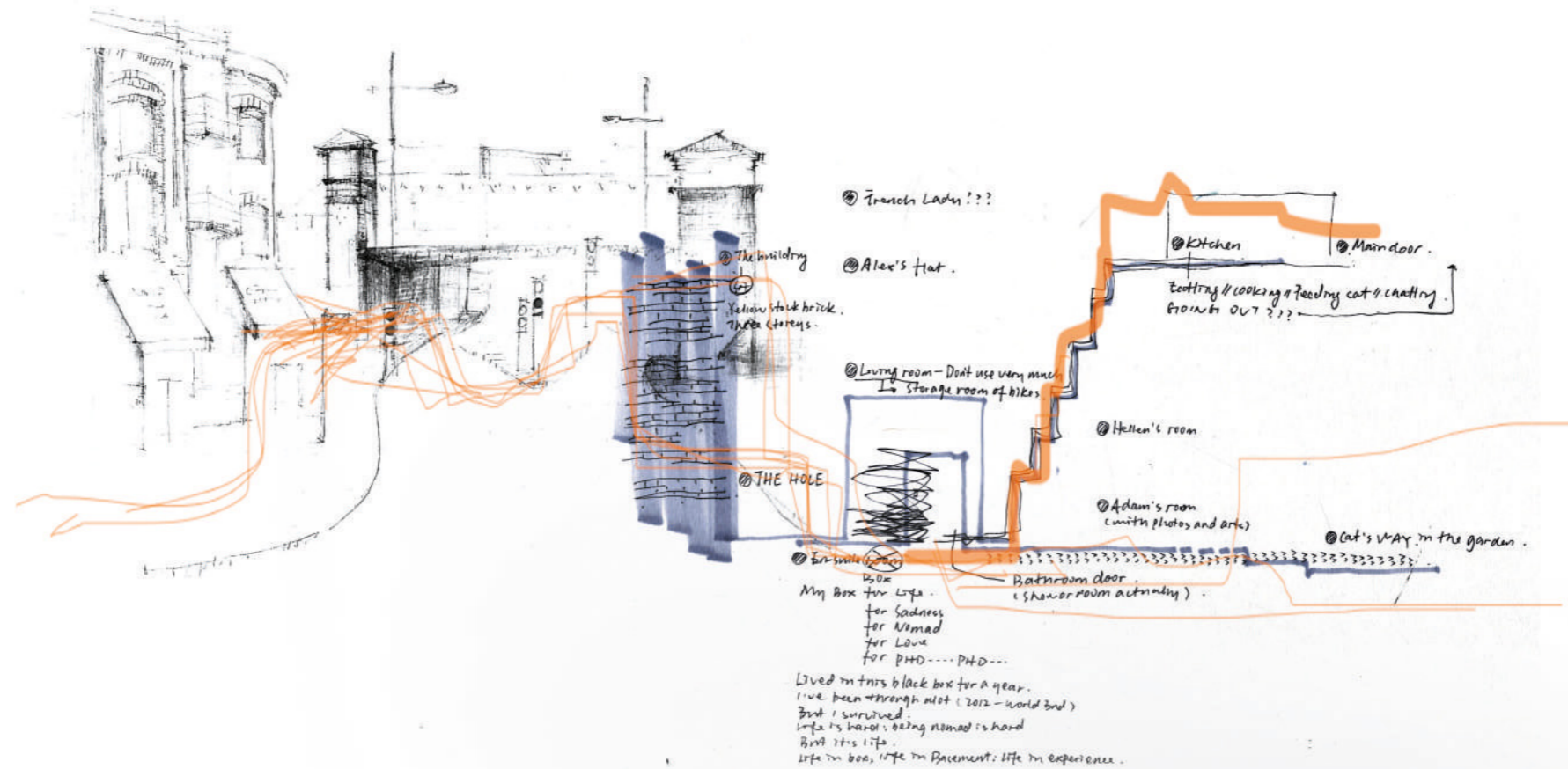
⋅⋅ **Memories of Archway**

It has been two years since I moved out, and I have never gone back there.

My memory of this place is strange. It is blurring and frag-mental, but some parts are so vivid.

Memory **1**

It is on the edge of zone two and zone three in North London;

A typical North London residential area, with not many remarkable buildings or historical events;

It is more like a transitional place (or an interchange?) in-between of Highgate, Kentish Town and Holloway Road;

There was a tall grey building on top of the tube station;

And a big tricky junction;

Surrounded by old council houses;

It is not a posh area;

It is not an interesting area;

It is officially my first 'home' in Lon-don after a few weeks of 'sofa surfing' in Convent Garden.

Memory **2**

Get out from the tube station; pass through the tricky junction (Junction Road and Holloway Road); go further south along the Holloway Road; then turn right; you will face an estate of council houses; one of them used to be my home.

Memory **3**

The park on the way from Archway junction to Highgate was beautiful. Having a walk in the park used to be my weekly activity. I remember the low winter sun shined on rolling hills as the sprawling 'Londonscape' faded away. People sat on park benches, watching the day go by while falling leaves were spiralling to the lawn in the mist.

Memory **4**

There is a very weird Irish pub right next to the crossing point where five roads meet.

Memory **5**

Across Waterlow Park, about one mile from Archway junction, there was the famous Highgate Cemetery - a beautiful, peaceful place, which was full of trees, shrubbery, flowers and stunning Victorian sculptures and architectures;

However, I have never found myself feeling peaceful in any cemeteries. It is the East Asian attitude towards death in my blood. Places like cemeteries and graveyards, to me, are usually taboo and make me constantly nervous.

Therefore, I have only been there once, to visit the grave of Karl Marx.

The building was red;

It was one of several former council houses, which stood back a little way from the street;

A tier of small front gardens sprinkled with scattered plants separated each of these houses;

Interior decoration of this house was all green, thanks to the previous Irish owner. Dark green carpet spread over this two storey house. A peppermint wallpaper adorned the walls and rainwater from the window had left many marks on the double-layered sage curtains.

The house was separated into seven rooms – one kitchen, one bathroom, an individual toilet, four bedrooms and a shower box, which probably had the most bizarre layout I had ever seen.

My bedroom and kitchen were on the ground floor, the rest of the rooms stayed upstairs.

In fact, my bedroom used to be the living room. Opposite the door was a window-wall with white plastic frame. The other side of the room was an old fireplace, surrounded by a mantelpiece of imitation forest-green marble. Showy chandeliers coated by dust were hanging on the ceiling. Outside of the window was an empty back garden with grey flag paving. The garden was bounded by a red brick wall with a wooden grid on the top.

I don't have too many memories of the space upstairs apart from the bathroom. The bathroom was always full of steam; the wall was blotched in places with mildew. Some paint had become detached and hung down and the light was hazy.

Memory **7**   The winter in Archway was extremely cold.

wooden
wall
for the
garden.

a strange box
on the garden.

@ CAT

living room
my room (sofa)
Very dark room on ground floor
a door to the garden
(no one using the garden)

@ Toilet
strange place

@ Friend's room
@ Friend's room
@ Landlord's room

@ kitchen — i don't like the kitchen
Small fridge;
Oven doesn't work;
but good to have a dish wash;

@ door to outside
and upstairs ??
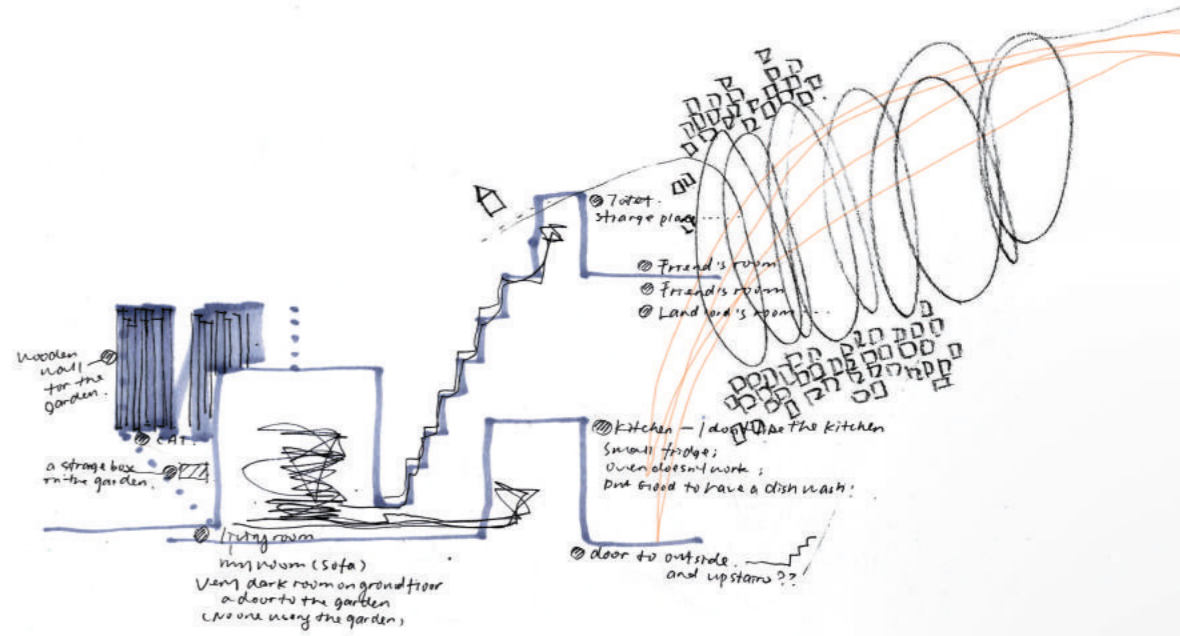
I lived here only for few months (one and half?)
This is a typical council house surrounding by other houses.
hard to remember and hard to like it.

'We have an innate capacity for remembering and imagining places. Perception, memory and imagination are in constant interaction; the domain of presence fuses into images of memory and fantasy.'[1]

'The city is redundant: it repeats itself so that something will stick in the mind. [...]
Memory is redundant: it repeats signs so that the city can begin to exist.'[2]

'As this wave of memories flows in, the city soaks it up like a sponge and expands…The city, however does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lighting roads, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls.'[3]

'They're memories that have been prompted, things I'd forgotten that I will make reappear, an anamnesis.'[4]

'The city does not consist of this, but of relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past.'[5]

'I remember, a disguised autobiography in actual fact but organised around micro-memories…it attempts to recover elements that form part of the texture of everyday life and that it may well be you didn't notice.'[6]

'A nomad, nonlinear philosophy of time as a zigzagging line of internally fractured coalitions of dynamic subject-in-becoming support a very creative reading of memory and its close relationship to the imagination.'[7]

1 Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses,* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), p. 67.

2 Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (London: Vintage, 1997), p. 9

3 Ibid., p.16.

4 Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces, trans. John Sturrock* (London: Penguin Books,1997), p. 127.

5 Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (London: Vintage, 1997), p. 9.

6 Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces, trans. John Sturrock* (London: Penguin Books,1997), p. 127.

7 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti* , (New York: Columbia University Press,2011), p. 31.

··· One Day in Covent Garden

I had visited London a couple of times before I officially lived in Covent Garden. But this time was different – I had to find my own way to live. If anyone asked me about my favourite parts in London, I would name Covent Garden as one of them for sure. It is a very busy area of London – full of people; bars, restaurants and shops. Although people may think this former flower and vegetable market is too commercial or too touristy on some level, I still adore this place, as it was a milestone in my nomad life.

I woke up in the morning in a fabric brown sofa. I tried to look outside of the only window in the living room. It was hard to tell what the weather was like. I could barely see any sky since this flat (this building) was closely surrounded by other Victorian buildings.

As it started getting noisy outside, I walked out of the building. The entrance of this building was well hidden in a back alleyway behind all the commercial buildings. No front garden, not any sign, just a door.

The smell of coffee wafted through the whole street; working people rushed out from cafes and disappeared into the tube station quickly. I sat on a bench, felt shafts of sunlight through gaps in the narrow streetscape. After the morning rush, the streets went quiet for a while. As the tourists entered, shops and restaurants opened one by one. A day in Covent Garden seemed to officially begin.

Tourists and shoppers normally occupied this area throughout most of the daytime. When night fell, bars and pubs started getting busy, visitors wandered on the street, took photos of buskers and office workers were having after-work drinks in the pub. As retailers were dealing with the last group of customers, the queues in front of the restaurants were growing. I walked down the street and enjoyed the most colourful moment in the day. It is exactly why I like Covent Garden – the place has so many characters. These characters brought people with varying experiences to the place, including people like me.

I kept walking around.

As the day was about to end, tourists had already faded away, professionals began to leave bars, and buskers were ready for their last song. The area welcomed its new occupants – young boys and girls. They always dressed fashionably, chatted and laughed loudly. Streets got dark as restaurants and bars switched off their lights. The smell of alcohol replaced smells of food. Regions, rules, genders, skin colours and occupation were all blurring at this moment, in this place. It didn't matter where you came from, what language were you speaking or what you did in daytime; mid-night in Covent Garden was extremely free and sexy.

I walked back to the building. Unlike other places I have lived in London, this was the only place that I didn't know by its building name, or house number or even postcode. Memory was the only tool for navigation.

To most people, Covent Garden was not the perfect place to live. Lack of privacy, too much noise from the street and no green life. However, this place was strangely cosy for my international nomad flatmates and me.

I couldn't help thinking the awkward feeling haunted me and lessened my sense of belonging or feeling of 'me in this city.' For sure, I had more local experiences than normal tourists, but I was certainly not a native. Certain atmospheres or certain environments sometimes reminded me of the city where I grew up. However I could not remember what my 'hometown' truly looked like. I used the phrase 'to go home' so often, yet I didn't really know where home was.

However, this feeling didn't exist when I was in Covent Garden. Getting lost in the crowd, in different music, in different smells of food, with these different characters, I didn't have to worry about being labelled. I felt totally embodied in space, comfortable with those various identities.

I went back to the flat, shut the door and the day.

I knew tomorrow would come.

'our research has concentrated above all on the uses of space, on the ways of frequenting dwelling in a place, on the complex processes of the art of cooking, and on the many ways of establishing a kind of reliability within the situation imposed on an individual, that is, of making it possible to live in them by reintroducing into them the plural mobility of goals and desires - an art of manipulating and enjoying.'[1]

Michel de Certeau considered everyday life as a battlefield for resisting dominant powerful force.[2] He focused on the resistance from 'ordinary people;'[3] and conceived of reversing the control of power from 'strong' to 'weak,' to ordinary people. Everyday life, the operation of everyday life and everyday practice are his 'tactics.'[4]

In my interpretation, he used the term 'strategy' and 'tactic'[5] as metaphors for discussing two sides of social structures. The force-relationships (the strong side), who can be isolated from an environment. They are limited by the 'proper.'[6] The strong side classify, divide and regulate space by using 'strategy.'[7] As de Certeau mentioned, 'political, economic, and scientific rationality has been constructed on this strategy model.'[8] On the other hand, the weak side (ordinary people), who don't represent the 'proper,' can use everyday practices as their 'tactics' to create opportunities in all kinds of strategic models; intervening and breaking down the dominant power system, re-making connections with the city or creating new space.[9] Further, de Certeau suggested such ways of undertaking everyday practice. One is ordinary language and everyday culture; another is walking.[10]

His understanding of these two sides in a social structure, and analysis of everyday practice, immediately make me think of my personal situation. As a nomad, as a woman, I think I might be a suitable representative of the 'weak side' in this context. In the above stories, I have talked about thinking critically, adjusting myself in a mobile situation and of experiencing the city rather than trapping myself in it. Michel de Certeau encouraged and indicated ways of fighting for the 'weak side' (especially people like nomads, women, immigrants, outsiders, etc.) and of confronting the dominant power. In my understanding of de Certeau's words. As the 'weak side,' we don't have our place, 'the proper place.'[11] However, everyday practices allow us to cleverly convert others' places into our own space,[12] which offers privileges for me in urban space and turns my fixed position as 'weak' into multiple subject-positions. (Obviously, compared to many, I am very privileged. For instance, I have the means to travel relatively freely.) That is to say, my positions alter with time; sometimes I am on the weak side, sometimes I am on the powerful side; and I believe we all have multiple subject-positions and they intersect differently.

As a foreigner, I don't have political rights in this country. I cannot vote, or participate in the jury. As a traveller, I have to bear the fatigue of moving

and the mood swings of separation. As a woman, I have some physical limitations… However, when I actually live here, when I wake up in the morning, when I walk in every street, when the postman knocks on my front door, when I grab a takeaway box in the middle of the night or when I know I can still catch the last bus home; I know the city is mine. The city is big, it may never fully belong to me, but I always find my secret path, I have an intimate conversation with it in everyday life.

Michel de Certeau also analysed different perspectives of looking at urban space. Namely from above and from the ground.[13] When we look at the city from above, from an angle that has broken connection with daily behaviours, what we see is 'transformed into a texturology in which extremes coincide - extremes of ambition and degradation, brutal oppositions of races and styles, […] and today's urban irruptions that block out its space.'[14] What we see is a 'theoretical or visual simulacrum.'[15] Producing this simulacrum is actually, the most common mistakes that architects, urban designers or urbanists may make. The actual practitioners in the city are on the ground.[16] The way they use urban space is hard to observe, they make myriad, individual coded connections with the city. Therefore, an approach is demanded for disconnecting their connections. An approach that is on the ground, away from totalised theoretical or visual simulacrum, which is, to de Certeau, 'another spatiality, an anthropological poetic experience of space.'[17] In my opinion, this is an important step in understanding the everyday-life re-reading of urban practices.

1 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (London: University of California Press, 1984), p. xix.

2 Ibid., p. xxii.

3 Ibid., p. xix.

4 Ibid., Part I, Part III.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., p. xix.

9 Ibid., See, part III.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 See, Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (London: University of Caliwfornia Press, 1984), pp, 91-93.

14 Ibid., p. 91.

15 Ibid., p, 93.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

Friend's room.

Pierre's room   Bathroom
Good size and very bright.
BUT...
NO PRIVACY!

Kitchen
cooking. chatting
place for communication

Back street behind the flat
and Main entrance

Sofa (my bed)
nice French food! and my stuffs.

I lived there only for few weeks.
I can't really remember the place (spatially)
but the love and friendship.
The place was the first place I lived in London (apart from Hotels)

Holborn
covent Garden
Leicester square
Euston // Russell square
and...

Little London   First London

??? (At was in Sheffield... -

· · · · **Flat near Docklands**

The reason that I choose to live in this flat, near Canary Wharf, is because this kind of new-build city apartment and all the modern tall buildings remind me of Chongqing, where I grew up. The surroundings make me feel comfortable. The reason that my husband likes this flat is because the 'Docklands' landscape reminds him of Cardiff bay, where he grew up.

The Area

Canary Wharf is an interesting place. I remember the first time I was here. I got out from the tube station and I was surrounded by modern high-rise buildings; reflections of sunshine from glass curtain walls; squares between buildings with fine-picked finish granite paving; well-decorated bars, restaurants and cafes along with waterfronts and the fast walking people coming out from clean turnstiles...

It reminded me of China immediately.

Actually, the whole Canary Wharf development was built on the site called West India Docks, which was one of the busiest docks in the world two hundreds years ago. In the 19th century, West India Dock was used to import cargo from other countries, especially importing tea from China.[1] Maybe there was some special link between this place and me, even before I moved here. I like this place, for nothing but the feelings of China.

> 'I like my town, but I can't say exactly what I like about it. I don't think it's the smell. I'm too accustomed to the monuments to want to look at them. I like certain lights, a few bridges, café terraces. I love passing through a place I haven't seen for a long time.'[2]

Space is always a mystery. Sometimes it does matter if the place is well designed, planned, or if the area is considered safe or whether the transport is fast enough to commute. Sometimes these things do not matter at all. I do believe that is the beauty of space, of the intimate but always unknown and evolving relationship between space and people. As time passes, the relationship may change quickly, or may steadily remain. I work on it, work really hard to reveal the secrets in space and the connections in between space and myself; but it will never end.

1 '...the arrival of the Steamship Loudoun Castle at the London Dock after a record breaking maiden voyage carrying tea from Hankow in China, In the fore- ground Chinese sailors are helping to break the cargo...' See, Museum of London Docklands, [accessed 2014, 2015] http://www. museumoflondon.org.uk/ docklands/

2 Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 63.

'Space is a doubt: I have constantly to mark it, to designate it. It's never mine, never given to me, I have to conquer it.'[3]

The Docklands and Water

I grew up in the city with two rivers; one is the longest river in Asia. My mother always says only water can bring the 'spirit' to the city, because she believes this 'continuous flow' of water is like a repeating cycle of life – Born, Dead, Reborn, which can be called 'Samsara.'[4] This 'repeating cycle' is not just an idea in a religious or a philosophical text, but happens in any continuous biological system.

Rain falling down to the ground…
soil absorbing rain water…
plants growing in the soil, freshening the air…
water in the air gathering together…
rain falling down to the ground…

This on-going, sustainable biological system is also one of the key points in understanding the urban structure in Feng Shui.[5] My mother is neither religious nor geomancer; she is just an ordinarily dweller who stays in the city next to the water. But her words have affected me. That is why I like living near the Docklands.

There are two types of waterscapes in this zone. One is the redeveloped Docklands; the other is the river Thames. Most of the docks in the Isle of Dogs have been rebuilt from old freight docks.[6] They used to be the centre of one place and they are still the centres of those places now, only for different purposes.

The Thames is the Thames.

They exist as urban features. They exist as a spiritual backbone.

The Street and Road

There are eleven CCTV cameras on a single street (about 50 meters long) behind my apartment.
I find out that I have to dress properly to buy milk in the Tesco around the corner since everyone walking on the street is wearing either a suit or high heels.
There are barely any big trees on the street, but there are grasses and flowers. The roads are not just horizontal, but also vertical; The city is layered.

'…the street is what enables us to identify the houses.' [7]

Street is boundary, also a link.[8] It is the boundary between different types of places. It separates buildings and separates public and private. It is the link between the extension of certain places. The street is a miniature representation of one big area. We can find out if the place is safe or dangerous, old or new or fancy or shabby by exploring streets.

Street is an inventory; an inventory of culture, religion, history and life.[9] Maybe you don't have a home in the city. But you still have the street. 'Contrary to the buildings, which almost always belong to someone, the streets in principle belong to no one.'[10] A street is defining place; meanwhile, it is connecting with another street. It either passes on or rejects the identity of another place.[11] Exploring 'street', to me, is always the first step in carrying out spatial research.

'You must set about it more slowly…
The street, try to describe the street, what it's made of, what is it used for.
The people in the street. The cars…
The fashion is for heels that are too high…
Decipher a bit of the town. Its circuits: why do the buses go from this place to that? Who chooses the routes, and by what criteria?…
The people in the street: where are they coming from? Where are they going? Who are they?'[12]

The Building and Neighbours

The building is a five storey, new-build apartment block with Juliette balconies and CCTV surveillance. It has the most ordinary city apartment layout and finishes. Carpet floor, lift directly into ground floor car park, the same-looking doors with only numbers on them. The only thing that caught my attention was the wall near building main entrance. A wall that is full of security notices and flyers from the Metropolitan Police, which I have never seen in other places that I have lived.

It is a very quite building. Actually I am pretty sure each flat in this building is inhabited by people, but I just don't see them. I cannot help myself thinking of the house in Camden (47 Mornington Terrace). I remember the French Lady's grey hair, I remember the noise of Camden Council garbage truck, the crying from Alex's baby boy and shouting from people in the pub around corner.

It is hard to keep the balance between privacy and isolation. What is neighbourhood? What is a good neighbourhood?

3 Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 91.

4 Samsara is the repeating cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth (reincarnation) within Hinduism, Buddhism, Bön, Jainism, Yoga and Taoism. The Buddha taught that there is no beginning or end to this cycle. The concept of samsara is closely associated with the belief that one continues to be born and reborn in various realms in the form of a human, animal, or other being. [accessed 2014] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samsara

5 This concept is commonly found in '周易' (*The I Ching*), also known as *The Book of Change*. circa 1045 -771 BC.

6 See, Museum of London Docklands, [accessed 2014, 2015] http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/docklands/

7 Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 46.

8 Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, trans. John Sturrock (London: Penguin Books, 1997), pp. 46-47.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., p. 47.

11 Ibid., p. 46.

12 Ibid., pp. 50-52.

I have some neighbours in each place that I have lived, but 'it is true that in recent years I have changed neighbourhood quite a few times; I haven't had time to get properly used to one.'[13] What really is the meaning of 'neighbourhood' for people like me, who move all the time?

The Flat and Living room

A living room with three floor-to-ceiling glass windows makes me very happy. I see the top of towers in Canary Wharf financial centre from my window. I see the mailman coming and going everyday from my window. I see the Docklands Light Railway disappearing in the space between the apartment buildings opposite. I see the sun and the outside world.

I like this bright living room so much that I spend most of my 24 hour day in this room. Reading books, writing, drawing, eating, watching movies, staring outside of the window and so on. My bedroom is becoming a closet and a changing room. As I have said, I like the big windows, I pile up all my books along the wall, I decorate the room with my drawings and photos; I put my plant on the Juliette balcony and watch it grow.

The Table

I brought the table (dinning table) from a second-hand furniture shop in Sheffield. It has moved around the country with me several times; it is a varnished ellipse board with four Queen Anne's legs. Now, it is in the living room, facing the window, next to my book piles. I always keep the room clean and tidy, but not my table… and no one is allowed to touch anything on my table.

13 Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces,* trans. John Sturrock, (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 58.

This is another 'self portrait' as the table on which I was writing at the time.

In fact, this table is still in my back shed, my story continues, the story of this table also continues.

(The drawing on the left has been updated in June, 2023)

'*The table is Yoyo's spaceship of PhD,*' says Toby.

West St

Archway

Cadem Town

Westferry

Petts Wood

P.S.

It has been two years since I moved into this flat.

I am still living here. In the past two years, things have changed a lot. I have a much deeper under-standing of myself and this area through experiences of living here.

As I have known, there is quite a lot of contention about the Canary Wharf developments. Voices like Anna Minton in 'Ground Control.'1 She pointed out the change to the Isle of Dogs, which was known as the 'urban regener-ation' plan. It altered the old wharfs to become a fancy financial centre. But she doubted the process of 'urban re-generation.' 2 New urbanism, such as luxury shopping malls and well secured squares between skyscrapers are not really for local people who lived in the Docklands before the Canary Wharf development. The area was physically transformed. However, according to Minton, new development did not really address the concerns of local community, but rather created a huge gap between original locals and newly rich people.3 My flat is located on the boundary between the Canary Wharf estate to the South East and the rest of the city, Poplar to the North. On the boundary between the radically gentrified and the rougher, more authen-tic local community. Sometimes, I do see the gap between locals and rich bankers and I did witness some of the social problems that are caused by the complex and contentious gap.

But those 'gaps' have not effected my emotional connections with this flat. Eight family members of mine (from all over the world) have visited me in this flat during these two years; I registered my marriage in the local council; and I am about to complete my PhD here. Such subjective emotional experi-ences of living in Docklands, on some level, make me less sensitised to some political issues related to this area, or even to the city.

I understand as an spatial researcher, I should note the limits of my study. It is not a political critique that attempts to analyse the history of development in the area. Rather, I am attempting to know this place through my own di-rect experience; through the presence of my body in this place; to experience the space from '*within*.' My own subject positions offer a unique perspective of the area as I find it. I convey my experience of this place as it stands now, at the present, and reflect on why I am drawn to this area and how I expe-rience it. Maybe that is the ways in which it reminds me of China - being by the river, large scale developments of new skyscrapers and the scale of the streets and roads that feel windswept.

1 See, Anna Minton, *Ground Control: Fear and happiness in the twenty- first-century city*, (London: Penguin, 2012).

2 Ibid., xiv.

3 Ibid., Part One: The City.
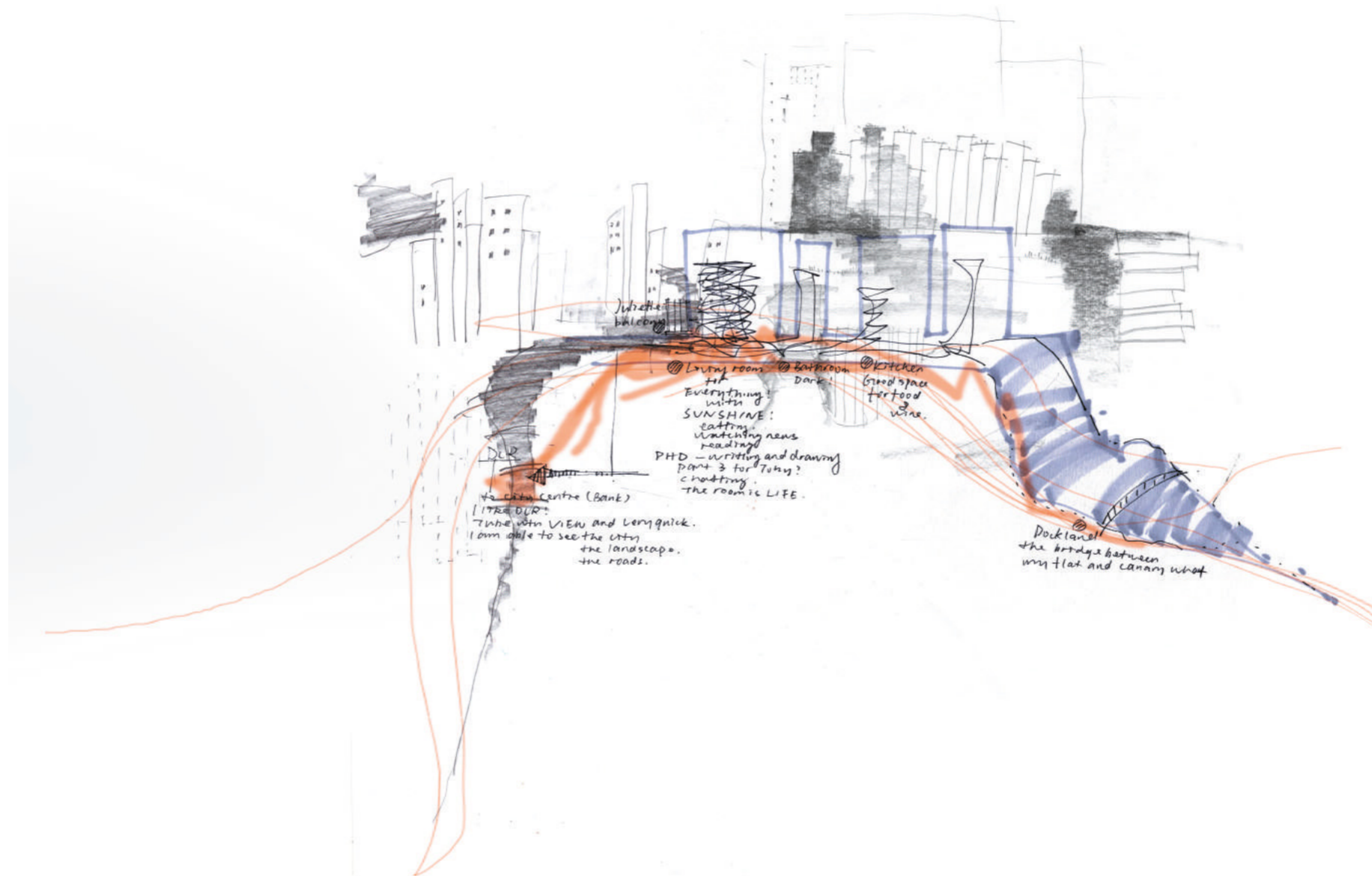
living room | bathroom | kitchen
top | Dark! | Good space
Everything with | | for food
SUNSHINE: | | & wine.
eating.
watching news
reading.
PHD — writing and drawing
part 3 for Tuby?
chatting.
the room is LIFE.

Whether
balcony.

DLR

to city centre (Bank)
I TAKE DLR!
Three with VIEW and very quick.
I am able to see the city
the landscape.
the roads.

Docklands
the bridge between
my flat and canary wharf

Occupy London 1

'Occupy London 1 and 2' are my reflective stories of London, the city where I have lived for many years. It also tells the story of my participation in politically related activities / protest in London. As a Chinese person, avoiding political activities is a most basic and instinctive default setting, so I didn't have the courage to tie my study with any political issues for a long time.

This experience, the thinking pattern I used to have are also a 'found object', which plays a very important role in my current philosophical studies and future research.

In this story, I re-examined my thoughts on spatial research and spatial design and the method of using memory to bridge the living body, the surrounding environment and time (past, now and the future).

On 15th October 2011, an on-going protest / demonstration against economic inequality was happening in London. Collectively known as '*Occupy London*.'[1] Protesters had established two encampments in central London. One outside St. Paul's Cathedral in the City of London and the other in Finsbury Square in the North of the City.[2]

On 17th November 2011, an architectural student studio, '*Representation of Civil Society*' from the University of Sheffield, participated in a workshop, '*Re-imagining the City*,' with one group of the protest group. Activities included an afternoon of walking, exploring, playing and mapping the City of London. It was such a lovely afternoon, a great opportunity for me to get outside since I had been trapped in work for months. In fact, the protest site was only 15 minutes walk away from where I worked at the time; in front of west entrance to St. Paul's Cathedral. Protestors occupied half of the square and the whole street towards St. Paul's tube station. Our tour started in one of the tents. We walked around St. Paul's Cathedral, then on towards Bank, the actual 'City of London.' Protestors walked through this urban area and in front of a 'private' building and had a protest picnic. Later on, the protestors and students split into a few small groups. I followed one of the student groups, who kept rambling in Bank and then back to St Paul's high street where the walk ended.

To be honest, all my memories of this tour with the students and the process of this protest were quite blurred. I remembered the people were crowded and loud, the sun was a bit dazzling. I was exhausted when I arrived at the site after 4 hours non-stop working in the office,[3] dealing with drawing programs such as AutoCAD and SketchUP. However, after we started our tour, walked past all the protestors and the tents and went across the roundabout behind tube station; energy magically and strangely filled up my body. I saw yellow leaves fall down to the ground; which had been 'ironed' onto the road surface. The image was like a self-portrait of autumn London. Coffee cups were left below the roadside bench, secretly telling urban anecdotes to the next user. The wind mixed with the taste of Thames, particularly noticeable at this time every year. I felt like I was breathing again, breathing in this city, in this moment, in this space.

To me, the value of this '*Occupy London*' trip was not to do with either the 'protest' picnic, or debating the impacts of capitalism on the current urban environment.[4] Maybe unlike other protestors, my understanding was not deep enough to reach any political or economical conclusions at that time. (Personal cultural background may also be part of the reason)

From September 2011 to January 2012, I took four months internship as a urban designer in one of the biggest architecture practices in London. The purpose of this internship was to look at the current architecture and urban planning field from the perspective of a practitioner; and to develop the role that I had been playing in this city from a student to a professional. I was hoping to allow myself to embrace the parallel experience of professional practice and spatial research; to know architecture and urban space from different aspects; perhaps to find the gaps between my work in spatial design and spatial research. The experience was interesting. Although the understanding of urban space, the spatial research methods, spatial and sociological theories, even the architecture education systems are different in China and the UK; ways of undertaking architecture and urban design in practice seem 'globally harmonised.' I believe that the city is now gradually becoming 'form or representation,'[5] a collection of object buildings, equivalents of models, schematics, drawings and projections. I was a little shocked by how much power architects and urban designers could have in transforming the city and the way they seemed to consider development of the city as a production line. During that time, I worked so hard in this practice, from the moment I squeezed myself into the tube until the moment I dragged my tired body back home, that I barely had a moment to actually experience the city. I worked on projects located in places I had never been and made site drawings derived from 'Google street-view.' I did not know whether other architects in other practices worked in the same way. But I do know I quit my job one month after the '*Occupy London*' trip.

Perhaps it is time for me to think about how to live as a person who has the ability to design urban space, who plays a role in developing the city, or maybe just as an ordinary person. Stop; turn around; look back; start over again. After all, it is Us, who actually live in this city and are the real occupiers.[6]

1 In the words of those involved, ordinary people and communities around the world are being devastated by a crisis we did not cause. Our political elites have chosen to protect corporations, financial institutions and the rich at the expense of the majority. 'Occupy London' is part of a global movement that has brought together concerned citizens to fight for a new political and economic system that puts people, democracy and the environment before profit. [accessed 2013]http://occupy-london.org.uk/about-2/

2 Ibid.

3 where I had my internship in an architecture practice.

4 [accessed 2013]http://occupy-london.org.uk/about-2/

5 '…the city is not the product of planners and architects. While urban professionals such as planners and architects might believe themselves to be in turn democratic negotiators, community advocators, neutral social scientists, exponents of the beautiful, and masterful shapers of space, …Too often, architecture is designed (and consequently comprehended) as a purely aesthetic or intellectual activity, ignoring social relations and rendering'
See, Iain, Borden, Joe, Kerr, Jane, Rendell and Alicia, Pivaro, *The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002), pp, 4,5.

6 'The City of London is the most popular hub of this country and the world…This is a good place to explore other possibilities in these spaces and always look for ways of reclaiming these spaces… we will explore and create public space in the city for all to enjoy – a lovely picnic, games of twister, spoken word performances, music, and much more. Bring your imagination, enthusiasm back to city!'
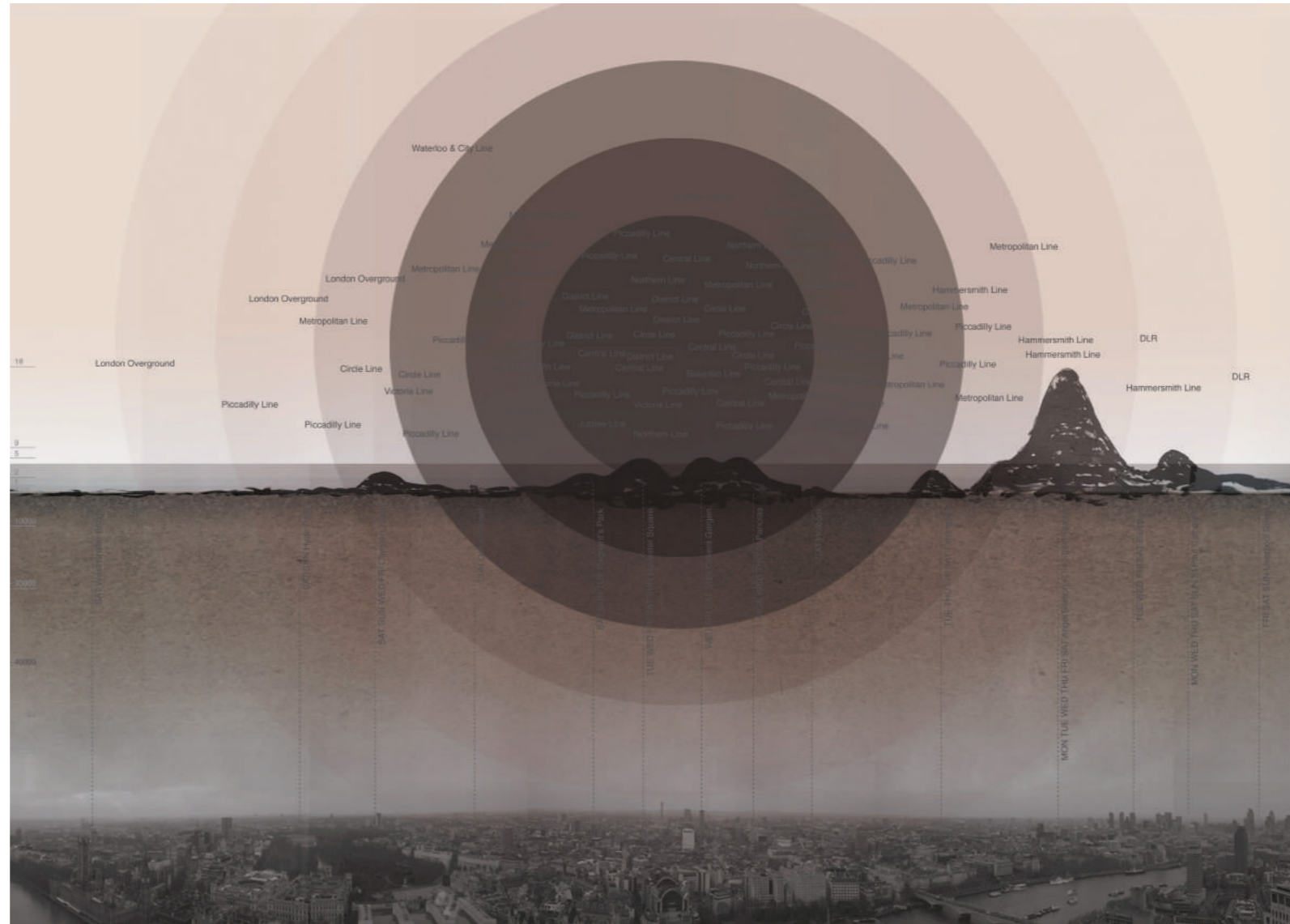– 'Occupy London' protestor.

Over two months I recorded my allocation of time between working and relaxing; all my routes and spots where I stayed through the whole city.

At the bottom of my mapping drawing, is 'London panorama.' (On one 'called off working' Friday, a series of 'great' London panorama photos were taken from the London eye. The city melt with air and sky. I put London panorama on the bottom of the image, which is presented in a gloomy and repressive colour.

My intention with this 'upside down' image is to raise the question of whether we should consider 'Life in the City' or 'City in the Life?' On the top of my drawing, I used the similar 'not so clean' colour to express how people's life was stolen by transportation, mainly by the tube.

City is divided, into transport, work, and ?

Occupy London 2

This piece of writing has nothing to do with the '*Occupy London*' protest, but is a retrospective of my life journey in London, my way of 'occupying' the city.

My very first impressions of London were from a green paperback children's book in Chinese translation, '*Oliver Twist*.' I can barely remember the story or the names of characters, but the 'images' have stayed in my mind for almost 20 years – gas lamp light streamed across the damp mist; streets covered with pools of water and mire; muddy stagecoaches rattling briskly by; thick steam from the chimney mixed with the fog hanging heavily above the city… In Mandarin, the book '*Oliver Twist*' is named 'orphan in the city of fog.' Maybe this translation represents most Chinese people's first impression of London, including my own, before I came to the UK.

The first visit to London was a University of Sheffield Architecture School studio trip for one of the school's Live Projects[1] (about 2 months after I arrived UK). Because of some train ticket issue, I arrived in London one day later than the studio crew. Before I arrived, I had received a very long message from the studio group: "when you get out of the train, DO NOT go outside, the tube station is linked with the train station; you need to find the tube entrance for the 'Metropolitan line, Circle Line, Hammersmith & the City line.' Take the 'METROPOLITAN LINE,' but make sure you get on the right side, which is towards Uxbridge. Once you are on the Metropolitan Line, get off at BAKER STREET. Then you need to find the BAKERLOO LINE. Take the Bakerloo line towards 'Harrow.' Get off at WILLESDEN JUNCTION. Once you get out at Willesden Junction, DO NOT MOVE, give us a call; we will meet you there." This detailed, thoughtful message made me feel slightly nervous, however it aided me in directly reaching the project site. After I officially moved to London, my movements basically relied on the underground. Instead of feeling nervous like the first visit, the London tube became the safest and fastest travel companion to me. However, this 'tube addiction' disconnected me and my understanding of the city. The scales of different areas, the distances between places, the orientations were twisted whilst travelling 50 meters under the ground.

1 Student led projects with real world clients. [accessed 2015] http://www.liveprojects.org

Gradually, I came back to the habit of walking, like I always did in Sheffield. Compared to Sheffield, London is a much more walkable city (not so many hills and close to the river), especially in the summer and autumn. I like the hot summer, as it is the typical weather in the subtropical city where I was born. I also like to feel the coming of the winter, feel the coming of the cold, which normally calms me down and clears my mind. Also, knowing the fact that winter arrives is to know that the year is about to end, which is slightly sad, but extremely real. Walking in the city revealed parts of the 'real images' of London to me. I no longer took the tube from Covent Garden to Leicester Square; I got to know more details of the streets, squares and parks; I had an deeper understanding of the history of the city through the blue plaques occasionally found attached to the front doors. I knew more about 'the London Style' by seeing various looks of pedestrians. Unlike the faded memories of getting in and out of the tube station, most memories of walking in the city are preserved.

It was a late summer afternoon, an evening, to be more precise; one night before my holiday travelling back to China. It was a cosy evening with gorgeous sunset glow. Toby and I were rambling near Bank, whilst chatting about his job and my research. Our trip started from Rosebery Avenue. We rambled passed the crowded Clerkenwell, the "architecture practices' base," and slowly approached the riverside. In order to get to know the city better, we took some previously undiscovered alleyways and some underpasses instead of the main street. The little adventure was surprisingly interesting, but shorter than I expected. Finally, when the Baroque façade of St. Paul's Cathedral caught my eyes, I knew we were close to the end of this little trip.

The air was getting chilly, the sunset glow faded away, but left a hint of crepuscular rays in the sky.

'Do you know the word Dérive?'* Toby asked;
'No, I don't.'
'I think we just did one.'

In the same summer, I finally passed the UK driving test; and started my experimentation with driving in London. The traffic in London is terrible, as it is in most of the world metropolises. The memory of driving in London is unique, a 'déjà vu.' Driving is indeed powerful and unfolds many more images of London to me. It completely changes the scale of the city, offers more opportunities of knowing and making connections in space. But the strange thing is, no matter how the scale of my movement changes, my feelings of different parts of the city are almost the same and are still based on the feeling I had when I walked rather than drove. I still trust my senses when my body is actually touching the ground. Just as I still have no idea about the West of London, no matter how many times I have driven through. I have never lived there, walked there or felt there.

Now, I am sitting at my table, my 'PhD spaceship;' trying to recall my life in London, my journey of actually 'occupying London.' My memories** and the images of the city are by no means linear; they are tangled, overlapped and twisted. It is a very emotional process. I realise that the city has brought me a lot, in fact, much more than I imaged or expected. I learned how to drive here; I got married here; I heard the news of losing my beloved family member here; I had the first official job here; I panicked, feared many times here; I also received lots of love, support and was given courage in the process of finding *home*, more importantly, finding myself here.

I have spent more than four years exploring the relationship between the city and me. I thought if I could find an answer, or some answers, I would improve the city on some level, as an architectural student. It turned out, it is the city, which has improved me during the whole process.

* Dérive: 'An experimental mode of behaviour linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique for hastily passing through varied environments. Also used, more particularly, to designate the duration of a prolonged exercise of such an experiment.'[1]

It is one of the basic situationist practices.[2]

It involves 'specific effects of the geographical environment (whether consciously organized or not) on the emotions and behaviour of individuals.'[3]

'The sudden change of ambiance in a street within the space of a few meters; the evident division of a city into zones of distinct psychic atmospheres; the path of least resistance that is automatically followed in aimless strolls (and which has no relation to the physical contour of the terrain); the appealing or repelling character of certain places — these phenomena all seem to be neglected. In any case they are never envisaged as depending on causes that can be uncovered by careful analysis and turned to account.'[4]

** I have discussed the relationship between people, space and time in 'One - Space, Us, Time.' They are conceptually connected: Space, time, and things are conceptually connected: space and time are understood to frame and contextualise the thing, they serve as its background, and they are, as it were, deposited by or inhere in things and processes'[5] I interpret 'the thing' as the living body.[6] According to Grosz, the thing is 'the result of our action. [...] the thing functions as fundamental provocation, as that which, in the virtuality of the past and the immediacy of the present cannot be ignored, it also functions as a promise, as that which, in the future, in retrospect, yields a destination or effect, another thing.'[7] In my understanding, 'the thing' exists because we think and act(ed) on its past, its present and its future. That is to say, the past, or memory, matters in bringing into existence the experiences of the city.

Grosz's understanding of memory has 'to retain and protract itself, to stretch itself so that it can be conceived in terms of a continuity between past, present, and future…'[8] In her theory, time is divided into two ways: 'one virtual, the other actual, one which makes the present pass, and the other which preserves it as past. One forms perception, the other memory'[8] The 'preserved past' is memory.[9] According to Grosz, memory, as a construction of mind, events and processes,[10] preserves the past, but it is not the complete past. It is part of the history.[11] More importantly, she argued, 'If memory directs me to the past and to duration, then it is linked not only to my body and its experiences but to the broad web of connections in

which my body is located.'[12] In other words, memory is not just constructed by mind and events, but also, by space. In my understanding, that is to say, memories are experiences of people in space(s), which are preserved in the past. If memory is indeed connected with mind, events and space, then of course it is subjective. 'Memory is the present's mode of access to the past. The past is preserved in time, while the memory image, one of its elements, can be selected according to present interests.'[13]

The fact is, whenever I draw, map or write about my subjective nomadic experiences of urban space, the nomadic legends in urban space, to me, are primarily preserved in the past. My nomadic subjectivity(ies) is always in memory. No matter whether it is in a short-term memory, or in a long-term memory. On the other hand, because it is in memory, in the past, it is subjective (connected with mind). Of course, the way of experiencing urban space, the subjectivity, (for other people or for me in the future) is not only frozen in the past; but also take place in the present and can effect the future. To Grosz, 'the present is not purely in itself, self-contained; it straddles both past and present, requiring the past as its precondition, while being oriented toward the immediate future.'[14]

1 See, *The Situationist International and the Theory of the Derive,* [accessed 2014] http://fog.ccsf.edu/~dcox/EMU/S.l.html

2 See, Guy Debord, *Theory of the Dérive.* trans. Knabb, Ken. (Paris, November, 1956). [accessed 2015] http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/2.derive.htm

3 See, Guy Debord, *Definitions. Internationale Situationniste #1,* trans. by Ken Knabb, (Paris, June 1958). [accessed 2015] http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/is1.html

4 See, Guy Debord, '*Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography. Les Lèvres Nues #6*', trans. by Ken Knabb, (Paris, September 1955).

5 Elizabeth Grosz, *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power* (NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005), p. 134.

6 See, 'One.'

7 Elizabeth Grosz, *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power,* (NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005), p. 132.

8 Ibid., p. 3.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., p. 96.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Elizabeth Grosz, *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power,* (NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005), p. 103.

14 Ibid., p. 102.

This is an simple mapping associated with 'Occupy London 2'.

Again, watercolour was used to represent my emotional connection with different places inside of the city. Red dots are the traces of my body, which are not completely overlapping with the 'emotional marks'.

The drawing is an expression of the differences between physical and emotional recognition of urban space.

Camden Town

Archway

Angel

Heathrow

Covent Garden

Westferry
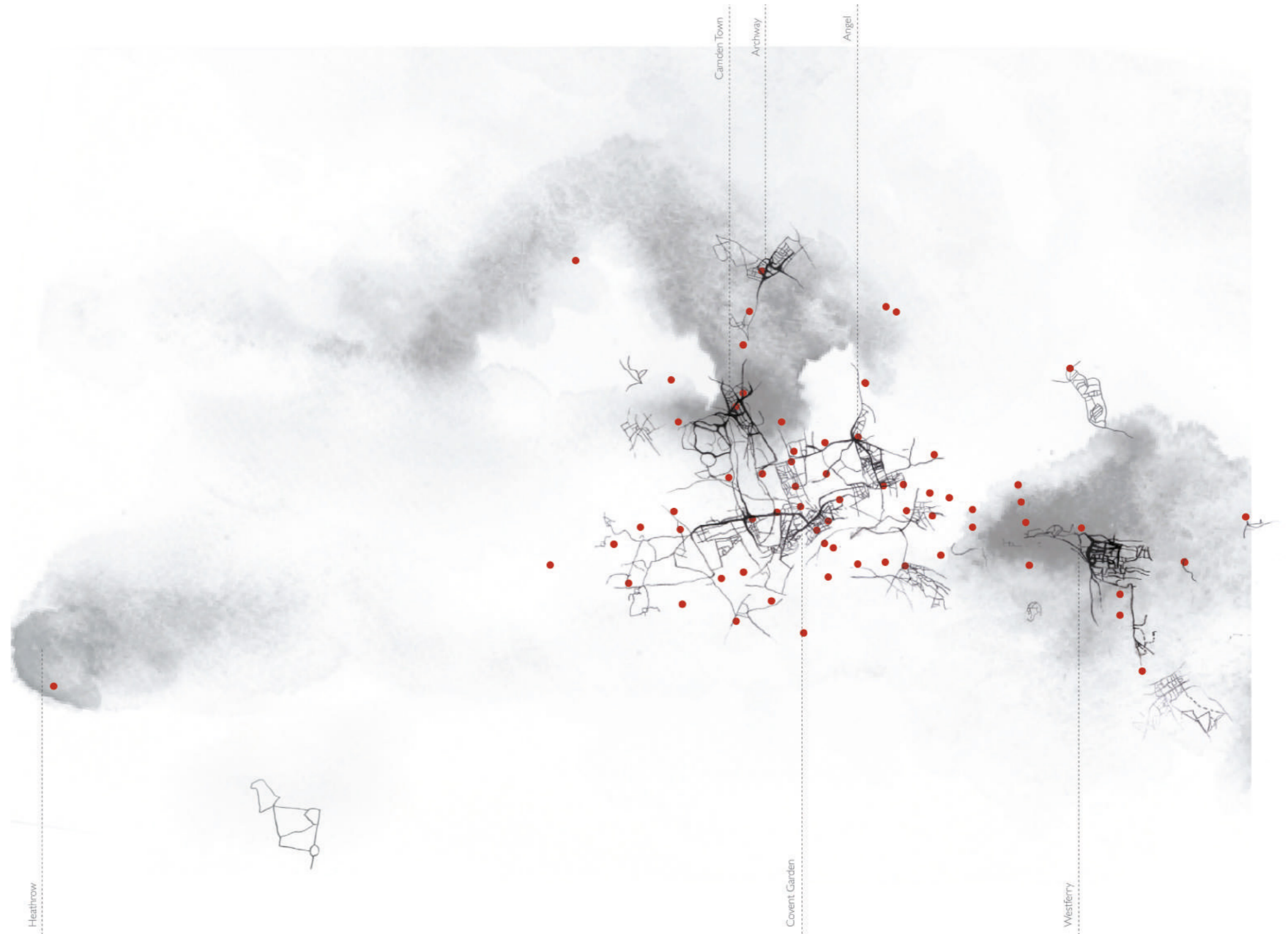
'[...] She too has been on many journeys, back from where she has come. Sometimes she uses the folded paper as a diary, one square per day. To remember days and places, she makes marks, one after another, slowly filling up the paper. Sometimes she records a now distant journey, marking all the squares at once, with no sense of sequence. If you fold and unfold the paper you can read one place next to, rather than before or after, another. In the patches of light and shadow she has made over time you can see the horizon of a mountain which you might have visited last summer.'[15]

— Jane Rendell

15 Jane Rendell, *Everything Else,*
[accessed 2015]http://www.
janerendell.co.uk/essays/
everything-else

Other Legends

As discussed in Two (methodology), mappings are crucial in establishing my hybrid methodology. They are the legends of my subjective nomadic story, which mirror the narratives. Sometimes they are stand alone as explorations used to explore alternative representations of my experience of the city.

This part is a collection of mappings, subjective drawings or sketches that do not appear in main stories. Never the less they still play important role for me carrying out the research. Some of them are nomadic story legends. Some of them are 'steps' in the iterative process; some of them are experimentations in visualisation.

This it another set of drawings for the 'Four Homes'.
A combination of infographic style, watercolour and acrylic painting.

Archway - old, slightly dirty. Raining mostly in the winter when I stayed;

Oxford Street - busy, busy, busy;
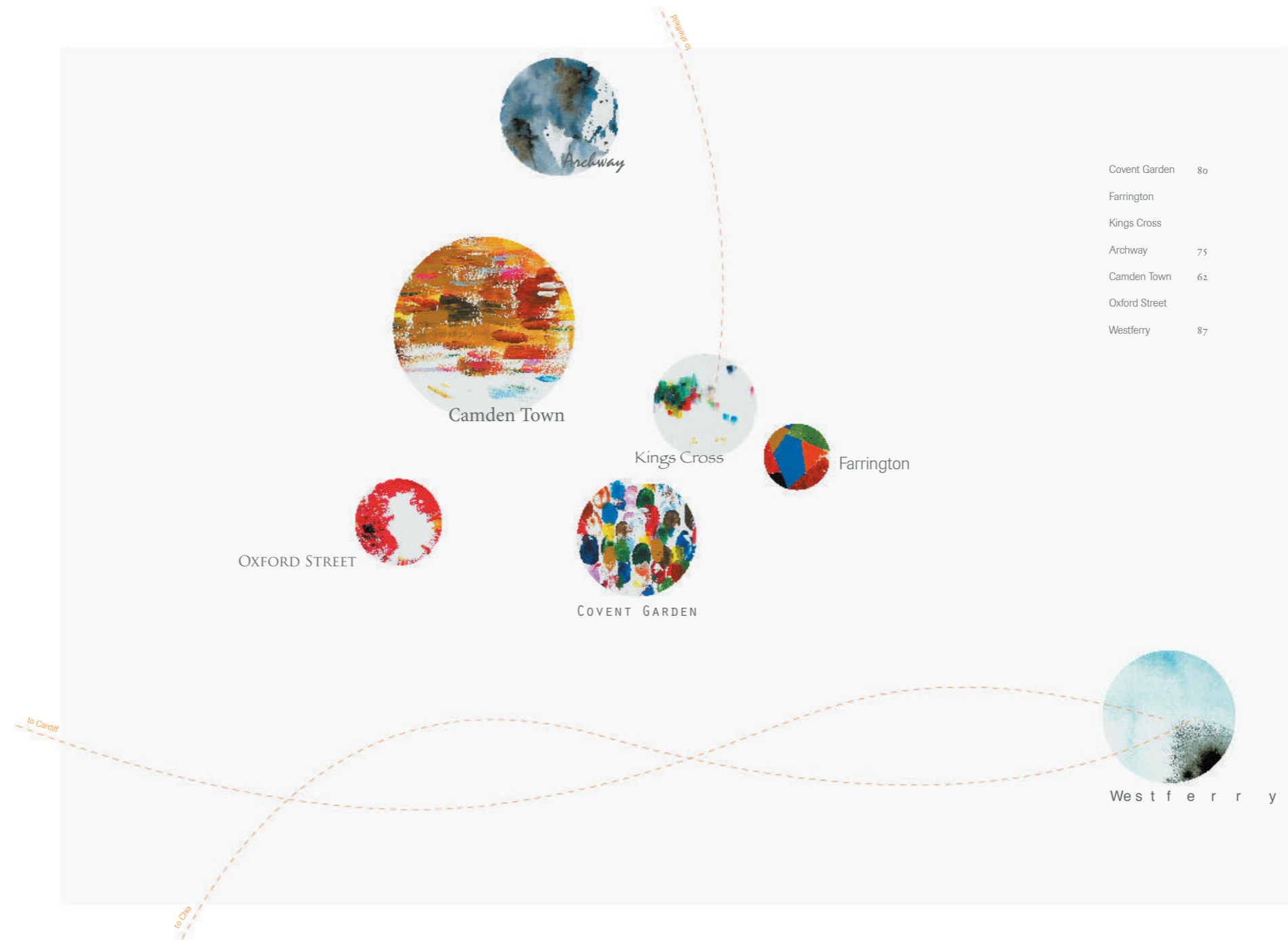
Camden Town - chaos traffic;

Kinds Cross - in the city centre but isolated to me. The only reason for me going there is taking train to Sheffield;

Covent Garden - a lot of people from all over the world: different colours, different races, different classes, different identities;

Farrington - a model for architecture;

Westferry - Adjacent to one of the biggest financial centres in London, but has totally different character. A place where I feels quite free, a place where my journey continues.

The full drawings were also attached at the back pocket in the first submission. I also placed them as thumbnails in each story in 'Four Homes,' which can also be considered as legends to the urban stories.

to Sheffield

Archway

Camden Town

Kings Cross

Farrington

OXFORD STREET

COVENT GARDEN

Covent Garden	80
Farrington	
Kings Cross	
Archway	75
Camden Town	62
Oxford Street	
Westferry	87

to Cardiff

to Crta

W e s t f e r r y

There are extracts from a num-
ber of iterative progress whilst
searching for an appropriate
means of representation for my
experiences of living in the 'Four
Homes.'
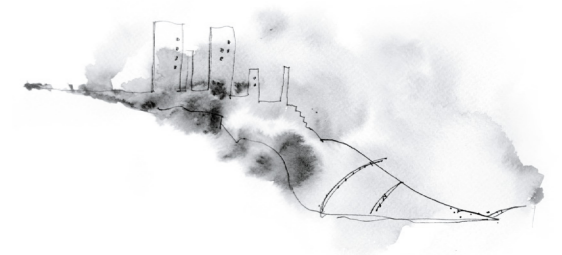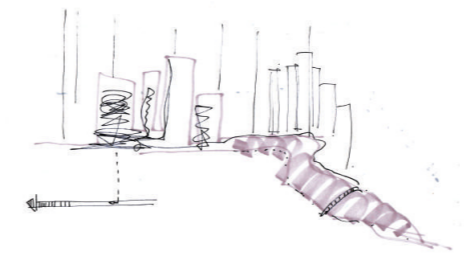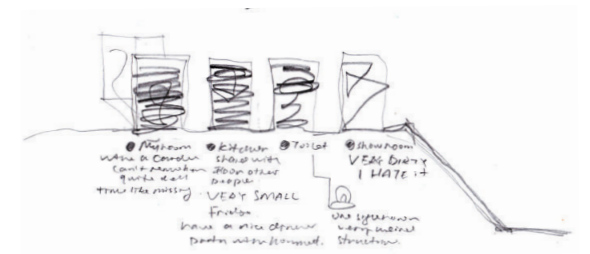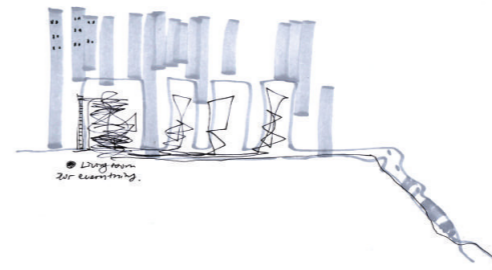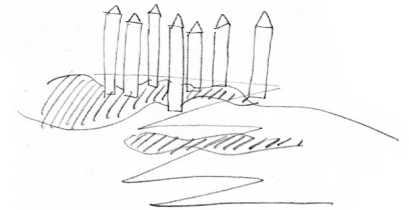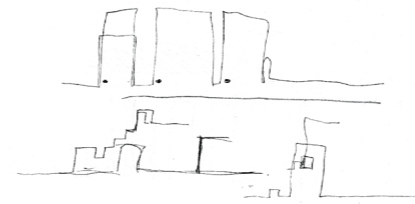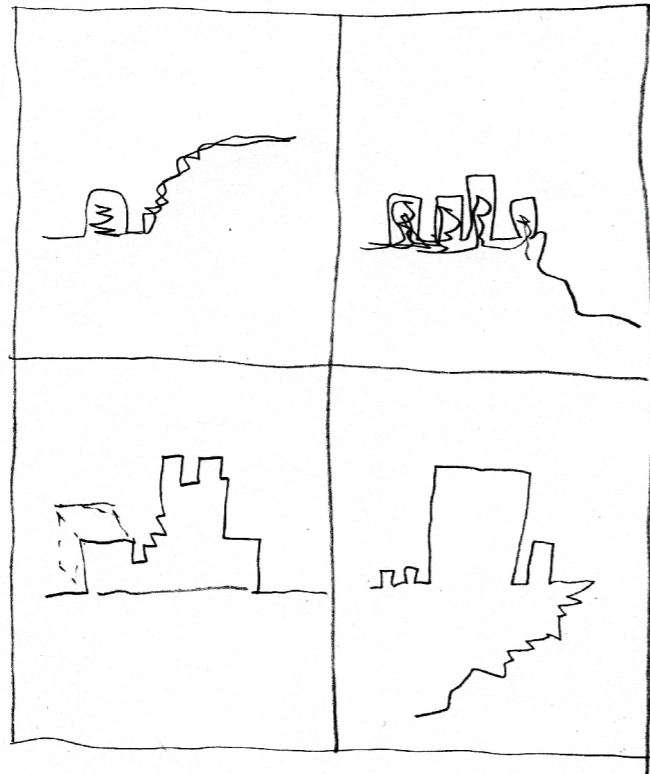
Epilogue

'Epilogue' was written in 2015 as a closure to the first submission. In this section, I delved into the meaning of "indeterminate" and its connection to change and unpredictability. I discussed the similarities and connection between the concepts of 'change' in Taoism and '*becoming*' in nomadic theory.

I also expressed the desire to develop a unique methodology to reflect my exploration of the indeterminate relationship between space and people as well as to offer personal experiences and critical insights into spatial research while inspiring others to engage in similar explorations.

This is:

a tale;

an atlas;

an auto ethnography;

a personal diary of nomadic experience that I would like to share; a self-examination of my architectural education and practice over 10 years;

a collection of thoughts about urban space for anyone who loves our city.

My aim is to explore the indeterminate relationship between urban space and people from a subjective point of view; to offer a unique, critical perspective of looking at urban space, to experiment with creative hybrid methods in spatial research and spatial representation, and which may be reflected in architecture and urban design work. Besides, the piece of work itself is a part of an open ended, iterative process.

During the PhD research I have engaged with an open-ended process, an iterative process. Therefore, there comes another good opportunity for me to look back again.

Through engaging with the narrative and visual methods (walking/travelling/dwelling, creative story writing and subjective mapping), I believe I have developed my critical understanding of urban space as 'social product' (Lefebvre), it is 'intimately bound up in daily life, social activities and personal rituals.' It can be understood as a triad of 'perceived,' 'conceived' and 'lived,' (Lefebvre) which should be radically differentiated from 'place,' 'area,' 'location,' or any 'fixed' ideas of space as a thing. Space is 'to be lived and experienced from within,' (Confucianism) by way of 'everyday life practice' (de Certeau). To me, the key point of studying space is to study the connection between with people. Space itself is an ongoing, never finished concept.(Massey) Thus, from my point of view, this people (social)-space (spatial) relationship, of course, is unlimited and indeterminate.

My multiple hybrid cultural backgrounds offer me a unique perspective from which to look at urban space differently. I consider myself as a nomadic woman. In thinking about the position of 'being outside' (Grosz) through researching nomadic theory and nomadic thinking modes and the 'process of becoming' (Braidotti), I gradually recognise the positivity and criticalness of my subject-positions and the true meaning of *home* that I have been searching for. The notion of 'subjective body/identity' (Braidotti) offers me a broader perspective for rethinking the personal experiences in the exploration of people-space relations. The methodology I have used is hybrid, as mentioned above, it is a to-fro process in which development of narrative and visual methods are engaged. They are my 'everyday practices.' (de Certeau). Walking, travelling and living are the first steps towards conversing with urban space. Storytelling and mapping become explorations in their own right as well as ways of representing each other. Therefore, I walk, move, and live whilst writing stories and mapping the experiences. Then I look back. Re-reading and theorising the stories and maps not only deepen my knowledge in sociology and philosophy, but also naturally alter my subjective feeling and understanding of urban space as well as improving the relationship between the city and myself. On some level, I would say that it has changed my psychological state and my lifestyle.

My initial aim of writing this essay was to explore the indeterminate relationship between space and people. I addressed the word 'indeterminate' at the beginning of this book. After all the theoretical reflection, all the journeys I have taken and all the stories and maps I have written / drawn; I think it is time for me to return to the question: what is the indeterminacy in the space-people relationship? In what way can I approach it?

Indeterminate, literally means unknown, undefined. It is rooted in the Latin word *indeterminatus*, which has two meanings, undetermined and unlimited.

Indeterminacy, the noun form of indeterminate, is the state or condition of being unpredictable. To me, it can also be interpreted as 'change,' or as 'chance.'

井蛙不可以语于 海者，拘于虚也;
夏虫不可以语于冰者，笃于时也 [1]

'Limited by space,
a frog in a well cannot know the beauty of ocean;
Limited by time,
an insect in the summer cannot know the beauty of ice.'[2]

The understanding of change was integral to the ancient Chinese book '*The I Ching*.'[3] It is also embedded in the whole theory of Taosim.

Lao-tzu believed change was everywhere. It was an intersection of natural, physical state and spiritual mode that were all associated with space and time. To accept change, to follow the rhythm of change, is the key point in Taoism. In order to follow the rhythm of change, the idea of 'Yin' and 'Yang'[4] was formed in Taoism. To describe the world Taoism refers to the intersection and interaction between 'Yin' and 'Yang.' Such intersection and interaction is understood as the *balance*. As I discussed in 'One,' the *balance* is an interchangeable, flowing process, a lived experience, which is reflected in change itself. Lao-tzu believed the *balance* was deeply embedded in life, everyone's daily life. The process of self-reflection and self-creation allows us to learn to reach this *balance*.[5]

Personally, I think the understanding of change in nomadism has some similarities with Lao-tzu's theory. Nomadism is concerned with a the style of thinking as well as the process of becoming. Nomadism focuses on a creative thinking mode (a style of thinking), a critical attitude (a state of mind) as

well as people's desire of becoming.[6] Fundamentally, in my interpretation, the aim of nomadism is to reach the *balance*. No matter whether the *balance* is in the indeterminate people-space relationship, or in the people-time relation, or in the people to people relation.

Therefore, I shall only keep experiencing the city, but I cannot permanently hold it.

The indeterminate legends of urban space are lived. They are my personal, experiences of urban space from within. This book is not about fixed answers. It represents my particular journeys in particular cities. My work is necessarily very subjective and I have to admit it provides a narrow perspective and it has certain limitations. My multiple cultural background provides me a unique, critical perspective. It also, to some extent, reduces my sensitivity to political or economic issues in certain social contexts.[7] In terms of the process of developing my methodology, I feel that developing some other narrative methods, such as filming or performance would be very useful and interesting in exploring the people – space relationship. As a Chinese student, revealing more connections between Western spatial theories and ancient Chinese spatial concepts would be very valuable - I think that it is my responsibility.

I believe that one possible reading of this book is of a personal empowerment throughout the life of the project, which is of course on going. I hope that this 'unfinished' book can offer a means of spatial representation and critical spatial thinking as well as a form of expression and emergent understanding for other people; especially students in spatial research who have similar experiences. The emotional responses I have received by presenting some of my work publicly a year ago[8] made me realise that I was not alone in struggling with these questions and that these methods of expression can be used by others. I realised that my work could be valuable, and be applied or developed by others with similar backgrounds to become empowered in their relationship to any city.

My journey is still going, the indeterminate legends of urban space are continuing.
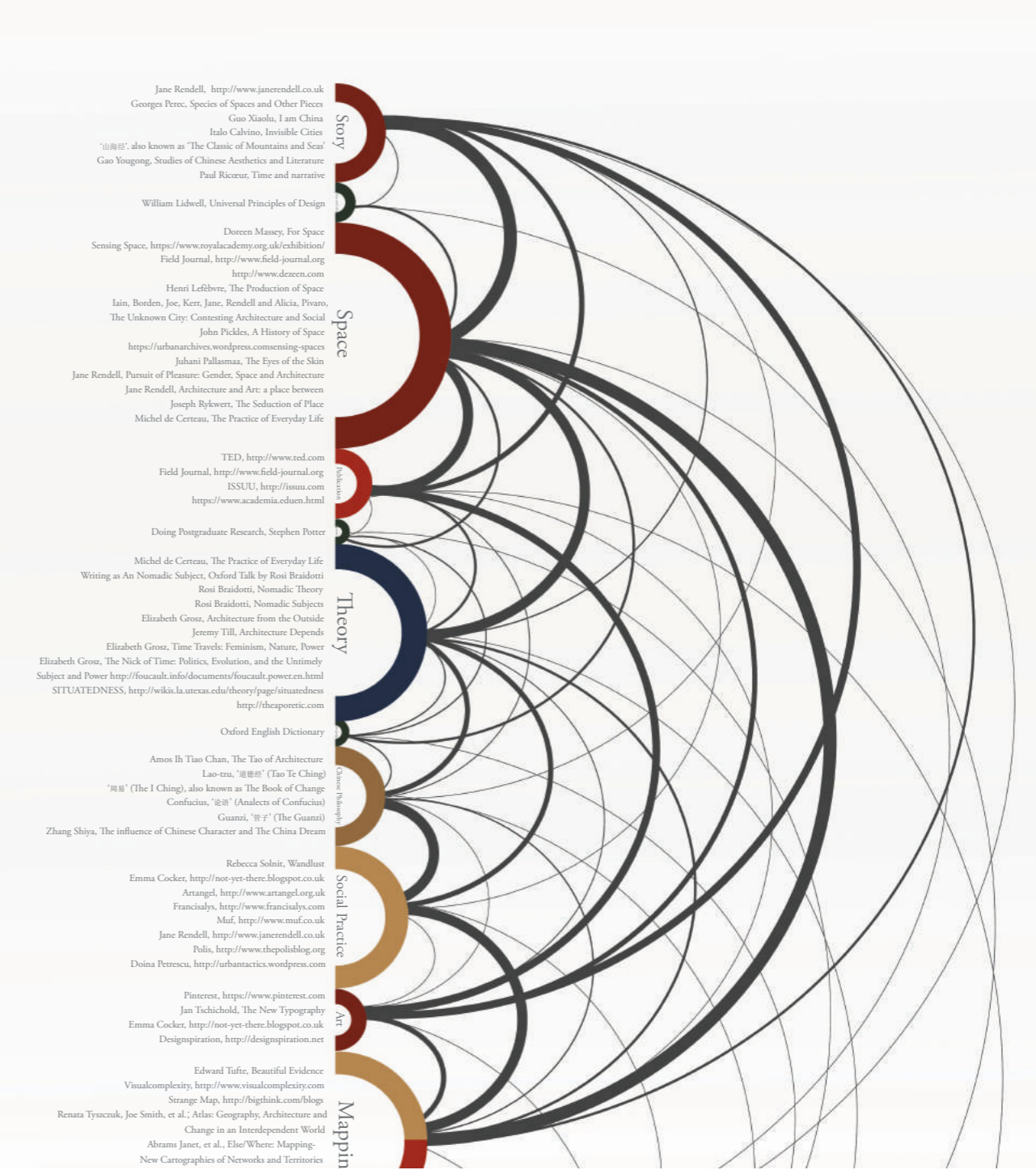
'I haven't been everywhere, but it's on my list'

 - Susan Sontag

Bibliography

'Semi-circle'

Unfinished circle, connected relationships, ongoing process...

Story

Jane Rendell, http://www.janerendell.co.uk
Georges Perec, Species of Spaces and Other Pieces
Guo Xiaolu, I am China
Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities
'山海经', also known as 'The Classic of Mountains and Seas'
Gao Yougong, Studies of Chinese Aesthetics and Literature
Paul Ricœur, Time and narrative

William Lidwell, Universal Principles of Design

Space

Doreen Massey, For Space
Sensing Space, https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/
Field Journal, http://www.field-journal.org
http://www.dezeen.com
Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space
Iain, Borden, Joe, Kerr, Jane, Rendell and Alicia, Pivaro,
The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social
John Pickles, A History of Space
https://urbanarchives.wordpress.comsensing-spaces
Juhani Pallasmaa, The Eyes of the Skin
Jane Rendell, Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space and Architecture
Jane Rendell, Architecture and Art: a place between
Joseph Rykwert, The Seduction of Place
Michel de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life

Publication

TED, http://www.ted.com
Field Journal, http://www.field-journal.org
ISSUU, http://issuu.com
https://www.academia.eduen.html

Doing Postgraduate Research, Stephen Potter

Theory

Michel de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life
Writing as An Nomadic Subject, Oxford Talk by Rosi Braidotti
Rosi Braidotti, Nomadic Theory
Rosi Braidotti, Nomadic Subjects
Elizabeth Grosz, Architecture from the Outside
Jeremy Till, Architecture Depends
Elizabeth Grosz, Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power
Elizabeth Grosz, The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely
Subject and Power http://foucault.info/documents/foucault.power.en.html
SITUATEDNESS, http://wikis.la.utexas.edu/theory/page/situatedness
http://theaporetic.com

Oxford English Dictionary

Chinese Philosophy

Amos Ih Tiao Chan, The Tao of Architecture
Lao-tzu, '道德经' (Tao Te Ching)
'周易' (The I Ching), also known as The Book of Change
Confucius, '论语' (Analects of Confucius)
Guanzi, '管子' (The Guanzi)
Zhang Shiya, The influence of Chinese Character and The China Dream

Social Practice

Rebecca Solnit, Wandlust
Emma Cocker, http://not-yet-there.blogspot.co.uk
Artangel, http://www.artangel.org.uk
Francisalys, http://www.francisalys.com
Muf, http://www.muf.co.uk
Jane Rendell, http://www.janerendell.co.uk
Polis, http://www.thepolisblog.org
Doina Petrescu, http://urbantactics.wordpress.com

Art

Pinterest, https://www.pinterest.com
Jan Tschichold, The New Typography
Emma Cocker, http://not-yet-there.blogspot.co.uk
Designspiration, http://designspiration.net

Mapping

Edward Tufte, Beautiful Evidence
Visualcomplexity, http://www.visualcomplexity.com
Strange Map, http://bigthink.com/blogs
Renata Tyszczuk, Joe Smith, et al.; Atlas: Geography, Architecture and
Change in an Interdependent World
Abrams Janet, et al., Else/Where: Mapping-
New Cartographies of Networks and Territories

BOOKS

Abrams, Janet, and Peter Hall, eds. Else/where--Mapping: New Cartographies of Networks and Territories. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Design Institute, 2006).

Bartlett School of Architecture (London, England). PhD Research Projects 2010. (London: Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, 2010).

Bartlett School of Architecture London. Bartlett School of Architecture Catalogue 2009. (London: Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, 2009).

Borden, Iain; Kerr, Joe; Rendell, Jane & Pivaro, Alicia. The Unknown City: Contesting Architecture and Social Space. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press. 2002).

Braidotti, Rosi. Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti. (New York: Columbia University Press. 2011).

Braidotti, Rosi. Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory. (New York: Columbia University Press. 1994).

Calvino, Italo. Invisible Cities trans. Weaver, William. (London: Vintage Classics. 1997).

Cocker, Emma; Mancini, Biana Scliar; Wookey, Sara. Performing The City, (Nottingham Trent University, 2012)

Chang, Amos I. T, Laozi, and Amos Ih Tiao Chang. The Tao of Architecture. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981).

de Certeau, Michel, and Steven Rendall The Practice of Everyday Life, trans. Rendall, Steven. (Berkeley. University of California Press. 1984).

Gehl, Jan. Cities for People. (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2010).

Gieseking, Jen; Mangold, William; Katz, Cindi; Low, Setha & Saegert, Susan. The People, Place, and Space Reader. (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group 2014).

Grosz, Elizabeth. Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space. (Cambridge. Massachusetts: MIT Press. 2001).

Grosz, Elizabeth. The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely. (Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd. 2004).

Grosz, Elizabeth. Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power. (Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd. 2005).

Guo Xiaolu. I am China, (London: Chatto & Windus, 2014)

Guo Xiaolu. A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers, (London: Vintage, 2007).

Haraway, Donna. Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. (New York: Routledge. 1991).

Harding, Sandra, ed. The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies. (New York: Routledge, 2004).

Koolhaas, Rem. Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan. (New York: Monacelli Press, 1994).

Latour, Bruno, and Peter Weibel, eds. Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy. (Cambridge, Mass. : [Karlsruhe, Germany]: MIT Press ; ZKM/Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, 2005).

Lidwell, Will; Butler, Jill and Holden, Kritina. Universal Principles of Design: 100 Ways to Enhance Usability, Influence Perception, Increase Appeal, Make Better Design Decisions, and Teach through Design (Rockport Publishers Inc. 2007).

Lefebvre, Henri. The Production of Space. trans. Nicholson-Smith, Donald. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 1991).

Lefebvre, Henri. Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life. (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013)

MacEachren, Alan M. How Maps Work: Representation, Visualization, and Design. (New York: Guilford Press, 2004).

Manolopoulou, Yeoryia, Marjan Colletti, and Marcos Cruz. PhD Research Projects 2009. (London: Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, 2009).

Massey, Doreen B. For Space. (London: SAGE Publications. 2005).

Massey, Doreen B. World City. (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity, 2007).

Minton, Anna. Ground Control: Fear and Happiness in the Twenty First Century City. (London: Penguin. 2012).

Oudsten, Frank den. Space.time.narrative: The Exhibition as Post-Spectacular Stage. (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011).

Pallasmaa, Juhani. The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses. (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons. 2012).

Perec, Georges, and David Bellos. Life, a user's manual: fictions. (London: Vintage, 2003).

Perec, Georges. Species of Spaces and Other Pieces. trans. Sturrock, John. (London: Penguin Books. 1997).

Pickles, John. A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping and the Geo-Coded World. (Oxon: Routledge. 2004).

Potter, Stephen Potter. Doing Postgraduate Research. (London: SAGE Publications, 2006)

Pryke, Michael, Gillian Rose, and Sarah Whatmore, eds. Using Social Theory: Thinking through Research. (London: Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications in association with the Open University, 2003).

Rendell, Jane. Art and Architecture: A Place between. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006).

Rendell, Jane. Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London. (London: The Athlone Press. 2002).

Ricœur, Paul. Time and narrative Volume 1. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

Ricœur, Paul. Time and narrative Volume 2. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

Rykwert, Joseph. The Seduction of Place: The History and Future of the City. (Oxford University Press, 2004).

Samara, Timothy. Making and Breaking the Grid: A Graphic Design Layout Workshop. (Gloucester, MA: Rockport Publishers, 2005).

Shields, Rob. Spatial Questions: Cultural Topologies and Social Spatialisation. (London: SAGE Publications Ltd. 2013).

Solnit, Rebecca. Wanderlust. (London: Verso Books. 2001).

Solnit, Rebecca. A Field Guide to Getting Lost. (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006).

Solnit, Rebecca. The Faraway Nearby. (London: Penguin. 2014).

Tschichold, Jan. The New Typography (Berkeley and Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006)

Tormey, Jane; Whiteley, Gillian. Telling Stories: Countering Narrative in Art, Theory and Film (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 2009)

Till, Jeremy. Architecture Depends. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press. 2009).

Tufte, Edward. Beautiful Evidence. (Cheshire CT: Graphic Press. 2006).

Tufte, Edward. The Visual Display of Quantitative Information. (USA: Graphics Press. 2001)

Tyszczuk, Renata; Smith, Joe; Clark, Nigel; & Butcher, Melissa. Atlas: Geography, Architecture and Change in an Interdependent World, London: (Black Dog Publishing. 2012).

Yougong, Gao. Studies of Chinese Aesthetics and Literature (中國美典與文學研究論集). (Taiwan: 國立臺灣大學出版中心. 2011).

Lao-tzu. '道德经' (Tao Te Ching), circa 600 BC.

Guanzi. '管子' (The Guanzi), circa 403-221 BC.

Confucius. '论语' (Analects of Confucius), circa 475–221 BC.

Chuang-tzu. '庄子 外篇' (Chuangzi, Nanhuajing), circa 300 BC.

'礼记' (The Book of Rites), circa 200 BC.

'說文解字' (Shuowen Jiezi), circa 79-106 AD.

'山海经' (The Classic of Mountains and Seas), circa 453-221 BC to 202 BC-220 AD.

'三五历纪' (Three Five Calendar), circa 220-280 AD.

'周易' (The I Ching), circa 1045-771 BC.

李彦，中国国古代科学 (Science in Traditional China). (Hongkong: The Chinese University of Hongkong, 1999).

冯友兰，中国哲学简史 (A Short History of Chinese Philosophy). (Beijing: The University of Beijing, 1985).

JOURNALS/ PAPERS

Rendell, Jane. Travel Stories: Angels and Nomads in Ridge, Sue. Travel Narratives, Norwich, 2000. [Pdf Accessed 2013 via http://www.janerendell.co.uk]

Rendell, Jane. (Un)doing it Yourself: Rhetorics of Architectural Abuse, Journal of Architecture, 1999. [Pdf Accessed 2014 via http://www.janerendell.co.uk]

Rendell, Jane. Everywhere else: Jan Peters, Martina Schmid, Silke Schatz, Domo Baal Gallery, London, 2003. [Pdf Accessed 2014 via http://www.janerendell.co.uk]

Rendell, Jane. Seeing Time/ Writing Place: Janet Hodgson, The Pits SWPA Publishing, 2006. [Pdf Accessed 2014 via http://www.janerendell.co.uk]

Rendell, Jane. Architecture Writing: Jane Rendell (ed.) 'Critical Architecture', special issue of the Journal of Architecture, 2005. [Pdf Accessed 2012 via http://www.janerendell.co.uk]

Rendell, Jane. The Welsh Dresser: an atlas: Brandon La Belle (ed.), Surface Tension, 2003. [Pdf Accessed 2014 via http://www.janerendell.co.uk]

Rendell, Jane. Travelling the Distance/Encountering the Other: David Blamey (ed.), Here, There, Elsewhere, London. 2005. [Pdf Accessed 2012 via http://www.janerendell.co.uk]

Rendell, Jane. Walking to Wapping/ Walking through Angels. 2001. [Pdf Accessed 2012 via http://www.janerendell.co.uk/walks/walking-to-wapping-walking-through-angels]

Massey, Doreen. 2003. Some Times of Space. London: Tate Publishing. [Pdf Accessed via http://www.f-i-e-l-d.co.uk/writings-violence_files/Some_times_of_space.pdf]

Manolopoulou, Yeoryia. The Active Voice of Architecture: An Introduction to the Idea of Chance. 2007. [Accessed via Field Journal vol.1: http://www.field-journal.org/index.html.]

Petrescu, Doina. The Indeterminate Mapping of the Common. 2007. [Accessed via Field Journal vol.1: http://www.field-journal.org/index.html.]

Tyszczuk, Renata. Games of Skill and Chance. 2007. [Accessed via Field Journal vol.1: http://www.field-journal.org/index.html.]

The Situationist International and the Theory of the Derive, [Accessed 2014 via http://fog.ccsf.edu/~dcox/EMU/S.I.html]

Debord, Guy. Theory of the Dérive. trans. Knabb, Ken. (Paris, November, 1956). [Accessed via http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/2.derive.htm]

Debord, Guy. Definitions. Internationale Situationniste #1, trans. by Ken Knabb, (Paris, June 1958). [Accessed via http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/is1.html]

Phillips, Andrea. Cultural Geographies in Practice: Walking and looking. Cultural Geographies, SAGE Publications (UK and US), 2005, 12 (4) [Pdf Accessed via https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00572164/document]

Modeen, Mary. Remembering Places: Modeen, Mary Remembered Places, Ballarat, Australia: Ballarat Fine Art Gallery. 2007. [Accessed via http://marymodeen.com/writing.html]

Cocker, Emma. R.S.V.P.: Choreographing Collectivity through Invitation and Response, Rhizomes: Issue 21, 2010. [Pdf Accessed via http://www.frenchmottershead.com/aboutus/writing/pdfs/rhizomes.pdf]

Urbansk, Steve. The Identity Game: Michel Foucault's Discourse-Mediated Identity as an Effective Tool for Achieving a Narrative-Based Ethic: The Open Ethics Journal, 2011, 5, 3-9 3

Foucault, Michel. The Subject and Power: Chicago Jornal, Critial Inquary, Vol. 8. No. 4. 1982 [Pdf Accessed via http://www.unisa.edu.au/Global/EASS/HRI/foucault-_the_subject_and_power.pdf]

Braidotti, Rosi. Metamorphic Others and Nomadic Subjects. [Pdf Accessed via http://www.tanyaleighton.com/p/p000620/LARIC_Braidotti_Metamorphic_Others_and_Nomadic_Subjects464f5.pdf]

Pinder,David. Ghostly Footsteps: Voices, Memories And Walks In The City, Ecumene. 8. 2001 [Pdf Accessed via http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/docs/staff/6729.pdf]

Tedlock, Barbara. From Participant Observation to the Observation of Participation: The Emergence of Narrative Ethnography. Journal of Anthropological Research, Vol. 47, No. 1. University of New Mexico. 1991.

文化研究期刊 (Router, A Jornal of Cultural Studies) Vol. 4. 2007

Lu, Ruirong. 中國古代 時間觀的萌芽 ─《詩經》時間 意識探討. The Humanities and Management Journal (人文及管理學報), National Ilan University, November, 2007.

WEB RESOURCES [Accessed 2011 – 2015]

Caswell, Janice: http://janicecaswell.com/work/ new/

Alys, Francis: http://www.francisalys.com

Cocker, Emma. Not Yet There: http://not-yet-there.blogspot.com/

Petrescu, Doina: http://urbantactics.wordpress.com

Tufte, Edward: http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/index

Rendell, Jane: http://www.janerendell.co.uk

D.d. Zhang: http://ddwork.prosite.com

Cardiff, Janet & Miller, George B: http://www. cardiffmiller.com/artworks/walks/missing_voice.html/

Guo Xiaolu: http://www.guoxiaolu.com

Napoleon's March, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Joseph_Minard

Bilton, Nick. An Annual Report On One Man's Life: http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/02/09/an-annual-report-on-one-mans-life.

The Situationist International and the Theory of the Derive. http://fog.ccsf.edu/~d-cox/ EMU/S.I.html

Sensing Space: https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/

Seven Walks: http://www.artangel.org.uk/ projects/2005/seven_walks/

R.S.V.P.: Choreographing Collectivity through Invitation and Response: http://www.rhizomes.net/issue21/cocker/index.html

Subject and Power: http://foucault.info/documents/foucault.power.en.html

SITUATEDNESS: http://wikis.la.utexas.edu/theory/page/situatedness

古代的时间意识: http://www.gmw.cn/01gmrb/2008-05/12/content_772075.htm-
http://theaporetic.com/

Feltron, N, The 2008 Feltron Annual Report: http://feltron.com/ar08_01.html.

Feltron, N, The 2009 Feltron Annual Report: http://feltron.com/ar09_01.html.

Sense of Pattern: http://casualdata.com/ senseofpatterns/

Field Journal: http://www.field-journal.org

Dezeen: http://www.dezeen.com

TED: http://www.ted.com

ISSUU: http://issuu.com

Muf, http://www.muf.co.uk

Polis, http://www.thepolisblog.org

https://www.academia.eduen.html

Artangel: http://www.artangel.org.uk/

GAS: http://gassheffield.blogspot.co.uk

Public Work: http://www.publicworksgroup.net

Platform: http://platformlondon.org

Designaddict: http://www.designaddict.com

Visualcomplexity: http://www.visualcomplexity.com

Pinterest: https://www.pinterest.com

Archdaily: http://www.archdaily.com

Landezine: http://www.landezine.com

Designspiration: http://designspiration.net

Strange Map: http://bigthink.com/blogs

Wallpaper: http://www.wallpaper.com

Live Projects: http://www.liveprojects.org

汉典: http://www.zdic.net

中国古代思想中的天时观: http://www.confuchina.com/

e-flux, http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/whose-map-is-it/

Ewandowska, M, http://www.marysialewandowska.com

http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/docklands/

http://peopleplacespace.org

http://occupylondon.org.uk

Reynolds D, http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2012/05/how-to-choose-the-right-face-for-a-beautiful-body/

http://thestrangeattractor.net

http://blog.iso50.com

http://www.social-sculpture.org/index.htm

http://www.asla.org

https://www.behance.net

http://www.serpentinegalleries.org

http://cfar-biad.co.uk/index.php

Friedman, V, http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2007/08/08/80-beautiful-fonts-typefaces-for-professional-design/

http://digimap.edina.ac.uk

https://urbanarchives.wordpress.com

http://sfbay-anarchists.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Subjectivity.pdf

郭健，http://www.swissinfo.ch/chi/culture/乡村朋克_郭小橹-我拒绝属于谁/41302614

http://www.iging.com

https://sophiebosworth.wordpress.com

TALKS

Zhang, Shiya: The influence of Chinese Character and The China Dream. (汉字影响 与中国梦) in 'China Form.' [Broadcast: Hong-kong. Phoenix Television. 2013.]

Braidotti, Rosi: Thinking as a Nomadic Subject. [Accessed via https://www.ici-berlin.org/event/620/]

BBC Hardtalk with Guo Xiaolu. [Accessed via http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b04c364c/hardtalk-xiaolu-guo]

Rendell, Jane: Site Writing. ABP Series. 2013. [Accessed via https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KmiEdyStHnU]

Braidotti, Rosi: Nomadic Feminist Theory In A Global Era. [Accessed via https://vimeo.com/51895848]

Lexicon

I have always believed that Chinese hieroglyphic characters are one of the best combinations of literal and spatial visualization. 'Literalness is our original imitation of the world.'[1]

The origin of Chinese characters was inextricably linked with nature. 'It came from the world that we observed and from the body that we have.'[2] In my interpretation, Chinese character indeed visualize objects (the nature, the world). They were not a direct visualisation of the objects themselves, but a representation of the human being's understanding of the objects (the nature, the world). Also, the Chinese characters were not produced by a single person. They were produced by a society (a community or a group of people). They are a collective creation.[3]

From oracle bone scripts to traditional Chinese characters, the generation and evolution of Chinese characters not only represent the transformation of human knowledge of the world, but also represent the developing thinking process of ancient people. Shiya Zhang made an example in 'China Forum'[4] of the generation of the character '東' (East) in order to show how ancient Chinese people embedded their thinking process into Chinese characters. '東'(East) is combined by two characters: '木' and '日.' '木'(✦)[5] means the tree (timber or wood); '日'(☉)[6] means the sun. Therefore, when sun shines through the trees every morning, it shows the orientation: 'the East.' This kind of thinking process comes from everyday life experience, which is strongly linked with the nature, the world we observe and live in.

If, I am researching and exploring the relationships between people and space (between people and the city, or the world), from my personal viewpoint, then this thinking process is actually a process of understanding space.

People represent the process of understanding in myriad ways. Ancient Chinese people represent it through Chinese charterers. Therefore, rethinking the origins of Chinese characters may be interesting and helpful in spatial research and particularly in understanding the conneciton between literature and space.

1 My translation. See Gao Yougong, *Studies of Chinese Aesthetics and Literature* (中國美典與文學研究論集), (Taiwan, 國立臺灣大學出版中心, 2011)
2 See Shiya Zhang's speech '*The influence of Chinese Character and The China Dream*' (汉字影响与中国梦) in 'China Form' (Hongkong, Phoenix Television, 2013)
3 Ibid.
4 China Form (凤凰卫视世纪大讲堂) is a program made by Hongkong Phoenix Satellite Television Holdings Limited.
5 Both are oracle bone script
6 Ibid.
7 The characters are picked from '*Shuowen Jiezi*' (說文解字) circa 79-106 AD.
The reason that I chose them is they may relate with space, architecture, time, narrative, walking.
8 My translation from '*Shuowen Jiezi*' (說文解字) circa 79-106 AD

Traditional — Ancient — oracle bone script — Translation [7]

人 — 尺 — 亻 — Human, People (hieroglyphic) [8]

天 — 天 — 美 — The Sky (the thing above human)

日 — 日 — ☉ — The Sun (hieroglyphic)

月 — 月 — ☽ — The Moon (hieroglyphic)

土 — 仝 — 土 — Earth, Ground, Soil (where things grow)

山 — 山 — 山 — Mountain (hieroglyphic)

川 — 川 — 川 — River (hieroglyphic)

見 — 見 — 見 — See, Observe (human with eye)

木 — 木 — 木 — Wood, Tree, Timber (hieroglyphic)

東 — 東 — East (when sun reaches the middle of the tree)

田 — 田 — Field, Land (hieroglyphic)

界 — 畍 — Boundary, Area (where the land, river meet)

步 — 步 — Step, Foot (hieroglyphic)

行 — 行 — Walk (two feet together)

言 — 言 — Narrative, Talk (direct from tongue)

城 — 城 — City (made from the soil, in order to gather people. '城市' is the city)

市 — 市 — Market, City (where people make trade, hieroglyphic from scale)

家 — 家 — Home (a semi-closed area with a roof, a cover where the family live together)

室 — 室 — Room (a semi-closed area with a roof, a cover where human put their valuables)

門 — 門 — Door (hieroglyphic)

間 — 間 — Space, Between (between doors, things where the moon light get through)

房 — 房 — Building, Architecture (things offer human a shelter)

窗 — 窗 — Window (net in-between of opened area)

街 — 街 — Street (made by soil, the ground that is surrounded by objects)

回 — 回 — Return, Back and forth (hieroglyphic)

垣 — 垣 — Wall (made by soil, in between of the top and the ground)

基 — 基 — Foundation (structure in the ground where things can build on top)

時 — 時 — The on-going, running sun

旦 — 旦 — Today (when the sun arise from the ground)

Conversations between Didi
Zhang (DZ) and me (Y), 2012

Y // Hey.

DZ // Hello. Have you been up to much
recently?

Y // Trying to write my essay, doing some
researches and readings

DZ // Any specific topic?

Y // I am going to write something about
'mapping'

DZ // 'Mapping'? What is 'Mapping'? I
have never heard of it! Could you describe
it for me a little bit?

Y // Well...

DZ // Is it some like of 'architectural' thing
that 'normal' people will never get it?

Y // No, it is so not! Mapping is basically
'the way to do Map' And you know what is
Map, don't you?

DZ // Well, of course! 'The way to do Map'
means...drawing? Or painting?

Y // Yeah, drawings for sure, but not just
drawings, it is one of the methodologies to
define networks in society; Or to explore
people's movements by using human's
traces. For example, the movements of
tourists in Trafalgar Square, different
genders, different religions and different
ages of tourists' movements during a day,
are random, and appear to have no such
particular 'form'. However, the moments
show characteristics, in a simple architec-

tural way, well, shows people's interests to
space. Maps are the way we reveal such
interests.

Y // Another sample of 'Mapping', is
a drawing of an artist I have seen this
before. People eat, right? The drawing was
a sketchy table, with traces of the move-
ments when people were eating on this
table. After a period, the Mapping clearly
displayed the 'secret' about how people
use this table — frequency, orientation, etc.

DZ // Oh...I see! Info graphics! That is how
we called it in here!

Y // Info graphics...is?

DZ // Just like what you said before,
the 'interests' - well, for physical scien-
tists, they maybe figure out this specific
'interests' after lots of calculating, and
the way for them to show the 'result' is
to use series of formulas; for information
technologists, they explored this kind of
'interests' via code and computer pro-
grams, and the way for them to show the
'result' is software or application; for artists
or architects, like us, we use visualisation
to represent this 'interests', to show people
'result,'— collecting data, gather human's
reactions/feedbacks, then we visualise
things in an artistic/architectural way. That
is what we call 'info graphics' — graphics
with information.

Y // Actually, that is really useful and
inspirational! Mapping is actually graph-
ics with information; using another way of
visualisation, to explain human's activi-
ties, behaviours, route and social/cultural
network. We should not just create a map
with an image of the Earth or space's basic
projection. In contrast, we should bring
information in.

DZ // That's correct. Here is a typical sam-
ple of Info graphic, also, a map – London
underground map – I know you are quite
familiar with this map since you are in UK -
still, I have to say, it is absolutely the great
milestone of the whole history of graphic
design. Before the design of the London
underground map, people had no idea
about graphics with information, literally!
In other words, people had no idea how
to use an easy, simple methodology to
describe, or to combine data with massive
information. London underground map
did it! The method, which was used in the
designing work of London underground
map, was visualisation. London is appar-
ently one of the busiest metropolises in
the world. There are thousands of people
taking tube everyday, every minute, how
do we let people know which tube line
they are supposed to take in the shortest
time? Can you image life without the info
graphic? Such a miracle! These information
can be read, felt or understood by every
individual, is exactly the beauty of visuali-
sation, also, the soul of the MAP.

DZ // Of course, map/mapping/info
graphic that we were talking about before,
were more artistic/architectural, more
beautiful. Social networks, human's traces
and behaviours. Designers or architects'
feelings or stories are able to be embed-
ded into maps/graphics.

Y // turns out maps are so powerful!

DZ // Exactly! That is why we work so hard
on it! Anyway, hope my words can help
you a little bit.

Y // A lot! Many thanks.

Edited from two online conversations on
the 19th October and the 5th November
2012

Afterword   Part ll

'Conclusion'

'Afterword Part ll / Conclusion' was written in the
summer of 2023, after my second PhD Viva.

It is a small closure for this thesis, but it is never a
closure for creative subjective writing, or for theoretic
explorations of how *we* interact with, inhabit, under-
stand and represent urban space.
The understanding of nomadic theory and autothe-
ory gives me much more confidence to employ my
unique, personal experiences in a broader cultural
and social context.

This thesis is for PhD, more importantly, it becomes a
guidebook for my life; a friend accompanying me for
over ten years and also the most authentic record of
my journey in academic and design fields.

The way of me carrying out PhD itself is a sample of a back and forth exploring experiment. Through challenging the current architectural representation of space; researching for the conversation between space and the users; employing subjective writing, walking and creative mapping into the PhD research and integrating my ***becoming*** identity as an active part of the research by revisiting the nomadic theory and autotheory; I think I have found my audiences.

In June 2018, an article had been published in The New York Times [1] regrading a lawsuit that was filed against Harvard University in 2014 which alleged that the university discriminates against Asian applicants by systematically giving them lower scores on certain personality traits such as likability, courage, kindness, and being 'widely respected'.[2]

I don't want to forcibly connect this incident with this thesis, but I have indeed felt the ubiquitous discrimination, against Chinese, against Asians, against women, and against minority, marginalised groups. As I wrote in 'Afterword Part I', deeper cultural burdens and political influences have led Chinese people, especially Chinese women, habitually, to remain silent on various levels. This pandemic, the war between Russia and Ukraine, the trade conflicts between China and the West have made these cultural and political barriers even more severe in 2023. The situation for Chinese people in the Western world is increasingly difficult. Simply, multiple global and domestic political developments make the physical act of 'going home' more difficult. Moreover, on ideological and moral levels, the country of our birth and the country we are currently located both reject our existence in various ways. Our stories need to be seen. A methodology to amplify our voices and to cross these social, cultural and political barriers are urgently needed.

My stories and perspectives in different urban spaces may not be precise, but these are real and direct. They provide knowledge from an insider that may not be available through the traditional research methods. They highlight the significance of lived experiences and voices not just from the field of spatial research, but also offer a unique opportunity for marginalized voices to be heard and validated. This PhD approach offers potential new ways of representing space and hopefully provides a framework for students who wish to engage with nomadic theory, autotheory and spatial philosophical study in their own research. The combinations of creative writing and visual method are designed to bring my/our audiences into the scene, to enlarge the voice and to hope that anyone who may be lost in any alien city can use my legends of urban space as a short guide.

'My hope is for my book to be a starting place, an open project, a weak theory, that others might take with them, adapt, and use.' [3]

– Lauren Fournier

1 Anemona Hartocollis, Harvard Rated Asian-American Applicants Lower on Personality Traits, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/15/us/harvard-asian-enrollment-applicants.html [Accessed 2023]

2 The Harvard Plan That Failed Asian Americans, https://harvardlawreview.org/print/vol-131/the-harvard-plan-that-failed-asian-americans/ [Accessed 2023]

3 See Writing The Self, Communally: An Interview With Lauren Fournier, https://c-j-l-c.org/portfolio/writing-the-self-communally/ [Accessed 2023]